

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8470

To authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to make awards to increase or improve access to comprehensive mental and behavioral health services for individuals exposed to violent encounters involving law enforcement personnel, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 21, 2024

Ms. BUSH (for herself, Mr. BOWMAN, Mr. CARSON, Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania, Mrs. RAMIREZ, Ms. TLAIB, and Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Education and the Workforce, and the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to make awards to increase or improve access to comprehensive mental and behavioral health services for individuals exposed to violent encounters involving law enforcement personnel, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Helping Families Heal
3 Act of 2024”.

4 **SEC. 2. HELPING FAMILIES HEAL PROGRAM.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and
6 Human Services (in this section referred to as the “Sec-
7 retary”), acting through the Assistant Secretary for Men-
8 tal Health and Substance Use, shall carry out a program,
9 to be known as the Helping Families Heal Program, con-
10 sisting of awarding grants, contracts, and cooperative
11 agreements to eligible entities to—

12 (1) recruit, hire, train, and dispatch mental
13 health professionals and community health workers
14 to provide comprehensive mental health services to
15 individuals who have suffered traumatic experiences,
16 or are in grief, in bereavement, or at risk of suicide
17 or violence, as a result of—

18 (A) witnessing or experiencing law enforce-
19 ment personnel violence;

20 (B) the death of a family member due to
21 law enforcement personnel violence; or

22 (C) the death of a colleague or neighbor
23 due to law enforcement personnel violence;

24 (2) implement community-based mental health
25 programs that—

1 (A) build awareness of individual, commu-
2 nity, and intergenerational trauma as a result
3 of witnessing or experiencing law enforcement
4 personnel violence;

5 (B) train staff and volunteers to identify,
6 and screen for, signs of trauma exposure, men-
7 tal health disorders, and risk of suicide in the
8 wake of law enforcement personnel violence;

9 (C) incorporate community interventions,
10 family engagement, and intergenerational coun-
11 seling that encourage the development of posi-
12 tive mental health, prevent mental health dis-
13 orders, and diminish the impact of trauma re-
14 sulting from law enforcement personnel vio-
15 lence;

16 (D) facilitate partnerships among families,
17 mental health and substance use disorder pro-
18 viders, family-based mental health and sub-
19 stance use disorder providers, trauma networks,
20 and health care providers (including mental
21 health professionals and community health
22 workers who specialize in pediatric services);
23 and

24 (E) establish mechanisms for individuals
25 who have witnessed or experienced law enforce-

1 ment personnel violence to report incidents of
2 violence or plans to commit violence; or

3 (3) provide technical assistance to community-
4 based organizations regarding the activities de-
5 scribed in paragraphs (1) and (2).

6 (b) DURATION OF AWARDS.—The duration of a
7 grant, contract, or cooperative agreement awarded under
8 subsection (a) shall be no longer than 1 year.

9 (c) ADDITIONAL AWARDS.—Subject to the avail-
10 ability of funds, the Secretary shall make an additional
11 award of grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements
12 under subsection (a) each fiscal year through fiscal year
13 2029 to each recipient of an award under subsection (a)
14 that demonstrates that its award resulted in a substantial
15 increase in the number of individuals provided with mental
16 health services who have witnessed or experienced law en-
17 forcement personnel violence.

18 (d) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants, contracts, and
19 cooperative agreements under this section, the Secretary
20 shall give priority to eligible entities in communities
21 that—

22 (1) have high rates of interaction with law en-
23 forcement personnel for residents;

1 (2) have been or are currently subject to a Fed-
2 eral or State investigation regarding racial bias in
3 the use of force by law enforcement personnel;

4 (3) have high rates of arrest and incarceration
5 of persons with mental illness, intellectual disability,
6 or developmental disability; or

7 (4) commit to providing in-kind contributions
8 from non-Federal sources, or volunteer hours, for in-
9 dividuals served by recipients of awards under this
10 section.

