SENATE, No. 1059

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2024 SESSION

Sponsored by:
Senator LINDA R. GREENSTEIN
District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)
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District 5 (Camden and Gloucester)

Co-Sponsored by:
Senators O'Scanlon, Corrado, McKnight and Johnson

SYNOPSIS

Establishes Law Enforcement Critical Mental Health Assistance Grant Program; appropriates $3 million.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Law and Public Safety Committee with technical review.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/5/2024)

AN ACT establishing the Law Enforcement Critical Mental Health Assistance Grant Program, supplementing Title 30 of the Revised Statutes, and making an appropriation.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. The Legislature finds and declares:

a. Due to the nature of law enforcement work, with its associated risks, danger, and stress, law enforcement officers face a high probability of developing post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental illnesses.

b. Law enforcement officers commonly feel that disclosure of mental illness will result in negative professional consequences up to and including job loss, creating a culture in which officers often do not divulge mental health struggles and do not seek appropriate and necessary treatment.

c. Family members of law enforcement officers often face unique stressors related to their loved ones' employment and may have an elevated need for mental health services.

d. For the safety of law enforcement officers, their families, and the members of the public served by law enforcement, it is critical for there to be systems in place that address mental health and establish an environment in which members of law enforcement and their families feel comfortable seeking mental health services.

2. As used in P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill):

"Family member" means a spouse, domestic partner, child, or parent of, or any other family member related by blood or by law to a law enforcement officer who resides in the same home as the law enforcement officer.

"Law enforcement officer" means a person whose public duties include the power to act as an officer for the detection, apprehension, arrest, and conviction of offenders against the laws of this State.

"Mental health provider" means a psychiatrist, a psychologist, an advanced practice nurse practitioner with a specialty in psychiatric mental health, a clinical social worker, a professional counselor, or a marriage and family therapist who is licensed to provide mental health services pursuant to Title 45 of the Revised Statutes.

3. a. There is hereby established in the Department of Human Services the Law Enforcement Critical Mental Health Assistance Grant Program. The program shall award grants to mental health providers to provide confidential mental health services to law enforcement officers or family members of the law enforcement officers who are in a mental health crisis or suicidal.

b. The Commissioner of Human Services shall develop an application by which a mental health provider may apply for a grant for funding to provide mental health services pursuant to subsection a. of this section. The commissioner shall establish selection criteria for the awarding of grants under the program. Consideration shall be given to the geographical location of mental health providers and the areas where they provide services in order to facilitate patients traveling less than one hour to receive mental health services, to the greatest extent possible. The commissioner shall provide notice of the availability of funding for this program and make the application available on the department's Internet website. Upon receipt of an application, the commissioner shall review the application and, subject to the availability of funds, award a grant to each approved grant applicant.

c. The commissioner shall establish program guidelines for the provision of mental health services pursuant to subsection a. of this section and shall publish a list of approved mental health providers on the department’s Internet website.

4. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Human Services $3 million to fulfill the provisions of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

5. This act shall take effect on the first day of the fourth month next following the date of enactment, except that the commissioner may take any anticipatory administrative action in advance thereof as shall be necessary for the implementation of this act.