
Public Safety Committee

2SSB 5970

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

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Frockt, Saldaña, O'Ban and Palumbo).

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creates the mental health field response team grant program (program), administered by the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs.
--

Hearing Date: 2/19/18

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.

Designated Crisis Responder. A designated crisis responder (DCR) is a mental health professional with the authority to conduct an evaluation for civil commitment based on the presence of a mental disorder or substance use disorder. The DCR may detain a person in an evaluation and treatment facility, secure detox facility, or approved substance use disorder treatment facility.

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 (DSHS) to provide a comprehensive network of behavioral health services in a regional

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.

service area. Behavioral health organizations contract with local providers to provide an array of mental health services, monitor the activities of local providers, and oversee the distribution of funds under the state managed care plan.

Summary of Bill:

Subject to an appropriation, 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 and fully integrated managed care organizations. To the extent possible, at least one grant recipient agency should be from eastern Washington and one from western Washington. Grant recipients must be selected and receiving funds by October 1, 2018.

Mental health professionals 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 include at least one DCR who will perform professional services.

The WASPC must consult with the DSHS Behavioral Health Administration and the managed care system to develop requirements for participating mental health professionals. Grant recipients must provide training necessary for mental health professionals to operate successfully and competently in partnership with law enforcement agencies.

Within existing resources, the WASPC must consult with the DSHS Data and Analysis Unit to establish data collection and reporting guidelines for grant recipients. Data must be used to evaluate whether the use of mental health field response teams improves outcomes of interactions with persons experiencing behavioral health crises.

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.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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