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SB-1276 The Comprehensive Statewide Domestic Violence Program. (2019-2020)

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Senate Bill No. 1276

CHAPTER 249

An act to amend Section 13823.15 of the Penal Code, relating to domestic violence.

[Approved by Governor September 29, 2020. Filed with Secretary of State September 29, 2020.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1276, Rubio. The Comprehensive Statewide Domestic Violence Program.

Existing law establishes the Comprehensive Statewide Domestic Violence Program in the Office of Emergency Services to, among other things, provide local assistance to existing service providers and to establish a targeted or directed program for the development and establishment of domestic violence services in currently unserved and underserved areas. Existing law requires the Office of Emergency Services to provide financial and technical assistance to local domestic violence centers in implementing specified services. Existing law authorizes domestic violence centers to seek, receive, and make use of any funds that may be available from all public and private sources to augment state funds and requires centers receiving funds to provide cash or an in-kind match of at least 10% of the funds received.

This bill would remove the requirement for centers receiving funds to provide cash or an in-kind match for the funds received. The bill would make related findings and declarations.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares the following:

(a) Current state funding requirements for domestic violence shelter service providers require 10 percent matching funds, using either cash or in-kind matching funds. This state law requirement is in addition to matching fund requirements from federal funding sources.

(b) Domestic violence programs rely on private funding, in-kind donations, or volunteer hours to meet this match requirement. In this time of crisis, flexibility is needed as programs adapt to the changing needs of the survivors, families, and communities they serve.

(c) During the COVID-19 crisis, service providers have been forced to cancel large annual fundraisers, and small business and individual donors who have been impacted by the crisis are unable to donate to the program, reducing the availability of private funds to meet the match requirement.

(d) During the COVID-19 crisis, volunteers are staying home and in-kind donations are dwindling severely. Securing, documenting, and reporting funding matches would be a significant burden for programs who are shifting operations and service

delivery in a crisis. Programs need to focus on keeping survivors and their staff safe and healthy, not on administrative requirements such as matching fund documentation.

(e) In recognition of the need for flexibility during this crisis, the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act signed into law on March 27th, 2020, provided increased funding for domestic violence services through the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) and waived the funding match requirement for these funds.

SEC. 2. Section 13823.15 of the Penal Code is amended to read:

13823.15. (a) The Legislature finds the problem of domestic violence to be of serious and increasing magnitude. The Legislature also finds that existing domestic violence services are underfunded and that some areas of the state are unserved or underserved. Therefore, it is the intent of the Legislature that a goal or purpose of the Office of Emergency Services shall be to ensure that all victims of domestic violence served by the Office of Emergency Services Comprehensive Statewide Domestic Violence Program receive comprehensive, quality services.

(b) There is in the Office of Emergency Services a Comprehensive Statewide Domestic Violence Program. The goals of the program shall be to provide local assistance to existing service providers, to maintain and expand services based on a demonstrated need, and to establish a targeted or directed program for the development and establishment of domestic violence services in currently unserved and underserved areas. The Office of Emergency Services shall provide financial and technical assistance to local domestic violence centers in implementing all of the following services:

- (1) Twenty-four-hour crisis hotlines.
- (2) Counseling.
- (3) Business centers.
- (4) Emergency "safe" homes or shelters for victims and families.
- (5) Emergency food and clothing.
- (6) Emergency response to calls from law enforcement.
- (7) Hospital emergency room protocol and assistance.
- (8) Emergency transportation.
- (9) Supportive peer counseling.
- (10) Counseling for children.
- (11) Court and social service advocacy.
- (12) Legal assistance with temporary restraining orders, devices, and custody disputes.
- (13) Community resource and referral.
- (14) Household establishment assistance.

Priority for financial and technical assistance shall be given to emergency shelter programs and "safe" homes for victims of domestic violence and their children.

(c) (1) Except as provided in subdivision (f), the Office of Emergency Services and the advisory committee established pursuant to Section 13823.16 shall collaboratively administer the Comprehensive Statewide Domestic Violence Program, and shall allocate funds to local centers meeting the criteria for funding. All organizations funded pursuant to this section shall utilize volunteers to the greatest extent possible.

