
SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Senator Jesse Arreguín, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 785 **Hearing Date:** June 24, 2025
Author: Sharp-Collins
Version: April 9, 2025
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: SJ

Subject: *Community Violence Interdiction Grant Program*

HISTORY

Source: Author

Prior Legislation: AB 2064 (Jones-Sawyer), held in Senate Appropriations, 2024
AB 762 (Wicks), Ch. 421, Stats. of 2023
AB 912 (Jones-Sawyer), vetoed, 2023
AB 1603 (Wicks), Ch. 735, Stats. of 2019
AB 1454 (Jones-Sawyer), Ch. 584, Stats. of 2019
AB 1812 (Com. on Budget), Ch. 36, Stats. of 2018
AB 97 (Ting), Ch. 14, Stats. 2017

Support: California Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry; California Special Districts Association; California Youth Empowerment Network; Chinese for Affirmative Action; City of San Diego; Ella Baker Center for Human Rights; Friends Committee on Legislation of California; Greater Sacramento Urban League; Hadassah; Initiate Justice; Initiate Justice Action; Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund; Jewish Counsel for Public Affairs; Jewish Democratic Club of Marin; Jewish Family & Community Services East Bay; Jewish Family and Children's Service of Long Beach and Orange County; Jewish Family and Children's Services of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties; Jewish Family Service LA; Jewish Family Services of Silicon Valley; Jewish Federation of the Greater San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys; Jewish Free Loan Association; Jewish Long Beach; Jewish Public Affairs Committee of California; JCC/Federation of San Luis Obispo; JCRC Bay Area; Justice2Jobs Coalition; JVS SoCal; La Defensa; Prevention Institute

Opposition: None known

Assembly Floor Vote: 64 - 4

PURPOSE

This bill creates the Community Violence Interdiction Grant Program to be administered by the California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS) to provide funding to local community programs to decrease violence in neighborhoods and schools.

Existing law establishes the Youth Reinvestment Grant (YRG) Program within the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) for the purpose of granting funds, as specified. (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 1450.)

Existing law requires that 94% of YRG funds are allocated to local jurisdictions through a competitive grant process for the purpose of implementing trauma-informed diversion programs for minors. Requires that services funded via the program are evidence based or research supported, trauma informed, culturally relevant, and developmentally appropriate. (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 1454, subds. (a) & (b).)

Existing law requires that 3% of YRG funds are allocated to Indian tribes for the purpose of implementing diversion programs for Indian children that use trauma-informed, community-based, and health-based interventions. (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 1453, subd. (a).)

Existing law requires that priority be given to diversion programs addressing the needs of Indian children who experience high rates of juvenile arrest, suicide, alcohol and substance abuse, and average high school graduation rates lower than 75%. (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 1453, subd. (b).)

Existing law requires YRG funds to be allocated by the BSCC through a competitive grant process. Provides that grants be awarded to a local governmental entity or nonprofit organization for no less \$50,000 and no more than \$2 million. Requires an applicant to provide at least a 25-percent cash or in-kind match to the grant, except as provided. (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 1458, subds. (a) & (b).)

Existing law requires 90% of YRG funds awarded to a local government entity to pass through to community-based organizations to deliver services in underserved communities with high rates of youth arrests. (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 1458, subd. (b)(3).)

Existing law provides that the BSCC is responsible for oversight and accountability of the YRG program. (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 1459.)

Existing law establishes the Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR) in the CalHHS with a mission to promote trauma responsive, culturally informed services for youth involved in the juvenile justice system that support their successful transition to adulthood and help them become responsible, thriving, and engaged members of their communities. (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 2200, subds. (a) & (b).)

Existing law requires all juvenile justice grant administration functions in the BSCC to be moved to OYCR no later than January 1, 2025. (Welf. & Inst. Code, § 2200, subd. (h).)

Existing law establishes the California Violence Intervention Program (CalVIP) to be administered by the BSCC. (Pen. Code, § 14131, subd. (a).)

Existing law provides that the purpose of CalVIP is to improve public health and safety by supporting effective community gun violence reduction initiatives in communities that are disproportionately impacted by community gun violence. (Pen. Code, § 14131, subd. (b).)