11 (e) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible for a grant, con-
12 tract, or cooperative agreement under subsection (a), an
13 entity shall be—

14 (1) a community-based mental health care or
15 substance use disorder provider, including a public
16 or private mental health entity, health care entity,
17 family-based mental health entity, or trauma net-
18 work; or

19 (2) a community-based organization or non-
20 profit organization as determined appropriate by the
21 Secretary.

22 (f) LIMITATION.—The Secretary may not award any
23 funds under this section to a law enforcement or child pro-
24 tective services entity.

1 (g) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-
2 tion shall be construed to limit the applicability of the reg-
3 ulations under section 264(c) of the Health Insurance
4 Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (42 U.S.C.
5 1320d–2 note) to any patient records developed by covered
6 entities through activities funded through an award under
7 this section.

8 (h) GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION.—The Secretary
9 shall ensure that recipients of grants, contracts, and coop-
10 erative agreements under subsection (a) are distributed
11 equitably among the regions of the country and among
12 urban and rural areas.

13 (i) EVALUATION AND MEASURES OF OUTCOMES.—

14 (1) DEVELOPMENT OF PROCESS.—The Sec-
15 retary shall develop a fiscally appropriate process for
16 evaluating activities carried out pursuant to an
17 award under this section. Such process shall in-
18 clude—

19 (A) the development of guidelines for the
20 submission of program data by grant, contract,
21 and cooperative agreement recipients;

22 (B) the application by such recipients of
23 measures of outcomes developed under para-
24 graph (2) to the programs funded through such
25 awards; and

1 (C) the submission of annual reports by
2 such recipients concerning the effectiveness of
3 programs funded through such awards.

4 (2) MEASURES OF OUTCOMES.—The Secretary
5 shall develop measures of outcomes to be applied by
6 recipients of awards under this section to evaluate
7 the effectiveness of activities funded through such
8 awards.

9 (j) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
10 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
11 \$50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2025 through 2029.

12 **SEC. 3. HEALING FOR STUDENTS PROGRAM.**

13 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and
14 Human Services (in this section referred to as the “Sec-
15 retary”), acting through the Assistant Secretary for Men-
16 tal Health and Substance Use, shall carry out a program,
17 to be known as the Healing for Students Program, con-
18 sisting of awarding grants, contracts, or cooperative agree-
19 ments to eligible entities to—

20 (1) recruit, hire, train, and dispatch mental
21 health professionals and community health workers
22 to provide comprehensive mental health services to
23 students and school personnel who have suffered
24 traumatic experiences, or are in grief, in bereave-

1 ment, or at risk of suicide or violence, as a result
2 of—

3 (A) witnessing or experiencing law enforce-
4 ment personnel violence;

5 (B) the death of a family member due to
6 law enforcement personnel violence; or

7 (C) the death of a colleague or neighbor
8 due to law enforcement personnel violence;

9 (2) implement school-based mental health pro-
10 grams that—

11 (A) build awareness of individual, commu-
12 nity, and intergenerational trauma as a result
13 of witnessing or experiencing law enforcement
14 personnel violence;

15 (B) train school personnel to identify, and
16 screen for, signs of trauma exposure, mental
17 health disorders, and risk of suicide in the wake
18 of law enforcement personnel violence;

19 (C) incorporate family engagement, stu-
20 dent supports, and intergenerational counseling
21 that encourage the development of positive
22 mental health, prevent mental health disorders,
23 and diminish the impact of trauma resulting
24 from law enforcement personnel violence;

1 (D) educate students and their families on
2 the stigma surrounding mental health;

3 (E) facilitate partnerships among families,
4 students, mental health and substance use dis-
5 order providers, family-based mental health and
6 substance use disorder providers, trauma net-
7 works, and health care providers (including
8 mental health professionals and community
9 health workers who specialize in pediatric serv-
10 ices); and

11 (F) establish mechanisms for students and
12 school personnel who have witnessed or experi-
13 enced law enforcement personnel violence to re-
14 port incidents of violence or plans to commit vi-
15 olence; or

16 (3) in the case of a grantee that is a local edu-
17 cational agency or a consortium of local educational
18 agencies, provide technical assistance to schools re-
19 garding the activities described in paragraphs (1)
20 and (2).