(2) The centers may seek, receive, and make use of any funds which may be available from all public and private sources to augment state funds received pursuant to this section.

(d) The Office of Emergency Services shall conduct statewide training workshops on domestic violence for local centers, law enforcement, and other service providers designed to enhance service programs. The workshops shall be planned in conjunction with practitioners and experts in the field of domestic violence prevention. The workshops shall include a curriculum component on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender specific domestic abuse.

(e) The Office of Emergency Services shall develop and disseminate throughout the state information and materials concerning domestic violence. The Office of Emergency Services shall also establish a resource center for the collection, retention, and

distribution of educational materials related to domestic violence. The Office of Emergency Services may utilize and contract with existing domestic violence technical assistance centers in this state in complying with the requirements of this subdivision.

(f) The funding process for distributing grant awards to domestic violence shelter service providers (DVSSPs) shall be administered by the Office of Emergency Services as follows:

(1) The Office of Emergency Services shall establish each of the following:

(A) The process and standards for determining whether to grant, renew, or deny funding to any DVSSP applying or reapplying for funding under the terms of the program.

(B) For DVSSPs applying for grants under the request for proposal process described in paragraph (2), a system for grading grant applications in relation to the standards established pursuant to subparagraph (A), and an appeal process for applications that are denied. A description of this grading system and appeal process shall be provided to all DVSSPs as part of the application required under the RFP process.

(C) For DVSSPs reapplying for funding under the request for application process described in paragraph (4), a system for grading the performance of DVSSPs in relation to the standards established pursuant to subparagraph (A), and an appeal process for decisions to deny or reduce funding. A description of this grading system and appeal process shall be provided to all DVSSPs receiving grants under this program.

(2) Grants for shelters that were not funded in the previous cycle shall be awarded as a result of a competitive request for proposal (RFP) process. The RFP process shall comply with all applicable state and federal statutes for domestic violence shelter funding and, to the extent possible, the response to the RFP shall not exceed 25 narrative pages, excluding attachments.

(3) Grants shall be awarded to DVSSPs that propose to maintain shelters or services previously granted funding pursuant to this section, to expand existing services or create new services, or to establish new domestic violence shelters in underserved or unserved areas. Each grant shall be awarded for a three-year term.

(4) DVSSPs reapplying for grants shall not be subject to a competitive grant process, but shall be subject to a request for application (RFA) process. The RFA process shall consist in part of an assessment of the past performance history of the DVSSP in relation to the standards established pursuant to paragraph (1). The RFA process shall comply with all applicable state and federal statutes for domestic violence center funding and, to the extent possible, the response to the RFA shall not exceed 10 narrative pages, excluding attachments.

(5) A DVSSP funded through this program in the previous grant cycle, including a DVSSP funded by Chapter 707 of the Statutes of 2001, shall be funded upon reapplication, unless, pursuant to the assessment required under the RFA process, its past performance history fails to meet the standards established by the Office of Emergency Services pursuant to paragraph (1).

(6) The Office of Emergency Services shall conduct a minimum of one site visit every three years for each DVSSP funded pursuant to this subdivision. The purpose of the site visit shall be to conduct a performance assessment of, and provide subsequent technical assistance for, each shelter visited. The performance assessment shall include, but need not be limited to, a review of all of the following:

(A) Progress in meeting program goals and objectives.

(B) Agency organization and facilities.

(C) Personnel policies, files, and training.

(D) Recordkeeping, budgeting, and expenditures.

(E) Documentation, data collection, and client confidentiality.

(7) After each site visit conducted pursuant to paragraph (6), the Office of Emergency Services shall provide a written report to the DVSSP summarizing the performance of the DVSSP, deficiencies noted, corrective action needed, and a deadline for corrective action to be completed. The Office of Emergency Services shall also develop a corrective action plan for verifying the completion of corrective action required. The Office of Emergency Services shall submit its written report to the DVSSP no more than 60 days after the site visit. No grant under the RFA process shall be denied if the DVSSP has not received a site visit during the previous three years, unless the Office of Emergency Services is aware of criminal violations relative to the administration of grant funding.

