

SENATE BILL 1649

By Campbell

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4;
Title 38; Title 39 and Title 40, relative to the
Tennessee violence intervention program.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 38, is amended by adding the following
as a new chapter:

38-15-101.

(a) The Tennessee violence intervention program is established within the
department of finance and administration's office of criminal justice programs.

(b) The purpose of the program is to invest in effective, evidence-based violence
reduction initiatives focused on the highest-risk individuals in communities
disproportionately impacted by community violence.

(c) Specifically, the director of the office of criminal justice programs shall
establish, advertise, and administer grants through the Tennessee violence intervention
program, conduct program evaluations to determine the effectiveness of the violence
intervention programs, submit and post reports to provide transparency regarding the
effectiveness of the programs, and hold public forums to gather community input
regarding the programs.

(d) As used in this part, "office" means the department of finance and
administration's office of criminal justice programs.

38-15-102.

(a) The office shall award funds from the Tennessee violence intervention
program on a competitive basis to municipalities, not-for-profit health agencies, law

enforcement agencies, and nonprofit organizations that serve communities with disproportionately high rates and numbers of homicides and other incidents of violent crime, as determined by the office. The grants must be used to:

(1) Implement, expand, or enhance the coordination between evidence-based violence reduction initiatives, such as hospital-based violence intervention programs, street outreach programs, and focused deterrence strategies, that have demonstrated effectiveness at reducing rates of homicides and other incidents of violent crime via the provision of targeted services to victims affected by crime or violence;

(2) Support the development and delivery of intervention-based strategies by entities that provide targeted services to individuals who are victims affected by crime or violence and are at risk of being victimized by or engaging in violence, in order to interrupt cycles of violence, reinjury, and retaliation;

(3) Support initiatives that primarily target a reduction of violence among individuals who are victims affected by crime or violence and have been identified as having the highest risk of perpetrating or being victimized again by violence in the near future;

(4) Ensure that a sufficient portion of the available grant funding is provided to support programs directed at providing public awareness, outreach, assistance, or intervention services to victims of violent crime offered at community locations, such as hospitals, where individuals may be encountered in the immediate aftermath of a violent incident; and

(5) Conduct annual assessments of the needs of communities demonstrably affected by violent crime to ensure program funds are used effectively.

(b) In awarding grants, the office shall prioritize the following applicants:

(1) A not-for-profit hospital or a not-for-profit entity operating within, on behalf of, or in partnership with a hospital that operates or is applying to operate a hospital-based or hospital-linked violence intervention program that provides services in a municipality that has a disproportionately high rate of violent crime or homicide; or

(2) Applicants operating in areas disproportionately affected by violent crime, and whose proposals demonstrate the greatest likelihood of reducing, through targeted services, the rate and number of homicides and other incidents of violent crime in the community served by the applicant without contributing to mass incarceration.

(c) Applicants may apply either independently or jointly.

(d) The amount of funds awarded to an applicant are not limited to a specific amount and must be commensurate with:

(1) Levels of violent crime in the community served by the applicant;

(2) The scope of the applicant's proposal; and

(3) The applicant's demonstrated need for additional resources to effectively reduce the rate and numbers of homicides and other incidents of violent crime in the community served by the applicant.

(e) A grantee may use the grant awarded to supplement, but not replace, funding that would otherwise be made available to address group and community violence in the grantee's community.

(f) As used in this section, "hospital-based or hospital-linked violence intervention program" means a program that is operated by a not-for-profit hospital, or by a person or entity who is contracted to operate a program within, on behalf of, or in

partnership with a hospital, and that works to end cycles of violence through the provision of intensive counseling, case management, and social services to patients who are recovering from injuries resulting from violence.

38-15-103.

Application for a grant must be made in a manner and form as determined by the department of finance and administration's office of criminal justice programs. A formal notice of availability of funding must be posted prior to the time for acceptance of applications. However, at a minimum, in applying for the grant, the applicant shall provide:

(1) A description of how the applicant proposes to use the grant funds to implement an evidence-based violence reduction initiative pursuant to this part;

(2) A description of how the applicant proposes to use the grant funds to promote or improve coordination among agencies, organizations, and any already-existing violence reduction strategies or programs, in order to minimize duplication of services and achieve maximum impact;

(3) Objective evidence indicating that the applicant's proposed violence reduction initiative would likely reduce rates of homicides and other incidents of violent crime; and

(4) Clearly defined, measurable objectives for the violence reduction initiative.

38-15-104.

The office may use up to eight percent (8%) of the funds appropriated or made available, or such percentage as may be authorized under program guidelines for funding made available to the Tennessee violence intervention program through federal funding sources, for technical assistance and for the costs of implementing and

administering the program, including employment of dedicated grants management and program personnel and annual program evaluation and analysis of the effectiveness of violence reduction initiatives. The office shall make these evaluations available to the public.

38-15-105.

The office shall hold three (3) public hearings annually, with one (1) hearing in each grand division of the state. The public hearings shall provide a forum to receive information on how the public funds are spent, testimony from grant award recipients on the effectiveness of their programs and best practices, and input from the public on whether the initiatives and the grant-funded programs are accomplishing their respective missions. Public input must be used to assess whether the grant-making metrics and process for issuing grants need to be revised.

38-15-106.

The office shall report on the activities of the program annually to the governor, the chief clerks of the senate and house of representatives, and the legislative librarian. The report must include a listing of the grants awarded under the program, descriptions of the initiatives and impact on the communities served through the grants, and other information the office deems appropriate. The report must include:

- (1) A list of all grant applicants and approved grant applicants;
- (2) The amounts awarded to approved grant applicants;
- (3) The amount of matching funds and types of in-kind contributions provided by approved grant applicants; and
- (4) A status report on the activities funded by an approved grant applicant.

38-15-107.

(a) The office may seek money from the federal government, including Victims of Crime Act grants, private foundations, and any other source to fund the initiative created by this part.

(b) Available federal funding under the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (42 U.S.C. § 10601 et seq.), may, to the extent permitted by federal law, be used to award grants for initiatives authorized under this part and to promote the purposes of the Tennessee violence intervention program, which funding shall be in addition to any other funds appropriated, contributed, awarded, or otherwise provided for these purposes. The office may establish or provide for such additional conditions, limitations, and requirements on the Tennessee violence intervention program applicants and grantees as appropriate to promote the purposes of this part and to ensure that any grants relying on federal funding sources or participation are awarded in compliance with federal law.

SECTION 2. This act takes effect July 1, 2024, the public welfare requiring it.