

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4987

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

DECEMBER 9, 2020

Mr. CASEY introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

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 2020”.

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 purpose of this Act is to—

10 (1) authorize the Attorney General to award
11 competitive grants to nonprofit disability organiza-
12 tions to administer enhanced training programs to
13 law enforcement officers who may encounter or pro-
14 vide services to covered individuals, including—

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

17 (B) individuals who are deaf, hard of hear-
18 ing, or blind, are autistic, or have other intellec-
19 tual or developmental disabilities;

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

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

1 (E) support, not replace, other specialized
 2 law enforcement officer training, such as crisis
 3 intervention team training; and

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

8 (B) reduce incidences of violence between law
 9 enforcement officers and covered individuals;

10 (C) expand the knowledge of law enforcement
 11 officers of the signs of disabilities and effective ways
 12 to approach covered individuals to minimize situa-
 13 tions of risk to—

14 (i) those individuals; and

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

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

22 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

23 In this Act:

24 (1) COVERED GRANT.—The term “covered
 25 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 training program
23 offered to new law enforcement officers under sec-
24 tion 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 **SEC. 5. GRANT PROGRAM.**

20 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General shall award
21 competitive grants to nonprofit disability organizations to
22 administer enhanced training programs to law enforce-
23 ment officers who may encounter or provide services to
24 covered individuals.

1 (b) APPLICATION.—An eligible entity seeking a cov-
2 ered grant shall submit to the Attorney General an appli-
3 cation that—

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

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

10 (2) describes any training on how to interact
11 with covered individuals that is provided, as of the
12 date of submission of the application—

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

15 (B) by any partner agency to existing law
16 enforcement officers;

17 (3) describes the learning objectives of the
18 training programs that the eligible entity will admin-
19 ister using the grant;

20 (4) describes the activities that will be carried
21 out under the grant;

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

24 (6) demonstrates expertise in training related to
25 covered individuals.

1 (c) PREFERENCES.—In awarding covered grants, the
2 Attorney General shall ensure—

3 (1) geographic diversity of grant recipients, in-
4 cluding grant recipients that serve rural localities;
5 and

6 (2) that the training funded by the grant is
7 provided to multiple levels of law enforcement agen-
8 cies, including local, county, State, and Tribal agen-
9 cies.

10 (d) USE OF FUNDS.—

11 (1) MANDATORY USES.—An eligible entity that
12 receives a covered grant shall use the grant funds
13 to—

14 (A) modify the training provided by the
15 partner academy to new law enforcement offi-
16 cers of each partner agency so that the acad-
17 emy provides not fewer than 8 hours of training
18 on how to interact with covered individuals and
19 applicable Federal civil rights laws, including
20 not fewer than 4 hours of interactive learning
21 taught by covered individuals; and

22 (B) develop and implement an enhanced
23 training program for existing law enforcement
24 officers of each partner agency on safe, effec-

1 tive, and respectful interactions with covered in-
2 dividuals—

3 (i) that includes—

4 (I) awareness of and education
5 about covered individuals, including—

6 (aa) individuals with mental
7 health disabilities, including
8 schizophrenia;

9 (bb) individuals who are
10 deaf, hard of hearing, or blind,
11 are autistic, or have other intel-
12 lectual or developmental disabil-
13 ities;

14 (cc) older individuals with
15 dementia or other cognitive im-
16 pairments; and

17 (dd) individuals with any
18 other disabilities or chronic
19 health condition;

20 (II) escalation avoidance and de-
21 escalation techniques to be used when
22 interacting with covered individuals,
23 including procedures a law enforce-
24 ment officer should follow to ensure

1 the safety and calmness of a covered
2 individual; and

3 (III) communication strategies to
4 be used when interacting with covered
5 individuals, including individuals who
6 do not use speech to communicate;

7 (ii) that utilizes—

8 (I) instructors who are covered
9 individuals; or

10 (II) guest instructors or speakers
11 who are covered individuals; and

12 (iii) in which each law enforcement of-
13 ficer participates not less frequently than
14 once every 2 years.

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

17 (A) expand an existing training program
18 regarding interaction with covered individuals
19 that was provided to law enforcement officers
20 by a nonprofit disability organization in con-
21 junction with the partner academy or a partner
22 agency before the eligible entity received the
23 grant;

24 (B) reimburse staff members of the eligible
25 entity for mileage and travel time expended to

1 attend an initial training program or refresher
2 training program;

3 (C) develop a model of training that uti-
4 lizes volunteer instructors, except that the eligi-
5 ble entity shall pay any instructor, including a
6 guest instructor, who is a covered individual; or

7 (D) acquire a computer system or software
8 needed for the training programs.