Existing law requires CalVIP grants to be used to develop, support, expand, and replicate evidence-based community gun violence reduction initiatives, including, without limitation, hospital-based violence intervention programs, evidence-based street outreach programs, and

focused deterrence strategies, that seek to interrupt cycles of community gun violence and retaliation in order to reduce the incidence of homicides, shootings, and aggravated assaults. (Pen. Code, § 14131, subd. (c).)

Existing law requires that CalVIP grants are made on a competitive basis to cities that are disproportionately impacted by community gun violence, to community-based organizations that serve the residents of those cities, including tribal governments, and to counties that have one or more cities disproportionately impacted by community gun violence within their jurisdiction. (Pen. Code, § 14131, subd. (d).)

Existing law requires the BSCC, in awarding CalVIP grants, to give preference to applicants whose grant proposals demonstrate the greatest likelihood of reducing the incidence of community gun violence in the applicant's community, without contributing to mass incarceration. (Pen. Code, § 14131, subd. (g).)

Existing law requires the amount of CalVIP funds awarded to an applicant to be commensurate with the scope of the applicant's proposal and the applicant's demonstrated need for additional resources to address community gun violence in the applicant's community. Authorizes the BSCC to award grants up to \$2.5 million per applicant. (Pen. Code, § 14131, subd. (h).)

This bill requires CalHHS to administer the Community Violence Interdiction Grant Program to provide funding to local community programs for community-driven solutions to decrease violence in neighborhoods and schools.

This bill provides that eligible programs include, but are not limited to, all of the following:

- Evidence-based, focused-deterrence collaborative programs that conduct outreach to targeted gangs and offer supportive services to preemptively reduce and eliminate violence and gang involvement.
- Programs that create and enhance recreation- and health-based interventions for youth during peak times of violence.
- Programs that implement evidence-based interventions for pupils impacted by trauma for the improvement in the health and well-being of the youth and school and community stability.
- Youth diversion programs that promote positive youth development by relying on responses that prevent a youth's involvement or further involvement in the justice system.
- The creation and operation of school-based health centers.

This bill requires CalHHS to develop an application process and criteria for funding.

This bill establishes a competitive grant program with preference to cities and local jurisdictions that are disproportionately impacted by violence and gang involvement and with preference to community-based organizations that serve the residents of those cities and local jurisdictions.

This bill requires CalHHS to work with relevant stakeholders to promote and implement the grant program in a manner that effectively reaches a wide geography throughout the state and ensures that regions most impacted by violence and gang involvement are adequately considered

with an emphasis on addressing the violence prevention and gang deterrence needs within these regions.

This bill requires applicants seeking grant funding to implement evidence-based interventions for pupils impacted by trauma to demonstrate how they will prioritize interventions for pupils most impacted by trauma and typically unable to access traditional services, including, but not limited to, pupils who are low income or homeless, display symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder or severe trauma-related symptoms, members of immigrant and refugee groups, pupils with exceptional needs, and pupils who interact with child protective systems or who have had contact with the juvenile justice system.

This bill establishes the Community Violence Interdiction Grant Fund within the State Treasury. Requires moneys in the fund to be made available, only upon appropriation by the Legislature, to CalHHS for the purpose of implementing the provisions of this bill.

This bill requires the Director of Finance and the Legislative Analyst's Office to calculate the savings that accrued to the state from the closure of state prisons during the preceding fiscal year on or before July 31, 2026, and each fiscal year thereafter. Requires the Director of Finance and the Legislative Analyst's Office to use actual data or best available estimates where actual data is not available in making the required calculation.

This bill requires the Director of Finance to calculate the average of the two calculations, as described above. Provides that the calculation is final and shall not be adjusted for subsequent changes in the underlying data. Requires the Director of Finance to certify the results of the calculation to the Controller no later than August 1 of each fiscal year.

This bill requires the Controller to transfer from the General Fund to the Community Violence Interdiction Grant Fund the total amount calculated before August 15, 2026, and before August 15 of each fiscal year thereafter, upon appropriation by the Legislature.

COMMENTS

1. Need For This Bill

According to the author:

The State Legislature has decreased the number of incarcerated people in California through smart investments in rehabilitative and diversion programs. It is imperative that the resulting savings be reinvested into effective strategies proven to further reduce crime and violence. AB 785 will capture the savings from the closure of prisons and reinvest those funds in programs with proven success. For too long, we have been told that there is not enough money for these programs. By keeping the funding within our crime prevention budget rather than sending it back to the General Fund, we send a message that our efforts to reduce crime are continuous and we provide much needed resources for some outstanding programs.

