



State of Wisconsin
2023 - 2024 LEGISLATURE

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2023 SENATE BILL 901

January 11, 2024 - Introduced by Senators TAYLOR, LARSON, CARPENTER, WIRCH, L. JOHNSON, SPREITZER and AGARD, cosponsored by Representatives STUBBS, CABRERA, NEUBAUER, SNODGRASS, SUBECK, EMERSON, SHANKLAND, CONLEY, SINICKI, HONG, RATCLIFF, MOORE OMOKUNDE, C. ANDERSON, MADISON, BARE, JOERS, VINING, O'CONNOR, ANDRACA, PALMERI, OHNSTAD, CONSIDINE, JACOBSON, GOYKE and ORTIZ-VELEZ. Referred to Committee on Health.

1 **AN ACT to amend** 15.01 (6) and 15.02 (3) (c) 1.; and **to create** 15.194 (2) and
2 250.25 of the statutes; **relating to:** community violence intervention and
3 creation of the Office of Violence Prevention in the Department of Health
4 Services.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

This bill creates the Office of Violence Prevention in the Department of Health Services, establishes certain duties with respect to the office, and directs the office to award grants for community violence intervention. The bill provides that the office shall coordinate and expand violence prevention activities and work to reduce the incidences of interpersonal violence and reduce death by homicide. To achieve these goals, the office must do all of the following:

1. Establish a violence prevention focus within DHS and any local unit of government that receives funding from DHS.
2. Collaborate with other state agencies that are interested or active in the reduction of interpersonal violence.
3. Integrate violence prevention education into existing and planned state-funded substance use and abuse prevention programs.
4. Support the development and implementation of comprehensive, community-based violence prevention initiatives within cities and towns across the state.
5. Develop sources of funding beyond state revenues to maintain the office and expand its activities.

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6. Create a directory of existing violence prevention services and activities in each county.

7. Develop and recommend additional wraparound and support services that include both interpersonal violence and suicide prevention programs and are funded by local governing bodies.

8. Support local organizations that provide violence prevention services in seeking out and applying for grant funding in support of their initiatives.

9. With the support of DHS, develop and implement a public health strategy for preventing violence.

10. Conduct a statewide public health campaign on the effect of violence, strategies for violence cessation, and the use of alternative dispute resolution techniques.

The bill directs the office to establish and implement a program to award grants to support effective violence reduction initiatives in communities that are disproportionately affected by violence. Grants are to be awarded competitively to counties and cities that are disproportionately affected by violence, and to community-based organizations that serve the residents of those counties or cities. Where appropriate, the bill allows two or more counties or cities to submit joint applications to provide more comprehensive solutions. Grantees must submit to the office at regular intervals reports that describe the grantee's progress in achieving the grant objectives.

For further information see the state and local fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

1 **SECTION 1.** 15.01 (6) of the statutes is amended to read:

2 15.01 (6) "Division," "bureau," "section," and "unit" means the subunits of a
3 department or an independent agency, whether specifically created by law or created
4 by the head of the department or the independent agency for the more economic and
5 efficient administration and operation of the programs assigned to the department
6 or independent agency. The office of credit unions in the department of financial
7 institutions, the office of the inspector general in the department of children and
8 families, the office of the inspector general in the department of health services, the
9 office of violence prevention in the department of health services, and the office of
10 children's mental health in the department of health services have the meaning of

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1 “division” under this subsection. The office of the long-term care ombudsman under
2 the board on aging and long-term care and the office of educational accountability
3 in the department of public instruction have the meaning of “bureau” under this
4 subsection.

5 **SECTION 2.** 15.02 (3) (c) 1. of the statutes is amended to read:

6 15.02 (3) (c) 1. The principal subunit of the department is the “division”. Each
7 division shall be headed by an “administrator”. The office of credit unions in the
8 department of financial institutions, the office of violence prevention in the
9 department of health services, and the office of children’s mental health in the
10 department of health services have the meaning of “division” and the director of
11 credit unions in the department of financial institutions, the director of the office of
12 violence prevention in the department of health services, and the director of the office
13 of children’s mental health in the department of health services have the meaning
14 of “administrator” under this subdivision.

15 **SECTION 3.** 15.194 (2) of the statutes is created to read:

16 15.194 (2) OFFICE OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION. There is created an office of violence
17 prevention in the department of health services. The director of the office shall be
18 appointed by the governor to serve at the pleasure of the governor.

19 **SECTION 4.** 250.25 of the statutes is created to read:

20 **250.25 Office of violence prevention. (1) PURPOSE.** The office of violence
21 prevention shall coordinate and expand violence prevention activities.

22 **(2) DUTIES.** The office of violence prevention shall do all of the following:

23 (a) Establish a violence prevention focus within the department and any local
24 unit of government that receives funding from the department.

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1 (b) Collaborate with other state agencies that are interested or active in the
2 reduction of interpersonal violence, including child abuse, elder abuse, violence
3 against youth, domestic violence, gun violence, intimate partner violence, sexual
4 assault, and violence against persons based on perceived or actual sexual
5 orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

6 (c) Integrate violence prevention education into existing and planned
7 state-funded substance use and abuse prevention programs.

