

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2717 Session of
2020

INTRODUCED BY BULLOCK, CEPHAS, SHUSTERMAN, SCHLOSSBERG, SOLOMON,
WEBSTER, KINSEY, HILL-EVANS, HOHENSTEIN, DALEY, FRANKEL,
SAPPEY, DONATUCCI, GALLOWAY, THOMAS, McCLINTON, SCHWEYER,
SANCHEZ, KENYATTA AND A. DAVIS, JULY 30, 2020

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY, JULY 30, 2020

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.

19 5904. Advisory committee.

1 5905. Application forms.
2 5906. Award of program grants.
3 5907. Appropriations.
4 5908. Administrative costs.
5 5909. Reports.

6 § 5901. Scope of chapter.

7 This chapter relates to violence intervention and prevention.

8 § 5902. Definitions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

30 "Program." The Community-Based Violence Intervention and

Prevention (VIP) Grant Program established under section 5903(a)
(relating to grant program).

§ 5903. Grant program.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

§ 5904. Advisory committee.

The commission shall form an odd-numbered grant selection

advisory committee that includes, but is not limited to, the following:

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

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

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

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

§ 5905. Application forms.

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

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

(2) The amount of program grant money requested.

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

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

(5) A statement describing how the municipality or community-based organization proposes to use the program grant money to enhance coordination with relevant

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

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

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

10 § 5906. Award of program grants.

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

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

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

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

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

28 (3) Consider the scope of the applicant's proposal and
29 the applicant's demonstrated need for additional resources to
30 effectively reduce gun and group-related violence in the

affected municipality or community.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(g) Notice.--

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

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

(3) Notice of the denial of all or part of the program

1 grant money requested shall include the reasons for the full
2 or partial denial.

3 \$ 5907. Appropriations.

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

9 \$ 5908. Administrative costs.

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

16 \$ 5909. Reports.

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

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