

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1566

To provide grants to enable nonprofit disability organizations to develop training programs that support safe interactions between law enforcement officers and individuals with disabilities and older individuals.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 11, 2021

Mr. CASEY (for himself, Mr. MORAN, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To provide grants to enable nonprofit disability organizations to develop training programs that support safe interactions between law enforcement officers and individuals with disabilities and older individuals.

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

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Safe Interactions Act
5 of 2021”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Individuals with disabilities are 2.5 times
2 more likely to be victims of violent crime.

3 (2) Individuals with disabilities are 3 times
4 more likely to be victims of a serious crime.

5 (3) Individuals with disabilities make up be-
6 tween one-third and one-half of all individuals killed
7 by law enforcement officers.

8 **SEC. 3. PURPOSE.**

9 The purposes of this Act are to—

10 (1) authorize the Secretary to award competi-
11 tive grants to nonprofit disability organizations to
12 administer enhanced training programs to law en-
13 forcement officers who may encounter or provide
14 services to covered individuals, including—

15 (A) individuals with mental health disabil-
16 ities, including schizophrenia;

17 (B) individuals who are deaf, deaf-blind,
18 hard of hearing, or blind, are autistic, or have
19 other intellectual or developmental disabilities;

20 (C) older individuals with dementia or
21 other cognitive impairments; or

22 (D) individuals with any other disabilities
23 or chronic health condition;

24 (2) support, not replace, other specialized law
25 enforcement officer training; and

1 (3)(A) increase the awareness, knowledge, and
2 understanding of law enforcement officers about cov-
3 ered individuals and their unique needs and applica-
4 ble Federal civil rights laws;

5 (B) reduce incidences of violence between law
6 enforcement officers and covered individuals;

7 (C) expand the knowledge of law enforcement
8 officers, in areas such as the signs of disabilities,
9 identifying people with disabilities, communicating
10 with people with disabilities, and effective ways to
11 approach covered individuals to minimize situations
12 of risk to—

13 (i) those individuals; and

14 (ii) the law enforcement officers who inter-
15 vene or provide services to those individuals;
16 and

17 (D) increase the knowledge of law enforcement
18 officers of community resources available for covered
19 individuals to ultimately limit interactions with law
20 enforcement officers.

21 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

22 In this Act:

23 (1) COVERED GRANT.—The term “covered
24 grant” means a grant awarded under section 5(a).

1 (2) COVERED INDIVIDUAL.—The term “covered
2 individual” means—

3 (A) an older individual; or

4 (B) an individual with a disability.

5 (3) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-
6 ty” means a nonprofit disability organization that
7 has formed a partnership with a law enforcement
8 agency or a consortium of law enforcement agencies
9 to administer enhanced training programs to law en-
10 forcement officers of the agency or agencies on how
11 to interact with covered individuals.

12 (4) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term “Indian Tribe”
13 has the meaning given the term “Indian tribe” in
14 section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Edu-
15 cation Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

16 (5) INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY.—The term
17 “individual with a disability” means any individual
18 who has a disability, as defined in section 3 of the
19 Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C.
20 12102).

21 (6) INITIAL TRAINING PROGRAM.—The term
22 “initial training program” means a mandatory train-
23 ing program offered to new law enforcement officers
24 during their orientation under section 5(d)(1)(A).

1 (7) LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER.—The term
2 “law enforcement officer” means any officer, agent,
3 or employee of a State, political subdivision of a
4 State, or Indian Tribe—

5 (A) authorized by law or by a government
6 agency to engage in or supervise the prevention,
7 detection, or investigation of any violation of
8 criminal law; or

9 (B) authorized by law to supervise sen-
10 tenced criminal offenders.

11 (8) NONPROFIT DISABILITY ORGANIZATION.—
12 The term “nonprofit disability organization” means
13 a nonprofit organization—

14 (A) that serves covered individuals; and

15 (B)(i) that is operated by a board of which
16 the majority of members are covered individ-
17 uals;

18 (ii) that has an advisory panel of which the
19 majority of members are covered individuals; or

20 (iii) the majority of the employees of which
21 are covered individuals.

22 (9) OLDER INDIVIDUAL.—The term “older indi-
23 vidual” has the meaning given the term in section
24 102 of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C.
25 3002).

1 (10) PARTNER ACADEMY.—The term “partner
2 academy”, with respect to an eligible entity that re-
3 ceives a covered grant, means a law enforcement
4 training academy with which the eligible entity part-
5 ners to administer an initial training program, as
6 described in section 5(b)(1).

7 (11) PARTNER AGENCY.—The term “partner
8 agency”, with respect to an eligible entity that re-
9 ceives a covered grant, means the law enforcement
10 agency with which the eligible entity partners, or
11 that is a member of a consortium with which the eli-
12 gible entity partners, to administer enhanced train-
13 ing programs to law enforcement officers of the
14 agency on how to interact with covered individuals.

