
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 696 Session of
2021

INTRODUCED BY BULLOCK, CEPHAS, A. BROWN, SANCHEZ, ZABEL,
FRANKEL, N. NELSON, LEE, D. WILLIAMS, KINSEY, HANBIDGE,
KIRKLAND, McNEILL, GALLOWAY, BRIGGS, SCHWEYER, ISAACSON,
BURGOS, SCHLOSSBERG, KENYATTA, HILL-EVANS, CIRESI, A. DAVIS,
WEBSTER, DEASY, FREEMAN, KINKEAD AND SIMS, MARCH 1, 2021

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY, MARCH 1, 2021

AN ACT

1 Amending Title 35 (Health and Safety) of the Pennsylvania
2 Consolidated Statutes, in public safety, providing for
3 violence intervention and prevention; establishing the
4 Community-Based Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP)
5 Grant Program; imposing duties on the Pennsylvania Commission
6 on Crime and Delinquency; and making appropriations.

7 This act may be referred to as the Break the Cycle of
8 Violence Act.

9 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
10 hereby enacts as follows:

11 Section 1. Part III of Title 35 of the Pennsylvania
12 Consolidated Statutes is amended by adding a chapter to read:

13 CHAPTER 59

14 VIOLENCE INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION

15 Sec.

16 5901. Scope of chapter.

17 5902. Definitions.

18 5903. Grant program.

- 1 5904. Advisory committee.
- 2 5905. Application forms.
- 3 5906. Award of program grants.
- 4 5907. Appropriations.
- 5 5908. Administrative costs.
- 6 5909. Reports.
- 7 § 5901. Scope of chapter.

8 This chapter relates to violence intervention and prevention.

9 § 5902. Definitions.

10 The following words and phrases when used in this chapter
11 shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
12 context clearly indicates otherwise:

13 "Commission." The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and
14 Delinquency.

15 "Disproportionately impacted by violence." Having any of the
16 following characteristics of a municipality or community:

17 (1) Experiencing 10 or more homicides per year for at
18 least two of the three years preceding the submission of a
19 program grant application.

20 (2) Demonstrating a unique and compelling need for
21 additional resources to address gun and group-related
22 violence within the municipality or community.

23 "Hospital-based violence intervention program." A violence
24 intervention program that is operated by a hospital or an
25 individual or entity in collaboration with a hospital and
26 provides intensive counseling, case management and social
27 services to individuals who are recovering from injuries
28 resulting from violence.

29 "Municipality." A city, borough, incorporated town, township
30 or home rule municipality.

1 "Program." The Community-Based Violence Intervention and
2 Prevention (VIP) Grant Program established under section 5903(a)
3 (relating to grant program).

4 § 5903. Grant program.

5 (a) Establishment.--The Community-Based Violence
6 Intervention and Prevention (VIP) Grant Program is established
7 within the commission.

8 (b) Purpose.--The purpose of the program is to award grants
9 to improve public health and safety in municipalities and
10 communities that are disproportionately impacted by violence by
11 supporting, expanding and replicating effective community-based
12 violence reduction initiatives through strategies that:

13 (1) Include, but are not limited to, hospital-based
14 violence intervention, evidence-based street outreach and
15 focused deterrence programs.

16 (2) Have demonstrated effectiveness at reducing gun or
17 group-related violence without contributing to mass
18 incarceration.

19 (3) Are primarily focused on providing community-based
20 violence intervention services to the relatively small number
21 of individuals within a program grantee's municipality or
22 community who are identified as being at the highest risk of
23 perpetrating or being victimized by violence in the near
24 future.

25 (c) Administration.--The commission shall administer the
26 program.

27 (d) Public notice.--The commission shall provide information
28 regarding the availability and award of program grant money on
29 the commission's publicly accessible Internet website.

30 § 5904. Advisory committee.

1 The commission shall form an odd-numbered grant selection
2 advisory committee that includes, but is not limited to, the
3 following:

4 (1) Individuals who have been personally impacted by
5 violence.

6 (2) Individuals with experience implementing community-
7 based violence reduction initiatives.

8 (3) At least three members of the Department of Health's
9 Office of Health Equity Advisory Committee.

10 (4) A public health expert from a university in this
11 Commonwealth.

