

CHAPTER 256-B**OFFICE OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION****§1427. Office of Violence Prevention****(CONTAINS TEXT WITH VARYING EFFECTIVE DATES)**

1. Office established. The Office of Violence Prevention, referred to in this section as "the office," is established within the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention to coordinate and promote effective efforts to reduce violence in the State, including, but not limited to, gun violence, and related trauma and promote research regarding causes of and evidence-based responses to violence, including gun violence.

[PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. FFFF, §1 (NEW).]

2. Director. The commissioner shall appoint the director of the office.

[PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. FFFF, §1 (NEW).]

3. Collaboration. To carry out its duties, the office may collaborate with other state agencies and programs, including, but not limited to, the Address Confidentiality Program established under Title 5, section 90-B; the Victims' Compensation Board established under Title 5, section 3360-A; the Department of Education; the Office of Behavioral Health established under Title 5, section 20011; the Office of the Attorney General; the Department of Public Safety; the Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services established under Title 37-B, section 501; and the violence prevention program within the department.

[PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. FFFF, §1 (NEW).]

4. Awareness and education. The office shall increase the awareness of and educate the general public about laws and resources relating to violence prevention and conduct awareness and education campaigns in accordance with this subsection.

A. The office shall increase the awareness of and educate the general public about state and federal laws and existing resources relating to violence prevention, including:

- (1) The availability of and the process for requesting protection orders, including, but not limited to, protection from abuse orders under Title 19-A, chapter 103 and protection from harassment orders under Title 5, chapter 337-A;
- (2) The process for accessing available mental health and substance use disorder resources and how to refer individuals to needed mental health and substance use disorder treatment services, including suicide prevention services;
- (3) The process for accessing available resources and services for domestic violence prevention;
- (4) The process for reporting a lost or stolen firearm, including reporting requirements in state law;
- (5) The best practices for safe storage of firearms; and
- (6) Safe and responsible gun ownership, including increased awareness of the law and methods of compliance with state and federal law. [PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. FFFF, §1 (NEW).]

B. The office shall conduct awareness and education campaigns and develop and provide educational materials and training resources, including:

- (1) Developing and providing educational materials and training resources to local law enforcement agencies, health care providers and educators to assist those agencies, providers

and educators with educating the public about the laws, available resources and effective violence prevention strategies;

(2) Conducting awareness and education campaigns in a culturally competent way, including by providing materials and resources in multiple languages;

(3) Conducting awareness and education campaigns directed toward gun owners, parents and legal guardians of children and organizations that provide services to individuals and communities disproportionately affected by gun violence; and

(4) At the request of the Director of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, supporting and providing assistance for education campaigns and programs conducted by the department that are related to gun violence, including education campaigns and programs relating to the safe storage of firearms and suicide prevention.

The office may focus the awareness and education campaigns required under this paragraph in communities identified by the office as disproportionately affected by gun violence and use television messaging, radio broadcasts, print media, digital strategies or any other form of messaging considered effective and appropriate by the office to achieve the goals of this section.

[PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. FFFF, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. FFFF, §1 (NEW).]

5. (TEXT EFFECTIVE UNTIL 6/30/27) (TEXT REPEALED 6/30/27) Grant program.

Subject to available funding, the office may establish and administer a grant program to award grants to organizations to conduct community-based violence intervention initiatives that are primarily focused on interrupting cycles of violence, including gun violence, trauma and retaliation by providing culturally competent intervention services.

A. To be eligible for a grant award, an organization must demonstrate the ability to conduct effective community-based violence intervention initiatives that meet the criteria described in this subsection and in rules adopted by the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. The office shall prioritize awarding grants to organizations that conduct violence intervention initiatives with individuals and in communities identified as having the highest imminent risk of perpetrating or being victimized by violence. [PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. FFFF, §1 (NEW).]

B. An initiative conducted with a grant award must use strategies that are evidence-informed and have demonstrated potential for reducing violence without contributing to mass incarceration, such as group violence interventions, evidence-based street and community outreach programs, violence interruption and crisis management programs and individualized wraparound services. To improve the effectiveness of a violence intervention initiative, a grant recipient shall conduct regular evaluations of the initiative, including community input and engagement. [PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. FFFF, §1 (NEW).]

C. The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention shall adopt rules necessary for the administration of the grant program, including grant application procedures, criteria for determining the amount and duration of the grants and reporting requirements for organizations that receive grants. [PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. FFFF, §1 (NEW).]

D. In administering the grant program, the office shall collaborate with stakeholders as needed to ensure equity in the distribution of grants. The office shall consult with stakeholders to develop grant priorities. Stakeholders must include individuals and families affected by violence, organizations with expertise in violence prevention and gun safety and representatives of communities of color. [PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. FFFF, §1 (NEW).]

E. By February 1, 2027, the department shall submit to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human services matters a report that includes the following:

- (1) Information regarding the number of grants awarded and the amount of funding provided to each grant recipient;
- (2) A description of violence intervention initiatives funded, including the number of individuals served and the communities served by each funded initiative; and
- (3) Recommendations regarding the continuation of the grant program and recommendations for any changes to the program. [PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. FFFF, §1 (NEW).]

F. This subsection is repealed June 30, 2027. [PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. FFFF, §1 (NEW).]
[PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. FFFF, §1 (NEW).]

6. Data hub. The office shall create and maintain a data hub of regularly updated and accurate materials and resources as a repository for data, research and statistical information regarding violence in the State, including gun violence. As part of maintaining the data hub, the office shall:

A. Assist researchers who are seeking information regarding violence in the State; [PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. FFFF, §1 (NEW).]

B. Collaborate with researchers, including organizations that conduct gun violence research, to:

- (1) Identify gaps in available data needed to conduct violence prevention research and develop strategies to improve relevant data collection in the State;
- (2) Use existing available research to enhance evidence-based violence prevention tools and resources available to communities in the State; and
- (3) Improve the understanding of the disproportionate barriers to safety from violence by encouraging disaggregation of data by race and ethnicity when research is conducted; and [PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. FFFF, §1 (NEW).]

C. Promote new and relevant research regarding violence prevention and, if possible, make the research accessible to researchers and the public. [PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. FFFF, §1 (NEW).]
[PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. FFFF, §1 (NEW).]

7. Reporting requirements. The office and the department shall provide the following reports relating to the office's work.

A. Annually, by November 30th, the office shall report to the department on the activities it has conducted in the preceding 12 months. The report must include:

- (1) Information regarding awareness and education campaigns conducted by the office;
- (2) Effective violence intervention programs identified by the office;
- (3) Any federal grants or other funding the office applied for and whether the office received those grants or other funds;
- (4) A general summary of new and relevant research included in the office's data hub under subsection 6 and the nature of research assistance provided by the office; and
- (5) Recommendations to enhance the administration and operation of the office and improve the availability of services to reduce violence in the State.

The office shall make the report available on its publicly accessible website or on the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention's publicly accessible website. [PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. FFFF, §1 (NEW).]

B. In its annual report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human services matters pursuant to section 1425, the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention shall include a summary of the office's annual report submitted under paragraph A, including recommendations under paragraph A, subparagraph (5) and instructions for accessing

any new and relevant violence prevention research identified by the office in paragraph A, subparagraph (4). The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention shall make the summary available on its publicly accessible website. [PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. FFFF, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. FFFF, §1 (NEW).]

8. Rules. The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention shall adopt rules to implement this chapter. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are major substantive rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

[PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. FFFF, §1 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. FFFF, §1 (NEW).

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