21 (b) DURATION OF AWARDS.—The duration of a
22 grant, contract, or cooperative agreement awarded under
23 subsection (a) shall be no longer than 1 year.

24 (c) ADDITIONAL AWARDS.—Subject to the avail-
25 ability of funds, the Secretary shall make an additional

1 award of grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements
2 under subsection (a) each fiscal year through fiscal year
3 2029 to each recipient of an award under subsection (a)
4 that demonstrates that its award resulted in a substantial
5 increase in the number of individuals provided with mental
6 health services who have witnessed or experienced law en-
7 forcement personnel violence.

8 (d) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants, contracts, and
9 cooperative agreements under this section, the Secretary
10 shall give priority to eligible entities serving communities
11 that—

12 (1) have high rates of interaction with law en-
13 forcement personnel for residents;

14 (2) have been or are currently subject to a Fed-
15 eral or State investigation regarding racial bias in
16 the use of force by law enforcement personnel;

17 (3) have high rates of arrest and incarceration
18 of persons with mental illness, intellectual disability,
19 or developmental disability; or

20 (4) commit to providing in-kind contributions
21 from non-Federal sources, or volunteer hours, for
22 students and school personnel served by recipients of
23 awards under this section.

1 (e) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible for a grant, con-
2 tract, or cooperative agreement under subsection (a), an
3 entity shall be—

4 (1) a local educational agency serving elemen-
5 tary schools and secondary schools;

6 (2) a consortium of such local educational agen-
7 cies; or

8 (3) an elementary school or secondary school.

9 (f) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-
10 tion shall be construed to limit the applicability of the reg-
11 ulations under section 264(c) of the Health Insurance
12 Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (42 U.S.C.
13 1320d–2 note) to any patient records developed by covered
14 entities through activities funded through an award under
15 this section.

16 (g) GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION.—The Secretary
17 shall ensure that recipients of grants, contracts, and coop-
18 erative agreements under subsection (a) are distributed
19 equitably among the regions of the country and among
20 urban and rural areas.

21 (h) EVALUATION AND MEASURES OF OUTCOMES.—

22 (1) DEVELOPMENT OF PROCESS.—The Sec-
23 retary shall develop a fiscally appropriate process for
24 evaluating activities carried out pursuant to an

1 award under this section. Such process shall in-
2 clude—

3 (A) the development of guidelines for the
4 submission of program data by grant, contract,
5 and cooperative agreement recipients;

6 (B) the application by such recipients of
7 measures of outcomes developed under para-
8 graph (2) to the programs funded through such
9 awards; and

10 (C) the submission of annual reports by
11 such recipients concerning the effectiveness of
12 programs funded through such awards.

13 (2) MEASURES OF OUTCOMES.—The Secretary
14 shall develop measures of outcomes to be applied by
15 recipients of awards under this section to evaluate
16 the effectiveness of activities funded through such
17 awards.

18 (i) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the terms “ele-
19 mentary school”, “local educational agency”, and “sec-
20 ondary school” have the meanings given to such terms in
21 section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education
22 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

23 (j) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
24 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
25 \$50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2025 through 2029.

1 **SEC. 4. INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE.**

2 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Health and
3 Human Services, the Secretary of Education, and the At-
4 torney General, acting jointly, shall establish a permanent
5 interagency task force (referred to in this section as the
6 “Task Force”) to coordinate and promote holistic, quali-
7 fied responses to victims of law enforcement personnel vio-
8 lence.

9 (b) MEMBERS.—The Task Force shall be composed
10 of the following members:

11 (1) The Secretary of Health and Human Serv-
12 ices (or the Secretary’s designee).

13 (2) The Secretary of Education (or the Sec-
14 retary’s designee).

15 (3) The Attorney General of the United States
16 (or the Attorney General’s designee).