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

15 (f) ADVISORY COUNCIL.—

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

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

22 (A) be composed of—

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

1 (ii) 1 representative of the State law
 2 enforcement training academy or law en-
 3 forcement agency for the State that the eli-
 4 gible entity serves, who shall serve as vice
 5 chair of the advisory council;

6 (iii) 4 representatives of community-
 7 based organizations that support individ-
 8 uals with disabilities, not fewer than 2 of
 9 whom have a disability;

10 (iv) 2 representatives of community-
 11 based organizations that support older
 12 adults;

13 (v) 2 State officials or their designees;

14 (vi) 2 representatives of a State public
 15 safety agency; and

16 (vii) 3 members of the public with
 17 knowledge of individuals with disabilities
 18 and older adults with cognitive impair-
 19 ment, including not fewer than 2 self-advo-
 20 cates or family members of a covered indi-
 21 vidual; and

22 (B) include a majority of representation
 23 from racial and ethnic minority communities.

24 (3) DUTIES.—An advisory council established
 25 under paragraph (1) shall—

1 (A) advise the eligible entity and provide
2 general oversight of grant activities carried out
3 by the eligible entity, including development of
4 the training curriculum and implementation of
5 the training programs; and

6 (B) provide the advisory council with rec-
7 ommendations for the sustainability and expan-
8 sion of the training programs, such as the de-
9 velopment of a train-the-trainer model.

10 (g) ANNUAL REPORT.—

11 (1) REPORT TO ATTORNEY GENERAL BY ELIGI-
12 BLE ENTITIES.—Not later than 1 year after receiv-
13 ing a covered grant, and each year thereafter for the
14 duration of the grant period, an eligible entity that
15 receives a covered grant shall submit the following
16 information to the Attorney General with respect to
17 the preceding year:

18 (A) The number of individuals who bene-
19 fitted from the training programs provided by
20 the eligible entity using grant funds, includ-
21 ing—

22 (i) the number of individuals who
23 were trained through the training pro-
24 grams, including the total number of new

1 law enforcement officers who participated
2 in the initial training program; and

3 (ii) the estimated number of individ-
4 uals who were impacted by the training
5 programs.

6 (B) Demographic data, including age, sex,
7 and race, for the law enforcement officers who
8 received the training.

9 (C) The number of partner agencies that
10 participated in the training programs.

11 (D) Each partner law enforcement agency,
12 including the city and State in which the head-
13 quarters and each local office of the agency are
14 located, and the result of that partnership.

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

17 (2) REPORT TO CONGRESS BY ATTORNEY GEN-
18 ERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of en-
19 actment of this Act, and each year thereafter, the
20 Attorney General shall submit a report on the grant
21 program carried out under this Act, with respect to
22 the preceding year, to—

23 (A) the Committee on the Judiciary of the
24 Senate;

1 (B) the Committee on Appropriations of
2 the Senate;

3 (C) the Special Committee on Aging of the
4 Senate;

5 (D) the Committee on the Judiciary of the
6 House of Representatives; and

7 (E) the Committee on Appropriations of
8 the House of Representatives.

9 (h) EVALUATION.—

10 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General shall
11 use not more than 2 percent of the amounts made
12 available under section 6 for administrative purposes
13 and for an evaluation of the grant program carried
14 out under this Act.

15 (2) INDEPENDENT EVALUATOR.—The Attorney
16 General shall enter into a contract with a third-party
17 entity that is unrelated to any recipient of a covered
18 grant to carry out the evaluation under paragraph
19 (1).

20 (3) CONTENTS.—In carrying out the evaluation
21 under paragraph (1), the third-party entity con-
22 tracted under paragraph (2) shall report to the At-
23 torney General on—

1 (A) the demographic characteristics of the
2 population served by the training conducted by
3 eligible entities using covered grants; and

4 (B) any change in the occurrence of vio-
5 lence in the communities served by training de-
6 scribed in subparagraph (A).

7 **SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

8 There is authorized to be appropriated to the Attor-
9 ney General \$50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2021
10 through 2024 to carry out this Act.

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