

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## ESSB 5353

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Creating a partnership model that facilitates community engagement with law enforcement.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Law & Justice (originally sponsored by Senators Conway, Darneille, Nguyen and Wilson, C.).

**Senate Committee on Law & Justice**  
**Senate Committee on Ways & Means**  
**House Committee on Public Safety**  
**House Committee on Appropriations**

**Background:** Various regions around the state have developed community based coalitions to effect positive change in their neighborhoods and address issues such as violence and substance abuse. Coalition members are typically made up of educators, social services, health care providers, law enforcement, faith based groups, and tribal entities. Examples of such programs include:

- Okanogan County Community Coalition has worked to create permanent prescription drop boxes to reduce youth access to prescription medications and increased emphasis patrols and media to reduce youth alcohol consumption;
- Pierce County Safe Streets program has worked to reduce crime in neighborhoods and business districts with programs such as personal safety education for aging and disabled and initiatives to combat youth violence; and
- Safe Yakima Valley has spearheaded projects such as youth mentoring, youth career fairs such as 100 Jobs for 100 Kids, and neighborhood clean up initiatives.

**Summary:** Community Engagement Grant Program. The Department of Commerce (Commerce) is directed to create and maintain a grant program to foster community engagement through neighborhood organizing, law enforcement and community partnerships, youth mobilization, and business engagement.

The program must include 12 to 15 grant awards to counties that have demonstrated a

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commitment to programs that promote community engagement in public safety, including Spokane, Pierce, King, Okanogan, Yakima, Cowlitz, Clark, Chelan-Douglas, Walla-Walla, Benton-Franklin, Grant, and Snohomish counties.

Commerce must adopt policies and procedures to administer the project, including an application process, disbursement of grant funds to selected applicants, tracking compliance and proper use of funds, and measuring outcomes.

Program Eligibility. Applicants for the grant program must:

- be a public agency or nongovernmental agency;
- have demonstrated experience with community engagement initiatives that impact public safety;
- have community engagement;
- 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; and
- have established priorities, policies, and measurable goals in compliance with the requirements of the project.

A law enforcement agency may be considered an eligible applicant only if there are no other eligible applicants from the community or county in which the law enforcement agency serves.

Grant Participants. Activities for grant participants are outlined. Among other requirements, a successful participant must build substantive law enforcement and community partnerships; mobilize youth to partner with neighborhood groups and law enforcement to prevent violence; engage businesses to help prevent crimes through safety training and other prevention initiatives; and collect and report data and information required by Commerce.

Reporting. Commerce must work with the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to develop reporting guidelines for the grant recipient to measure whether the program had an impact on crime rates and community engagement with law enforcement. A preliminary report must be submitted to the Legislature by January 1, 2022, with a final report due December 1, 2023.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

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|--------|----|---|--------------------|
| Senate | 49 | 0 |                    |
| House  | 97 | 1 | (House amended)    |
| Senate | 48 | 0 | (Senate concurred) |

**Effective:** July 25, 2021