17 (4) The heads of other Federal departments
18 and agencies (or their designees), as determined nec-
19 cessary by the Secretary of Health and Human Serv-
20 ices.

21 (c) DUTIES.—The Task Force shall—

22 (1) solicit regular and detailed input from
23 stakeholders, including victims of law enforcement
24 personnel violence and their families, students, edu-
25 cators, mental health professionals, community

1 health workers, researchers, experts in infant, child,
2 and youth trauma, and the public;

3 (2) recommend mechanisms for the Department
4 of Health and Human Services, the Department of
5 Education, and the Department of Justice to collect
6 and review statistical data about interactions with
7 law enforcement personnel;

8 (3) identify options for coordinating existing
9 grants that support people who have experienced law
10 enforcement personnel violence;

11 (4) recommend other ways to improve coordina-
12 tion, planning, and communication within and across
13 Federal agencies, offices, and programs, to better
14 serve people who have experienced law enforcement
15 personnel violence; and

16 (5) facilitate ongoing efforts to streamline the
17 application, monitoring, and reporting processes to
18 make Federal funds provided pursuant to awards
19 under this Act and other similar existing grants
20 maximally accessible to small, grassroots organiza-
21 tions that support communities acutely impacted by
22 high rates of law enforcement personnel violence.

23 (d) MEETINGS.—For the purpose of carrying out this
24 section, the Task Force may hold such meetings, and sit

1 and act at such times and places, as the Task Force con-
2 siders appropriate.

3 (e) INFORMATION.—The Task Force may secure di-
4 rectly from any Federal agency such information as may
5 be necessary to enable the Task Force to carry out this
6 section. Upon request of the Chairperson of the Task
7 Force, the head of such agency shall furnish such informa-
8 tion to the Task Force.

9 (f) REPORTS.—Not later than 2 years after the date
10 of the first meeting of the Task Force, and at least once
11 every 2 years thereafter, the Task Force shall—

12 (1) submit to the general public, the heads of
13 relevant Federal departments and agencies other
14 than those represented on the Task Force, the Com-
15 mittee on Energy and Commerce, the Committee on
16 the Judiciary, and the Committee on Education and
17 the Workforce of the House of Representatives, and
18 the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and
19 Pensions and the Committee on the Judiciary of the
20 Senate, a report containing all of the findings and
21 recommendations required under this section; and

22 (2) make such report available online in an ac-
23 cessible format.

24 **SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS.**

25 In this Act:

1 (1) COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER.—The term
2 “community health worker” means a frontline public
3 health worker who—

4 (A) is a trusted member of, or has a close
5 understanding of, the community served, ena-
6 bling the worker to serve as a link between
7 health and social services and the community,
8 so as to facilitate access to services and improve
9 the quality and cultural competence of service
10 delivery; and

11 (B) builds individual and community ca-
12 pacity by increasing health knowledge and self-
13 sufficiency through a range of activities such as
14 outreach, community education, informal coun-
15 seling, social support, and advocaey.

16 (2) INTERACTION WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT
17 PERSONNEL.—The term “interaction with law en-
18 forcement personnel” means an interaction in
19 which—

20 (A) a law enforcement agent uses force or
21 threatens to use force;

22 (B) an individual is stopped by a law en-
23 forcement agent while such individual is—

24 (i) driving a motor vehicle; or

25 (ii) otherwise in public;

1 (C) an individual is a passenger in a motor
2 vehicle that is stopped by a law enforcement
3 agent;

4 (D) an individual is arrested; or

5 (E) an individual is otherwise stopped or
6 approached by a law enforcement agent.

7 (3) LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL VIO-
8 LENCE.—The term “law enforcement personnel vio-
9 lence” means a situation where a law enforcement
10 agent uses force.

11 (4) USE FORCE; USES FORCE.—The terms “use
12 force” and “uses force” include pushing, grabbing,
13 handcuffing, hitting, kicking, using chemical or pep-
14 per spray, using an electroshock weapon, pointing or
15 shooting a gun, engaging in sexual assault, and
16 other acts that can cause bodily harm.

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