
SENATE BILL 5353

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2021 Regular Session

By Senators Conway, Darneille, Nguyen, and Wilson, C.

Read first time 01/26/21. Referred to Committee on Law & Justice.

1 AN ACT Relating to creating a partnership model that facilitates
2 community engagement with law enforcement; adding a new section to
3 chapter 43.330 RCW; creating a new section; and providing an
4 expiration date.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that community
7 engagement is a foundational principle of successful community
8 policing practices. When individuals and neighborhood groups are
9 encouraged to partner with law enforcement, a powerful alliance can
10 be built on mutual trust and respect and mitigate polarization
11 between police departments and community groups. A successful
12 community-police partnership leads to the achievement of shared goals
13 of improving safety and quality of life and ensuring that public
14 safety services are tailored to the needs of local communities.

15 The legislature recognizes current efforts in Washington to
16 mobilize communities to insist on equitable and accountable practices
17 that will result in community participation in public safety efforts
18 as well as establish cooperative lines of communication between
19 civilians and law enforcement. Laudable community engagement models
20 such as the safe streets campaign in Pierce county, safe Yakima in
21 Yakima county, and the Okanogan county community coalition are

1 recognized to mitigate crime trends by engaging the community and law
2 enforcement in cooperative efforts to improve public safety.

3 The department of commerce intends to foster community engagement
4 with community resource officers through the creation of a community
5 engagement project in 15 communities across the state of Washington
6 with a mix of urban, rural, and suburban areas to facilitate
7 community-law enforcement partnerships and improve police-community
8 relations. The department will implement a project evaluation to
9 measure and examine the impact of local initiatives on community
10 engagement, neighborhood safety, and positive community-police
11 relations.

12 The funded projects will facilitate the empowerment of
13 communities to engage in crime prevention efforts through
14 neighborhood organizing, law enforcement-community partnerships,
15 youth mobilization, and business engagement.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.330
17 RCW to read as follows:

18 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
19 specific purpose, a project is created in the department to foster
20 community engagement through neighborhood organizing, law
21 enforcement-community partnerships, youth mobilization, and business
22 engagement. The department shall administer the project. The project
23 must include 12 to 15 grant awards in those counties that have
24 demonstrated their commitment to programs that promote community
25 engagement in public safety including the following counties:
26 Spokane, Pierce, King, Okanogan, Yakima, Cowlitz, Clark, Chelan-
27 Douglas, Walla-Walla, Benton-Franklin, Grant, and Snohomish.

28 (2) The department shall adopt policies and procedures necessary
29 to administer the project including: (a) An application process; (b)
30 disbursement of the grant award to selected applicants; (c) tracking
31 compliance and proper use of funds; and (d) measuring outcomes.

32 (3) Eligible applicants must:

33 (a) Be a public agency or nongovernmental organization, that is
34 not a law enforcement agency;

35 (b) Have demonstrated experience with community engagement
36 initiatives that impact public safety;

37 (c) Have community engagement;

38 (d) Have established or be willing to establish a coordinated
39 effort with committed partners, which must include law enforcement

1 and organizations committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion of
2 community members, including organizations whose leadership
3 specifically reflects the communities most impacted by racism; and

4 (e) Have established priorities, policies, and measurable goals
5 in compliance with the requirements of the project as provided in
6 subsection (4) of this section.

7 (4) The grant recipient shall:

8 (a) Lead and facilitate neighborhood organizing initiatives,
9 including:

10 (i) Empowering community members with tools, skills, confidence,
11 and connections to identify, eradicate, and prevent illegal activity;

12 (ii) Making neighborhood improvements to deter future criminal
13 activity; and

14 (iii) Educating community members regarding how to connect with
15 city, county, and law enforcement resources;

16 (b) Build substantive law enforcement-community partnerships,
17 including:

18 (i) Building trust between community members and law enforcement
19 by facilitating purposeful antiracist practices and the development
20 of policies that lead to equal treatment under the law;

21 (ii) Establishing clear expectations for law enforcement to be
22 competent to practice fair and equitable treatment including
23 facilitating dialogue between law enforcement and community members
24 to increase understanding of the impact of historical racist
25 practices and current conflicts;

26 (iii) Community members regularly informing law enforcement,
27 through presentations, workshops, or forums, on community perceptions
28 of law enforcement and public safety issues;

29 (iv) Educating community members on the role and function of law
30 enforcement in the community;

31 (v) Clarifying expectations of law enforcement and of the role of
32 the community in crime prevention;

33 (vi) Educating community members on the best practices for
34 reporting emergency and nonemergency activities;

35 (vii) Recognizing community members for effective engagement and
36 community leadership; and

37 (viii) Recognizing law enforcement officials for efforts to
38 engage underrepresented communities, improve community engagement and
39 empowerment, and reform law enforcement practices;

1 (c) Mobilize youth to partner with neighborhood groups and law
2 enforcement to prevent violence by:

3 (i) Helping them develop knowledge and skills to serve as leaders
4 in their communities;

5 (ii) Focusing on prevention of violence and substance abuse; and

6 (iii) Empowering youth to bring their voice to community issues
7 that impact healthy police-community relations;

8 (d) Engage businesses to help prevent crimes, such as vandalism
9 and burglaries, through safety training and other prevention
10 initiatives;

11 (e) Provide training and technical assistance on how to implement
12 community engagement, improving law enforcement and community
13 partnership, youth engagement, and business engagement;

14 (f) Identify and maintain consistent, experienced, and committed
15 leadership for managing the grant, including an administrator who
16 acts as an available point of contact with the department; and

17 (g) Collect and report data and information required by the
18 department.

19 (5) The department shall, in consultation with the Washington
20 state institute for public policy, develop reporting guidelines for
21 the grant recipient in order to measure whether the safe streets
22 pilot project had an impact on crime rates and community engagement
23 with, and perceptions of, law enforcement. The department shall
24 submit a preliminary report to the legislature with details on the
25 selected grant recipients and the reporting guidelines by January 1,
26 2022. The department shall submit a final report on the safe streets
27 pilot project, including an analysis of the reported data required
28 under this subsection, by December 1, 2023.

29 (6) This section expires January 1, 2024.

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