
Public Safety Committee

HB 2892

Brief Description: Establishing the mental health field response teams program.

Sponsors: Representatives Lovick, Hayes, Goodman, Klippert, Tarleton, Slatter, McDonald, Frame and Kloba.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the mental health field response team grant program (program), administered by the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs.
- Requires the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to conduct a study on whether the program improves outcomes of interactions with persons experiencing behavioral health crises.

Hearing Date: 1/30/18

Staff: Kelly Leonard (786-7147).

Background:

Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs. The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) is an independent organization consisting of sheriffs, police chiefs, the Washington State Patrol, and the Washington Department of Corrections. The 1975 Legislature made the WASPC a statutory entity by designating the association as a "combination of units of local government," and it currently receives state funding to manage certain programs. This includes, for example, the Jail Booking and Reporting System.

Behavioral Health Organizations. A behavioral health organization refers to a county, group of counties, or nonprofit organization under contract with the Department of Social and Health Services to provide a comprehensive network of behavioral health services in a regional service area. Behavioral health organizations contract with local providers to provide an array of mental

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health services, monitor the activities of local providers, and oversee the distribution of funds under the state managed care plan.

Washington State Institute for Public Policy. The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) is a research organization created by the Legislature to provide nonpartisan research at legislative direction on issues of importance to Washington.

Summary of Bill:

When funded, the WASPC must develop and implement a mental health field response team grant program (program). The purpose of the program is to assist local law enforcement agencies to develop and operate mental health field response team capabilities, utilizing mental health professionals to professionally, humanely, and safely respond to encounters involving persons with mental health issues.

Grants are awarded to local law enforcement agencies based on locally developed proposals to incorporate mental health professionals into the agencies' mental health field response. Two or more agencies may submit a joint grant proposal. Grant applications are reviewed by peer review panels appointed by the WASPC in consultation with behavioral health organizations. To the extent possible, at least one grant recipient agency should be from the east side of the state and one from the west side of the state. Grant recipients must be selected and receiving funds by October 1, 2018.

Grant recipients must include at least one DSHS designated mental health professional who will perform professional services. A mental health professional may assist patrol officers in the field or in an on-call capacity, provide training on best practices, or provide other services. Grant recipients must also develop and provide training necessary for mental health professionals to operate successfully and competently in partnership with law enforcement agencies.

The WASPC must submit an annual report to the Governor and appropriate committees of the Legislature on the program, including information on grant recipients, use of funds, participation of mental health professionals, and feedback from the grant recipients.

The WSIPP, in consultation with the WASPC, must develop data collection and reporting guidelines for grant recipients. The WSIPP must conduct a study on whether the use of mental health field response improves outcomes of interactions with persons experiencing behavioral health crises, including reducing rates of violence and harm and other measurable effects.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 24, 2018.

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