8 (d) Support the development and implementation of comprehensive
9 community-based violence prevention initiatives within cities and towns across the
10 state, including the prevention of child abuse, elder abuse, violence against youth,
11 domestic violence, gun violence, intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and
12 violence against persons based on perceived or actual sexual orientation, gender
13 identity, or gender expression.

14 (e) Develop sources of funding beyond state revenues to maintain the office and
15 expand its activities.

16 (f) Create a directory of existing violence prevention services and activities in
17 each county.

18 (g) Develop and recommend additional wraparound and support services that
19 include both interpersonal violence and suicide prevention programs and are funded
20 by local governing bodies.

21 (h) Support local organizations that provide violence prevention services in
22 seeking out and applying for grant funding in support of their initiatives and provide
23 technical assistance and support to the organizations to maximize the organizations'
24 likelihood of success with their applications.

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1 (i) With the support of the division of the department responsible for public
2 health, develop and implement a public health strategy that provides for all of the
3 following:

4 1. The use of culturally competent and community-wide risk-assessment
5 tools.

6 2. The identification of heavy utilizers of public services.

7 3. The provision of cognitive and family-based therapy.

8 4. The coordination of available services to combat the spread of violence.

9 5. Technical assistance from culturally competent organizations or individuals.

10 (j) Conduct a statewide public health campaign concerning the effect of
11 violence, strategies for violence cessation, and the use of alternative dispute
12 resolution techniques.

13 **(3) GRANTS.** (a) The office of violence prevention shall develop and implement
14 a program to award grants to support effective violence reduction initiatives in
15 communities that are disproportionately affected by violence, including gun
16 violence, group violence, suicides, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, and
17 gender-based violence.

18 (b) The grants under this subsection shall be used to support, expand, and
19 replicate evidence-based violence reduction initiatives, including hospital-based
20 violence intervention programs, evidence-based street outreach programs, and
21 focused deterrence strategies, that seek to interrupt the cycles of violence,
22 victimization, and retaliation in order to reduce the incidence of firearm violence.
23 These initiatives must be primarily focused on providing violence intervention
24 services and support to the small segment of the population that is identified as
25 having the highest risk of perpetrating or being victimized by firearm violence.

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1 (c) Grants under this subsection shall be awarded on a competitive basis to
2 counties and cities that are disproportionately affected by violence and to
3 community-based organizations that serve the residents of those counties or cities.
4 Where appropriate, 2 or more counties or cities may submit joint applications to
5 provide more comprehensive solutions.

6 (d) An applicant for a grant under this subsection shall submit to the office on
7 a form provided by the office a proposal that includes all of the following:

8 1. A problem statement describing the issue or concern followed by a list of
9 objectives and activities that describe how the applicant proposes to use the grant
10 to implement an evidence-based violence reduction initiative in accordance with this
11 subsection.

12 2. A statement describing how the applicant proposes to use the grant to
13 enhance the local coordination of existing violence prevention and intervention
14 programs and minimize duplication of services.

15 (e) In awarding grants under this subsection, the office shall give preference
16 to applicants whose grant proposals demonstrate to the greatest extent all of the
17 following:

18 1. A substantial likelihood of reducing violence in the applicant's community
19 without contributing to mass incarceration.

20 2. Partnership with one or more entities, including community-based
21 organizations and public agencies, provided that at least one applicant is a
22 community-based organization.

23 3. Leadership reflective of the demographics of the population being served.

24 4. Experience working with formerly incarcerated or otherwise
25 justice-involved individuals.

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1 5. Experience working with persons who are currently or were formerly
2 involved with interpersonal violence.

3 (f) Each county or city that receives a grant under this subsection shall
4 distribute not less than one-half of the grant funds awarded to one or more of any
5 of the following entities:

6 1. Community-based organizations.

7 2. Indian tribes and tribal organizations.

8 3. Public agencies or departments that are primarily dedicated to community
9 safety or gun violence prevention.

10 (g) The office shall form a grant selection advisory committee that shall include
11 persons who have been affected by violence, formerly incarcerated persons, and
12 persons with direct experience in implementing evidence-based violence reduction
13 initiatives, including initiatives that incorporate public health, community-based,
14 or ecological systems approaches.

15 (h) A grantee under this subsection shall report to the office, on a form provided
16 by the office and in intervals prescribed by the office, the grantee's progress in
17 achieving the stated grant objectives.

18 (i) The office may contract with an entity that has expertise in evaluating
19 community-based, grant-funded programs to evaluate a grant proposal's
20 effectiveness, provided that all of the following are satisfied:

21 1. The entity uses both qualitative and quantitative methods in evaluating the
22 grant proposal.

23 2. To the extent practicable, the entity uses participatory action research
24 methods or other research methods that incorporate subject engagement.

25 **SECTION 5. Effective date.**