2. Other Violence and Crime Prevention Grant Programs

CalVIP

From 2007 to 2017, California's budget acts appropriated \$9.215 million per year to operate the California Gang Reduction, Intervention and Prevention (CalGRIP) program, which provided matching grants to cities for initiatives to reduce youth-and gang-related crime. The budget acts between 2007 and 2017 guaranteed \$1 million annually for the City of Los Angeles, with the remainder distributed to other cities of all sizes through a competitive application process overseen by BSCC. In the 2017 Budget Act, the CalGRIP program—restructured to CalVIP—shifted the program away from initiatives targeting gang crime and affiliation toward evidence-based violence prevention programs.

AB 1603 (Wicks), Chapter 735, Statutes of 2019, codified CalVIP and established the program's purpose as improving public health and safety by supporting effective violence reduction initiatives in communities that are disproportionately impacted by violence. AB 762 (Wicks), Chapter 241, Statutes of 2023, specified that CalVIP's purpose is to reduce gun violence. CalVIP grants are used to develop, support, expand, and replicate evidence-based community gun violence reduction initiatives, including, hospital-based violence intervention programs, evidence-based street outreach programs, and focused deterrence strategies. CalVIP requires that funded initiatives are primarily focused on providing violence intervention services to the segment of the population that is identified as high risk of perpetrating or being victimized by gun violence in the near future.

CalVIP historically received \$9 million in baseline funding from the General Fund. The 2021-22 Budget included a onetime augmentation of \$200 million over three years. Beginning with the 2024-25 Budget, CalVIP is funded by the Gun Violence Prevention and School Safety fund, which receives its funds from an excise tax on retail sales of firearms and ammunition established via AB 28 (Gabriel), Chapter 231, Statutes of 2023. (Office of the Governor, *California State Budget 2024-25*, p. 79 available at <<http://www.ebudget.ca.gov/2024-25/pdf/Enacted/BudgetSummary/FullBudgetSummary.pdf>>.)

Four cohorts of grantees have received funding, with the Cohort 4's funding running through the end of this year. Applications for Cohort 5 are due in August of this year, and the funding cycle runs from January 2026 to June 2029.

YRG

The YRG Program was created through the 2018 Budget Act and a related trailer bill. The program was amended by AB 1454 (Jones-Sawyer), Chapter 584, Statutes of 2019. The YRG Program is aimed at diverting youth who are at risk of juvenile justice involvement from initial contact with the juvenile justice system using approaches that are evidence-based, culturally relevant, trauma-informed, and developmentally appropriate. Two cohorts received over \$40 million.

This bill creates another competitive grant program to address community violence. Specifically, this bill establishes the Community Violence Interdiction Grant Program to provide funding to local community programs to decrease violence in neighborhoods and schools. The bill provides that the following types of programs are eligible for funding: programs and services designed to

reduce and eliminate violence and gang involvement; programs that create and enhance recreation- and health-based interventions for youth during peak times of violence; programs that implement evidence-based interventions for students impacted by trauma for the improvement in the health and well-being of the youth and school and community stability; youth diversion programs that promote positive youth development by relying on responses that prevent a youth's involvement or further involvement in the justice system; and the creation and operation of school-based health centers, among others.

3. Argument in Support

The City of San Diego writes:

...This forward-thinking legislation will provide critical funding to local community-based programs that work to address and reduce violence through community-driven, preventative, and restorative approaches.

San Diego, like many urban centers across California, continues to work proactively to address the complex challenges associated with community safety and violence prevention. While our City has made progress through a combination of policing, prevention, and intervention strategies, we recognize that lasting solutions must come from within the communities most affected. AB 785 reflects a deep understanding of this principle by prioritizing investments in local initiatives that are rooted in trust, cultural competency, and direct engagement with youth, families, and schools.

By establishing this interdiction program, AB 785 empowers local governments and community organizations to implement evidence-based, trauma-informed strategies that can interrupt cycles of violence, support at-risk individuals, and foster safer, more resilient neighborhoods. Moreover, it acknowledges the public health dimensions of community violence, elevating solutions that focus not only on enforcement but also on healing and prevention.

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