

By: Miles

S.B. No. 1725

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of the office of community violence intervention and prevention within the Department of State Health Services and a grant program for violence intervention and prevention services.

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

SECTION 1. This Act may be cited as the Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Act.

SECTION 2. Subtitle B, Title 2, Health and Safety Code, is amended by adding Chapter 56 to read as follows:

CHAPTER 56. OFFICE OF COMMUNITY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION

SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 56.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Advisory committee" means the grant review advisory committee established under Section 56.102.

(2) "Office" means the office of community violence intervention and prevention established under Section 56.051.

Sec. 56.002. RULES. The executive commissioner shall adopt rules as necessary to implement this chapter.

Sec. 56.003. FUNDING. The department shall solicit and accept gifts, grants, and donations on behalf of the office to carry out the office's duties under this chapter.

SUBCHAPTER B. OFFICE: ESTABLISHMENT, POWERS, AND DUTIES

1 Sec. 56.051. ESTABLISHMENT; PURPOSE. The commissioner
2 shall establish within the department the office of community
3 violence intervention and prevention for the purposes of:

4 (1) coordinating and expanding violence intervention
5 and prevention activities;

6 (2) reducing the incidence of interpersonal violence
7 and homicide;

8 (3) providing leadership, coordination, and technical
9 assistance to promote effective state and local efforts on reducing
10 preventable injuries and deaths resulting from all forms of
11 physical violence;

12 (4) collaborating with governmental entities, law
13 enforcement agencies, community-based organizations, business
14 leaders, and other appropriate individuals in this state to develop
15 evidence-based policies, strategies, and interventions to reduce
16 the impacts of violence in this state; and

17 (5) awarding grants under Subchapter C.

18 Sec. 56.052. POWERS AND DUTIES. (a) The office shall
19 develop collaborative relationships with state agencies involved
20 in reducing interpersonal violence, including:

21 (1) child abuse;

22 (2) elder abuse;

23 (3) violence involving youth;

24 (4) family violence;

25 (5) intimate partner violence;

26 (6) gun violence;

27 (7) sexual assault; and

1 (8) violence against an individual based on the
2 individual's actual or perceived:

3 (A) sexual orientation;

4 (B) gender identity; or

5 (C) gender expression.

6 (b) To fulfill the purposes of this chapter, the office
7 shall:

8 (1) integrate violence intervention and prevention
9 education into state-funded substance use programs;

10 (2) support the development and implementation of
11 comprehensive, community-based violence intervention and
12 prevention initiatives throughout this state, including
13 initiatives focused on preventing the types of violence described
14 by Subsection (a);

15 (3) develop and recommend comprehensive wraparound
16 and other support services, including interpersonal violence and
17 suicide prevention programs, to be funded by local governmental
18 entities; and

19 (4) assist local organizations that provide violence
20 intervention and prevention services in seeking and applying for a
21 grant under Subchapter C.

22 (c) The office shall develop and implement a public health
23 strategy for implementing the purposes described by Section 56.051.

24 The strategy must require:

25 (1) the use of culturally competent, community-wide
26 risk assessment tools;

27 (2) the use of methods to identify individuals in need

1 of intervention or prevention services who rely heavily on public
2 services;

3 (3) the provision of cognitive and family-based
4 counseling;

5 (4) the coordination of available services to prevent
6 incidents of violence; and

7 (5) as appropriate, technical assistance from
8 culturally competent organizations or individuals.

9 Sec. 56.053. INCREASING PUBLIC AWARENESS OF VIOLENCE;
10 DIRECTORY OF VIOLENCE INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION SERVICES. (a)
11 The office shall conduct a statewide public health campaign on the
12 impact of violence, strategies to help prevent the occurrence of
13 violence, and the use of alternative dispute resolution methods for
14 addressing incidents of violence.

15 (b) The office shall develop and post on the department's
16 Internet website a directory of violence intervention and
17 prevention services available in each county in this state.

18 SUBCHAPTER C. COMMUNITY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION GRANT
19 PROGRAM

20 Sec. 56.101. ESTABLISHMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF GRANT
21 PROGRAM. The office shall establish and administer a community
22 violence intervention and prevention grant program and award grants
23 under the program to improve public health and safety by supporting
24 effective violence reduction strategies throughout this state in
25 communities disproportionately impacted by a high incidence of
26 violence, including:

27 (1) gun violence;

- 1 (2) group violence;
- 2 (3) suicides;
- 3 (4) family violence;
- 4 (5) intimate partner violence; and
- 5 (6) violence based on an individual's gender.

6 Sec. 56.102. ADVISORY COMMITTEE. (a) The office shall
7 establish the grant review advisory committee to assist the office
8 in reviewing and selecting grant applications for a grant award
9 under this subchapter. The advisory committee must include:

- 10 (1) members who have been personally impacted by
11 violence;
- 12 (2) members who have been incarcerated; and
- 13 (3) members with hands-on experience implementing
14 evidence-based violence reduction initiatives that incorporate a
15 public health, community-based, or ecological system approach.