15 (12) REFRESHER TRAINING PROGRAM.—The
16 term “refresher training program” means a training
17 program offered to existing law enforcement officers
18 under section 5(d)(1)(B).

19 (13) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary”
20 means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

21 **SEC. 5. GRANT PROGRAM.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall award com-
23 petitive grants to nonprofit disability organizations to ad-
24 minister enhanced training programs to law enforcement

1 officers who may encounter or provide services to covered
2 individuals.

3 (b) APPLICATION.—An eligible entity seeking a cov-
4 ered grant shall submit to the Secretary an application
5 that—

6 (1)(A) identifies a law enforcement training
7 academy with which the eligible entity will partner
8 to administer an initial training program; and

9 (B) includes a memorandum of understanding
10 entered into between the eligible entity and the law
11 enforcement training academy;

12 (2) describes the training program curriculum,
13 which shall include training on how to interact with,
14 identify, approach, and communicate with covered
15 individuals that is provided, as of the date of sub-
16 mission of the application—

17 (A) by the partner academy to new law en-
18 forcement officers; or

19 (B) by any partner agency to existing law
20 enforcement officers;

21 (3) describes the learning objectives of the
22 training programs that the eligible entity will admin-
23 ister using the grant;

24 (4) describes the activities that will be carried
25 out under the grant;

1 (5) includes a timeline of the activities de-
2 scribed in paragraph (4); and

3 (6) demonstrates expertise in training related to
4 covered individuals.

5 (c) PREFERENCES.—In awarding covered grants, the
6 Secretary shall ensure—

7 (1) geographic diversity of grant recipients, in-
8 cluding grant recipients that serve rural localities;
9 and

10 (2) that the training funded by the grant is
11 provided to multiple levels of law enforcement agen-
12 cies, including local, county, State, and Tribal agen-
13 cies.

14 (d) USE OF FUNDS.—

15 (1) MANDATORY USES.—An eligible entity that
16 receives a covered grant shall use the grant funds
17 to—

18 (A) modify the training provided by the
19 partner academy to new law enforcement offi-
20 cers of each partner agency so that the acad-
21 emy provides not fewer than 8 hours of training
22 on topics such as how to interact with, identify,
23 approach, and communicate with covered indi-
24 viduals and applicable Federal civil rights laws,

1 including not fewer than 4 hours of interactive
2 learning taught by covered individuals; and

3 (B) develop and implement an enhanced
4 training program for existing law enforcement
5 officers of each partner agency on safe, effec-
6 tive, and respectful interactions with covered in-
7 dividuals—

8 (i) that includes—

9 (I) awareness of and education
10 about covered individuals, including—

11 (aa) individuals with mental
12 health disabilities, including
13 schizophrenia;

14 (bb) individuals who are
15 deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing,
16 or blind, are autistic, or have
17 other intellectual or develop-
18 mental disabilities;

19 (cc) older individuals with
20 dementia or other cognitive im-
21 pairments; and

22 (dd) individuals with any
23 other disabilities or chronic
24 health condition;

1 (II) escalation avoidance and de-
 2 escalation techniques to be used when
 3 interacting with covered individuals,
 4 including procedures a law enforce-
 5 ment officer should follow to ensure
 6 the health and safety of a covered in-
 7 dividual; and

8 (III) communication strategies to
 9 be used when interacting with covered
 10 individuals, including individuals who
 11 do not use speech to communicate;

12 (ii) that utilizes—

13 (I) instructors who are covered
 14 individuals; or

15 (II) guest instructors or speakers
 16 who are covered individuals; and

17 (iii) in which each law enforcement of-
 18 ficer participates not less frequently than 4
 19 hours every year.

20 (2) OPTIONAL USES.—An eligible entity that re-
 21 ceives a covered grant may use the grant funds to—

22 (A) expand an existing training program
 23 regarding topics such as interacting with, iden-
 24 tifying, approaching, and communicating with
 25 covered individuals that was provided to law en-

1 forcement officers by a nonprofit disability or-
2 ganization in conjunction with the partner
3 academy or a partner agency before the eligible
4 entity received the grant;

5 (B) reimburse staff members of the eligible
6 entity for mileage and travel time expended to
7 attend an initial training program or refresher
8 training program occurring in person or online;

9 (C) develop a model of training that uti-
10 lizes volunteer instructors, except that the eligi-
11 ble entity shall pay any instructor, including a
12 guest instructor, who is a covered individual;

13 (D) acquire a computer system or software
14 needed for the training programs; or

15 (E) support the paid participation of indi-
16 viduals with disabilities and their family mem-
17 bers as advisors.

18 (e) SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.—An eligible enti-
19 ty that receives a covered grant shall use the grant funds
20 to supplement, and not supplant, any funds that would,
21 in the absence of the grant funds, be made available from
22 a State, political subdivision of a State, or Indian Tribe
23 for the activities described in subsection (d).

