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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5367**

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**State of Washington 69th Legislature 2025 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Law & Justice (originally sponsored by Senators Orwall, Conway, and Hasegawa)

AN ACT Relating to grant programs fostering community engagement through law enforcement-community partnerships and immersion; amending RCW 43.330.545; and adding a new section to chapter 43.330 RCW.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 43.330.545 and 2023 c 189 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(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.~~))

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.330 RCW to read as follows:

Subject to the amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the department of commerce shall develop and administer a community immersion law enforcement grant program. The program must facilitate engagement in, and knowledge of, the unique aspects of the community which a newly hired law enforcement officer will serve by placing newly hired officers in community-based organizations to engage in community-focused work while awaiting entry to the basic law enforcement academy per RCW 43.101.200. In administering the program, the department must:

(1) Award competitive grants to local law enforcement agencies using a grants review committee comprised of a sheriff or police chief, a law enforcement officer who holds a rank at or below that of sergeant, and a member of a community-based organization;

(2) Require grant recipients to gather and report data and engage in an evaluation process informed by the city of Kent's experience pursuant to section 129(60), chapter 334, Laws of 2021;

(3) Require grant recipients to assign officers to the program for not less than 45 days of service time;

(4) Prohibit grant recipients from providing a stipend or other financial arrangement to community-based organizations participating in the program in excess of $5,000 per participant;

(5) Allow grant recipients to utilize grant funds to pay for overtime costs required to fill vacant patrol shifts while the newly hired officer participates in the program; and

(6) Limit the department's costs of administering the program to no more than five percent of the amounts appropriated.

**--- END ---**