12 § 5905. Application forms.

13 The commission shall develop annual grant application forms
14 for any municipality or community-based organization serving a
15 municipality that seeks a program grant. At a minimum, the forms
16 shall contain the following information:

17 (1) The name, address and contact information of the
18 municipality or community-based organization.

19 (2) The amount of program grant money requested.

20 (3) The proposed use for the program grant money
21 requested, including clearly defined and measurable
22 objectives for the program grant money and the anticipated
23 number of individuals to be served.

24 (4) A statement describing how the municipality or
25 community-based organization proposes to use the program
26 grant money to implement a community-based violence reduction
27 initiative in accordance with the strategies described in
28 section 5903(b) (relating to grant program).

29 (5) A statement describing how the municipality or
30 community-based organization proposes to use the program

1 grant money to enhance coordination with relevant
2 stakeholders or existing violence prevention and intervention
3 programs and service providers in the municipality or
4 community, if any, to achieve maximum impact and minimize
5 duplication of services.

6 (6) Evidence indicating that the proposed violence
7 reduction initiative would likely reduce the incidence of gun
8 and group-related violence.

9 (7) Any other information that the commission deems
10 necessary and appropriate.

11 § 5906. Award of program grants.

12 (a) Review.--After review of the information provided under
13 each applicant's submitted application form, the commission
14 shall determine whether to award grant program money to the
15 applicant and, if so, the amount of the program grant money
16 awarded.

17 (b) Competitive nature of awards.--Program grants shall be
18 awarded on a competitive basis to municipalities and community-
19 based organizations that are disproportionately impacted by
20 violence.

21 (c) Considerations.--In awarding program grants, the
22 commission shall:

23 (1) Give preference to applicants whose grant proposals
24 demonstrate the greatest likelihood of reducing the number of
25 persons victimized by gun and group-related violence in their
26 community, without contributing to mass incarceration.

27 (2) Consider the geographic and demographic diversity of
28 the applicants.

29 (3) Consider the scope of the applicant's proposal and
30 the applicant's demonstrated need for additional resources to

1 effectively reduce gun and group-related violence in the
2 affected municipality or community.

3 (d) Cash or in-kind match.--

4 (1) Subject to paragraph (2), each municipality that
5 receives a program grant shall commit a cash or in-kind match
6 that is equivalent to 25% of the cost of the program grant
7 awarded under this chapter.

8 (2) The commission may waive the requirement under
9 paragraph (1) for good cause.

10 (e) Distribution by municipality.--Each municipality that
11 receives a program grant shall distribute at least 50% of the
12 program grant money to:

13 (1) one or more community-based organizations within the
14 municipality or community;

15 (2) a public agency or department that is not a law
16 enforcement agency but is primarily dedicated to community
17 safety or violence prevention within the municipality or
18 community; or

19 (3) a combination of the entities specified under
20 paragraphs (1) and (2).

21 (f) Duration.--Subject to the availability of State funding,
22 a program grant shall be awarded for a duration of at least
23 three years.

24 (g) Notice.--

25 (1) The commission shall provide written notice to the
26 applicant of the award or denial of the program grant money.

27 (2) Notice of the award of program grant money shall
28 include the amount of the program grant money awarded and any
29 conditions or restrictions on the use of the program grant
30 money.

1 (3) Notice of the denial of all or part of the program
2 grant money requested shall include the reasons for the full
3 or partial denial.

4 § 5907. Appropriations.

5 In addition to any amounts otherwise authorized to be
6 appropriated or made available to the commission, the sum of
7 \$10,000,000 is hereby appropriated for each of the three fiscal
8 years following the effective date of this section to provide
9 program grants.

10 § 5908. Administrative costs.

11 The commission may use up to 8% of the money appropriated for
12 program grants each year for the costs of administering the
13 program, which may include the costs relating to the employment
14 of personnel, providing technical assistance to grantees, the
15 reimbursement of travel expenses and evaluating the impact of
16 initiatives supported by the grants.

17 § 5909. Reports.

18 Upon completion of each grant cycle, the commission shall
19 prepare and submit a report to the General Assembly regarding
20 the impact of violence reduction initiatives supported by the
21 program in each city that was awarded a grant and for all
22 grantees in this Commonwealth combined.

23 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.