24 (f) ADVISORY COUNCIL.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity that re-
2 ceives a covered grant shall establish an advisory
3 council composed of 15 members to advise the eligi-
4 ble entity on activities carried out using the grant.

5 (2) MEMBERSHIP.—An advisory council estab-
6 lished under paragraph (1) shall—

7 (A) be composed of—

8 (i) 1 representative of the eligible en-
9 tity who is a covered individual and shall
10 serve as chair of the advisory council;

11 (ii) 1 representative of the State law
12 enforcement training academy or law en-
13 forcement agency for the State that the eli-
14 gible entity serves, who shall serve as vice
15 chair of the advisory council;

16 (iii) 3 representatives of community-
17 based organizations that support individ-
18 uals with disabilities, not fewer than 2 of
19 whom have a disability;

20 (iv) 2 representatives of community-
21 based organizations that support older
22 adults;

23 (v) 2 State officials or their designees;

24 (vi) 1 representative of an organiza-
25 tion providing victim services;

1 (vii) 1 representative of a State public
2 safety agency;

3 (viii) 3 members of the public with
4 knowledge of individuals with disabilities
5 and older adults with cognitive impair-
6 ment, including not fewer than 2 self-advo-
7 cates or family members of a covered indi-
8 vidual; and

9 (ix) 1 active local or State law en-
10 forcement officer representing a labor or
11 representative organization; and

12 (B) include a majority of representation
13 from racial and ethnic minority communities.

14 (3) DUTIES.—An advisory council established
15 under paragraph (1) shall—

16 (A) advise the eligible entity and provide
17 general oversight of grant activities carried out
18 by the eligible entity, including development of
19 the training curriculum and implementation of
20 the training programs; and

21 (B) provide the advisory council with rec-
22 ommendations for the sustainability and expan-
23 sion of the training programs, such as the de-
24 velopment of a train-the-trainer model.

25 (g) ANNUAL REPORT.—

1 (1) REPORT TO SECRETARY BY ELIGIBLE ENTI-
2 TIES.—Not later than 1 year after receiving a cov-
3 ered grant, and each year thereafter for the duration
4 of the grant period, an eligible entity that receives
5 a covered grant shall submit the following informa-
6 tion to the Secretary with respect to the preceding
7 year:

8 (A) The number of individuals who bene-
9 fitted from the training programs provided by
10 the eligible entity using grant funds, includ-
11 ing—

12 (i) the number of individuals who
13 were trained through the training pro-
14 grams, including the total number of new
15 law enforcement officers who participated
16 in the initial training program and existing
17 law enforcement officers who participated
18 in the refresher training program; and

19 (ii) the estimated number of individ-
20 uals who were impacted by the training
21 programs.

22 (B) Demographic data, including age, sex,
23 and race, for the law enforcement officers who
24 received the training.

1 (C) The number of partner agencies that
2 participated in the training programs.

3 (D) Each partner law enforcement agency,
4 including the city and State in which the head-
5 quarters and each local office of the agency are
6 located, and the result of that partnership.

7 (E) Any recommendations for improving
8 the grant program carried out under this Act.

9 (2) REPORT TO CONGRESS AND THE ATTORNEY
10 GENERAL BY THE SECRETARY.—Not later than 2
11 years after the date of enactment of this Act, and
12 each year thereafter, the Secretary shall submit a re-
13 port on the grant program carried out under this
14 Act, with respect to the preceding year, to—

15 (A) the Attorney General;

16 (B) the Committee on the Judiciary of the
17 Senate;

18 (C) the Committee on Appropriations of
19 the Senate;

20 (D) the Special Committee on Aging of the
21 Senate;

22 (E) the Committee on the Judiciary of the
23 House of Representatives; and

24 (F) the Committee on Appropriations of
25 the House of Representatives.

1 (h) EVALUATION.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall use not
3 more than 2 percent of the amounts made available
4 under section 6 for administrative purposes and for
5 an evaluation of the grant program carried out
6 under this Act.

7 (2) INDEPENDENT EVALUATOR.—The Secretary
8 shall enter into a contract with a third-party entity
9 that is unrelated to any recipient of a covered grant
10 to carry out the evaluation under paragraph (1).

11 (3) CONTENTS.—In carrying out the evaluation
12 under paragraph (1), the third-party entity con-
13 tracted under paragraph (2) shall report to the Sec-
14 retary and the Attorney General on—

15 (A) the demographic characteristics of the
16 population served by the training conducted by
17 eligible entities using covered grants; and

18 (B) any change in the occurrence of vio-
19 lence in the communities served by training de-
20 scribed in subparagraph (A).

21 **SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

22 There is authorized to be appropriated \$100,000,000
23 for each of fiscal years 2022 through 2025 to carry out
24 this Act.

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