(8) If an agency receives funding from both the Comprehensive Statewide Domestic Violence Program in the Office of Emergency Services and the Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health Division of the State Department of Public Health during any grant cycle, the Comprehensive Statewide Domestic Violence Program and the Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health Division shall, to the extent feasible, coordinate agency site visits and share performance assessment data with the goal of improving efficiency, eliminating duplication, and reducing administrative costs.

(9) DVSSPs receiving written reports of deficiencies or orders for corrective action after a site visit shall be given no less than six months' time to take corrective action before the deficiencies or failure to correct may be considered in the next RFA process. However, the Office of Emergency Services shall have the discretion to reduce the time to take corrective action in cases where the deficiencies present a significant health or safety risk or when other severe circumstances are found to exist. If corrective action is deemed necessary, and a DVSSP fails to comply, or if other deficiencies exist that, in the judgment of the Office of Emergency Services, cannot be corrected, the Office of Emergency Services shall determine, using its grading system, whether continued funding for the DVSSP should be reduced or denied altogether. If a DVSSP has been determined to be deficient, the Office of Emergency Services may, at any point during the DVSSP's funding cycle following the expiration of the period for corrective action, deny or reduce further funding.

(10) If a DVSSP applies or reapplies for funding pursuant to this section and that funding is denied or reduced, the decision to deny or reduce funding shall be provided in writing to the DVSSP, along with a written explanation of the reasons for the reduction or denial made in accordance with the grading system for the RFP or RFA process. Except as otherwise provided, an appeal of the decision to deny or reduce funding shall be made in accordance with the appeal process established by the Office of Emergency Services. The appeal process shall allow a DVSSP a minimum of 30 days to appeal after a decision to deny or reduce funding. All pending appeals shall be resolved before final funding decisions are reached.

(11) It is the intent of the Legislature that priority for additional funds that become available shall be given to currently funded, new, or previously unfunded DVSSPs for expansion of services. However, the Office of Emergency Services may determine when expansion is needed to accommodate underserved or unserved areas. If supplemental funding is unavailable, the Office of Emergency Services shall have the authority to lower the base level of grants to all currently funded DVSSPs in order to provide funding for currently funded, new, or previously unfunded DVSSPs that will provide services in underserved or unserved areas. However, to the extent reasonable, funding reductions shall be reduced proportionately among all currently funded DVSSPs. After the amount of funding reductions has been determined, DVSSPs that are currently funded and those applying for funding shall be notified of changes in the available level of funding prior to the next application process. Funding reductions made under this paragraph shall not be subject to appeal.

(12) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, Office of Emergency Services may reduce funding to a DVSSP funded pursuant to this section if federal funding support is reduced. Funding reductions as a result of a reduction in federal funding shall not be subject to appeal.

(13) Nothing in this section shall be construed to supersede any function or duty required by federal acts, rules, regulations, or guidelines for the distribution of federal grants.

(14) As a condition of receiving funding pursuant to this section, DVSSPs shall

ensure that appropriate staff and volunteers having client contact meet the definition of "domestic violence counselor" as specified in subdivision (a) of Section 1037.1 of the Evidence Code. The minimum training specified in paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 1037.1 of the Evidence Code shall be provided to those staff and volunteers who do not meet the requirements of paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 1037.1 of the Evidence Code.

(15) The following definitions shall apply for purposes of this subdivision:

(A) "Domestic violence" means the infliction or threat of physical harm against past or present adult or adolescent intimate partners, including physical, sexual, and psychological abuse against the partner, and is a part of a pattern of assaultive, coercive, and controlling behaviors directed at achieving compliance from or control over that person.

(B) "Domestic violence shelter service provider" or "DVSSP" means a victim services provider that operates an established system of services providing safe and confidential emergency housing on a 24-hour basis for victims of domestic violence and their children, including, but not limited to, hotel or motel arrangements, haven, and safe houses.

(C) "Emergency shelter" means a confidential or safe location that provides emergency housing on a 24-hour basis for victims of domestic violence and their children.

(g) The Office of Emergency Services may hire the support staff and utilize all resources necessary to carry out the purposes of this section. The Office of Emergency Services shall not utilize more than 10 percent of funds appropriated for the purpose of the program established by this section for the administration of that program.

