

RCW 43.330.545 Community engagement grants—Law enforcement.

(Expires January 1, 2029.) (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, a project is created in the department to foster community engagement through neighborhood organizing, law enforcement-community partnerships, youth mobilization, and business engagement. The department shall administer the project. The project must include funding for programs delivering services in a range of rural and urban counties across Washington.

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

(3) Eligible applicants must:

(a) Be a public agency or nongovernmental organization;

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

(c) Include community engagement in their services;

(d) Have established or be willing to establish a coordinated effort with committed partners, which must include law enforcement and organizations committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion of community members, including organizations whose leadership specifically reflects the communities most impacted by racism; and

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

(4) A law enforcement agency applying for a grant award shall not be considered an eligible applicant unless there are no other eligible applicants from the community or county the law enforcement agency serves.

(5) The grant recipient shall:

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

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

(ii) Making neighborhood improvements to deter future criminal activity; or

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- (vi) Educating community members on the best practices for reporting emergency and nonemergency activities;
 - (vii) Recognizing community members for effective engagement and community leadership; and
 - (viii) Recognizing law enforcement officials for efforts to engage underrepresented communities, improve community engagement and empowerment, and reform law enforcement practices;
- (c) Mobilize youth to partner with neighborhood groups and law enforcement to prevent violence by:
- (i) Helping them develop knowledge and skills to serve as leaders in their communities;
 - (ii) Focusing on prevention of violence and substance abuse; or
 - (iii) Empowering youth to bring their voice to community issues that impact healthy police-community relations;
- (d) Engage businesses to help prevent crimes, such as vandalism and burglaries, through safety training and other prevention initiatives;
- (e) Provide training and technical assistance on how to implement community engagement, improving law enforcement and community partnership, youth engagement, and business engagement;
- (f) Identify and maintain consistent, experienced, and committed leadership for managing the grant, including an administrator who acts as an available point of contact with the department; and
- (g) Collect and report data and information required by the department.
- (6) The department shall, in consultation with the Washington state institute for public policy, develop reporting guidelines for the grant recipients to measure whether the project had an impact on crime rates and community engagement with, and perceptions of, law enforcement. The department shall report to the appropriate legislative policy committees by December 1st every odd-numbered year with details on the implementation of the project and the outcomes of the reported data and information.
- (7) This section expires January 1, 2029. [2023 c 189 § 1; 2021 c 327 § 2.]

Finding—2021 c 327: "The legislature finds that community engagement is a foundational principle of successful community policing practices. When individuals and neighborhood groups are encouraged to partner with law enforcement, a powerful alliance can be built on mutual trust and respect and mitigate polarization between police departments and community groups. A successful community-police partnership leads to the achievement of shared goals of improving safety and quality of life and ensuring that public safety services are tailored to the needs of local communities.

The legislature recognizes current efforts in Washington to mobilize communities to insist on equitable and accountable practices that will result in community participation in public safety efforts as well as establish cooperative lines of communication between civilians and law enforcement. Laudable community engagement models such as the safe streets campaign in Pierce county, safe Yakima in Yakima county, and the Okanogan county community coalition are recognized to mitigate crime trends by engaging the community and law enforcement in cooperative efforts to improve public safety.

The department of commerce intends to foster community engagement with law enforcement officers through the creation of a community

engagement project in 15 communities across the state of Washington with a mix of urban, rural, and suburban areas to facilitate community-law enforcement partnerships and improve police-community relations. The department will implement a project evaluation to measure and examine the impact of local initiatives on community engagement, neighborhood safety, and positive community-police relations.

The funded projects will facilitate the empowerment of communities to engage in crime prevention efforts through neighborhood organizing, law enforcement-community partnerships, youth mobilization, and business engagement." [2021 c 327 § 1.]