16 (b) The advisory committee shall select a presiding officer
17 from among the advisory committee members.

18 (c) An advisory committee member serves at the pleasure of
19 the office.

20 (d) Section 2110.008, Government Code, does not apply to the
21 advisory committee.

22 Sec. 56.103. ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS. (a)
23 The office, with advice from the advisory committee, shall award
24 grants through a competitive process to counties and municipalities
25 disproportionately impacted by a high incidence of violence and to
26 community-based organizations serving communities
27 disproportionately impacted by a high incidence of violence.

1 (b) To be awarded a grant under this subchapter, a county,
2 municipality, or community-based organization shall submit to the
3 office, in the form and manner the office prescribes, a complete
4 application that includes a statement describing:

5 (1) the community issues or concerns the grant money
6 will address;

7 (2) the applicant's goals and objectives for use of the
8 grant money, which must include the applicant's plan for
9 implementing an evidence-based violence reduction initiative; and

10 (3) the applicant's plan to enhance local coordination
11 of existing violence intervention and prevention programs and
12 minimize the duplication of services.

13 (c) If appropriate to address regional problems or provide a
14 more comprehensive solution:

15 (1) a county or municipality may submit a joint
16 application with one or more other counties or municipalities; and

17 (2) a community-based organization may submit a joint
18 application with one or more other community-based organizations.

19 Sec. 56.104. REVIEW AND SELECTION OF GRANT APPLICANTS. (a)
20 The office, with assistance and advice from the advisory committee,
21 shall review grant applications submitted under this subchapter and
22 select applicants for grant awards.

23 (b) In selecting applicants for grant awards, the office
24 shall give preference to applicants whose proposals demonstrate:

25 (1) the greatest likelihood for reducing violence in
26 the community served by the applicant without contributing to the
27 mass incarceration of individuals;

1 (2) for a joint application that includes at least one
2 community-based organization, a partnership with one or more
3 entities, including another community-based organization or a
4 public entity;

5 (3) leadership that reflects the demographics of the
6 community served by the applicant;

7 (4) experience with formerly incarcerated individuals
8 or individuals who are otherwise involved in the criminal justice
9 system; and

10 (5) familiarity with individuals who are experiencing
11 or have experienced interpersonal violence.

12 Sec. 56.105. REQUIRED USE OF GRANT MONEY. (a) A grant
13 recipient shall use a grant awarded under this subchapter to
14 support, expand, or replicate evidence-based violence reduction
15 initiatives focused on interrupting cycles of violence,
16 victimization, and retaliation to reduce the incidence of firearm
17 violence, including:

18 (1) hospital-based violence intervention programs;

19 (2) community outreach programs; and

20 (3) initiatives with focused deterrence strategies.

21 (b) The office may award a grant under this subchapter only
22 in accordance with a contract between the office and the grant
23 recipient. The contract must include provisions affording the
24 office sufficient control to ensure the public purpose of
25 supporting, expanding, or replicating evidence-based violence
26 reduction initiatives focused on interrupting cycles of violence,
27 victimization, and retaliation is accomplished and this state

1 receives the return benefit.

2 (c) Subject to Subsection (b), a county or municipal
3 recipient of a grant awarded under this subchapter must distribute
4 not less than 50 percent of the grant money in this state to one or
5 more of the following:

- 6 (1) a community-based organization;
7 (2) an Indian tribe or tribal organization; or
8 (3) a public entity primarily focused on community
9 safety or gun violence prevention.

10 Sec. 56.106. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS. Each grant recipient
11 shall report to the office, in a form and at intervals the office
12 prescribes, the recipient's progress toward achieving the grant
13 objectives.

14 Sec. 56.107. EFFICACY EVALUATION OF GRANT PROGRAM. The
15 office may contract with an independent entity with expertise in
16 evaluating community-based, grant-funded programs to evaluate the
17 effectiveness of the grant program under this subchapter, provided
18 the entity, in conducting the evaluation, uses:

- 19 (1) both qualitative and quantitative methods, as
20 appropriate; and
21 (2) participatory action research methods or other
22 research methods that incorporate subject engagement, to the extent
23 practicable.

24 SECTION 3. Not later than December 1, 2025:

- 25 (1) the commissioner of state health services shall
26 establish the office of community violence intervention and
27 prevention within the Department of State Health Services as

1 required by Chapter 56, Health and Safety Code, as added by this
2 Act; and

3 (2) the executive commissioner of the Health and Human
4 Services Commission shall adopt the rules necessary to implement
5 Chapter 56, Health and Safety Code, as added by this Act.

6 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.