

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2704

As Reported by House Committee On: Appropriations

Title: An act relating to establishing a competitive grant program for community sexual assault programs to provide counseling services in schools.

Brief Description: Establishing a competitive grant program for community sexual assault programs to provide counseling services in schools.

Sponsors: Representatives Caldier, Orwall, Griffey, Mosbrucker, Callan, Appleton, Davis, Tarleton, Pollet and Ormsby.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 1/27/20, 2/3/20 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates a competitive grant program for Community Sexual Assault Programs (CSAPs) to provide group counseling in common schools for youth survivors of sexual assault.
- Requires the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy (OCVA) in the Department of Commerce to develop and administer the grant program.
- Requires the OCVA to submit a report on the grant program to the Governor and appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 1 of each year.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 30 members: Representatives Ormsby, Chair; Robinson, 1st Vice Chair; Bergquist, 2nd Vice Chair; Stokesbary, Ranking Minority Member; MacEwen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Rude, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Caldier, Chopp, Cody, Corry, Dolan, Dye, Fitzgibbon, Hoff, Hudgins, Kilduff, Macri, Mosbrucker, Pettigrew, Pollet, Ryu, Schmick, Senn, Springer, Steele, Sullivan, Sutherland, Tarleton, Tharinger and Ybarra.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Chandler and Kraft.

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.

Staff: Jessica Van Horne (786-7288).

Background:

The Office of Crime Victims Advocacy (OCVA) in the Department of Commerce (Department) administers the state's Sexual Assault Program. Under the Sexual Assault Program, the OCVA oversees the distribution of the Sexual Assault Services Funding Formula (funding formula), which allocates state and federal funding to sexual assault service providers for a range of services. The funding sources for the funding formula are the State General Fund and federal Victims of Crime Act Victim Assistance Program moneys.

Community Sexual Assault Programs (CSAPs) are accredited sexual assault service providers that provide a set of core sexual assault services to a specific region of the state. Each county is served by at least one CSAP. The Department oversees CSAP accreditation, which includes setting accreditation standards, and confirming that CSAPs provide required core services and undergo a regular independent review process. Required core services are: information, referral, and awareness; crisis intervention; general advocacy; legal advocacy; medical advocacy; and system coordination. Community Sexual Assault Programs may also, but are not required to, provide primary prevention services.

Funding for core services is distributed to CSAPs on a regional basis through the funding formula. Funding for core services is distributed on a regional basis. Each region receives a base allocation, with additional funding provided based on the region's overall population and the number of clients served in the region. The region's total allocation is then distributed among all CSAPs that serve that region.

Community Sexual Assault Programs may be eligible to receive additional funding distributed through the funding formula if they offer specialized services, such as therapeutic services and support groups, or serve underserved populations. Community Sexual Assault Programs may also receive other federal funds distributed by the OCVA for sexual assault services.

Summary of Bill:

Subject to the availability of state funding, the OCVA must administer a competitive grant program for CSAPs to provide group counseling in common schools for youth survivors of sexual assault. Grant recipients must be an accredited CSAP, have prior experience providing group counseling to youth, and have established or be willing to establish a committed partnership with one or more common schools. The grant awards are supplemental to other funding provided to CSAPs through OVCA programs, including the funding formula.

The OCVA is required to submit an annual report on the grant program, including a summary of selected grant recipients, schools served, and services provided, to the Governor and appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 1 of each year.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 21, 2020.

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) Community sexual assault centers have provided group counseling in schools before, and have expressed interest in providing that service again. Group counseling can be more effective with youth survivors of sexual assault than conventional one-on-one counseling methods due to the peer-to-peer approach. This type of counseling is not currently eligible for the grant funding provided by the Department of Commerce.

Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) are in support of this bill. The CACs are a part of the state's response to serve children who have been abused, and are nationally accredited. Broadening the network of services available to child victims of abuse and assault is one of the best ways to support those victims. The CACs also request being added as eligible recipients of the grant program due to their experience in the area, existing partnerships with school districts, and their role in the state response to child abuse.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Caldier, prime sponsor; and Paula Reed, Children's Advocacy Centers of Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.