

As Introduced

135th General Assembly

Regular Session

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H. B. No. 420

Representatives Brewer, Abdullahi

**Cosponsors: Representatives Piccolantonio, Thomas, C., Forhan, McNally,
Mohamed, Robinson, Russo, Skindell, Sweeney, Upchurch, Williams, Isaacsohn,
Baker, Somani, Grim, Weinstein, Brown, Sims, Liston**

A BILL

To enact sections 5164.97, 5180.50, 5180.51, 1
5180.52, 5180.53, 5180.54, 5180.55, and 5180.56 2
of the Revised Code to establish the Office of 3
Firearm Violence Prevention within the 4
Department of Children and Youth, to require the 5
Office to administer grant programs aimed at 6
reducing firearm violence, to name this act the 7
"Building Safer Communities for Ohio's Children 8
Act," and to make an appropriation. 9

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. That sections 5164.97, 5180.50, 5180.51, 10
5180.52, 5180.53, 5180.54, 5180.55, and 5180.56 of the Revised 11
Code be enacted to read as follows: 12

Sec. 5164.97. (A) Not later than ninety days after the 13
effective date of this section, the medicaid director shall seek 14
approval from the United States centers for medicare and 15
medicaid services to establish a team-based model of care system 16
to address trauma recovery from chronic exposure to firearm 17

violence. 18

(B) The team-based model of care system shall include all 19
of the following services: 20

(1) Outreach services that recruit trauma-exposed 21
individuals into the system and develop supportive relationships 22
with them based on lived experiences in their communities; 23

(2) Case management and community support services that 24
provide stabilization to individuals recovering from chronic 25
exposure to firearm violence and school support services that 26
decrease truancy and involvement with the criminal justice 27
system; 28

(3) Group and individual therapy that addresses underlying 29
mental health conditions associated with post-traumatic stress 30
disorder, depression, anxiety, substance use disorders, 31
intermittent explosive disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, 32
attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and other mental 33
health conditions resulting from chronic disorder; 34

(4) Evidence-based family systems interventions that have 35
proven to reduce anti-social behaviors. 36

(C) The department of medicaid shall establish a 37
reimbursement methodology for the services described in this 38
section. 39

Sec. 5180.50. As used in sections 5180.50 to 5180.56 of 40
the Revised Code: 41

"Eligible county" means the fifteen counties in the state 42
with the highest per capita rate of fatal and nonfatal firearm- 43
shot victims excluding self-inflicted incidents, from January 1, 44
2018, to December 31, 2022. 45

"Evidence-based violence prevention services" means 46
coordinated programming and services that include effective 47
emotional or trauma-related therapies, housing, employment 48
training, job placement, family engagement, and wraparound 49
support services that have been proven effective or are 50
considered to be best practices for reducing violence within the 51
field of violence intervention research and practice. 52

"Evidence-based youth development programs" means after- 53
school and summer programming that provides services to teens to 54
increase school attendance and school performance, reduce 55
involvement in the criminal justice system, and develop 56
nonacademic interests that build social-emotional persistence 57
and intelligence based on best practices in the field of youth 58
development services for high-risk youth. 59

"Violence prevention organization" means an organization 60
that manages and employs qualified violence prevention 61
professionals. 62

"Violence prevention professional" means a community 63
health worker who renders violence preventive services. 64

Sec. 5180.51. The general assembly makes the following 65
findings: 66

(A) Certain areas across the state are experiencing 67
concentrated and perpetual firearm violence that is a public 68
health epidemic. 69

(B) Within areas experiencing this firearm violence 70
epidemic, violence is concentrated among teens and young adults 71
that have chronic exposure to the risk of violence and criminal 72
justice system involvement and related trauma in small 73
geographic areas where these young people live or congregate. 74

(C) Firearm violence victimization and perpetration is 75
highly concentrated in particular areas and among a small number 76
of individuals in these areas. 77

(D) People who are chronically exposed to the risk of 78
firearm violence victimization are substantially more likely to 79
be violently injured or to violently injure another person. 80
People who have been violently injured are substantially more 81
likely to be violently reinjured. Chronic exposure to violence 82
additionally leads individuals to engage in behavior, as part of 83
a cycle of community violence, trauma, and retaliation, that 84
substantially increases their own risk of violent injury or 85
reinjury. 86

(E) Evidence-based programs that engage individuals at the 87
highest risk of firearm violence and provide life stabilization, 88
case management, and culturally competent group and individual 89
therapy reduce firearm violence victimization and perpetration 90
and can end Ohio's firearm violence epidemic. 91

(F) A public health approach to ending Ohio's firearm 92
violence epidemic requires targeted, integrated behavioral 93
health services and economic opportunities that promote self- 94
sufficiency for victims of firearm violence and those with 95
chronic exposure to the risk of firearm violence victimization, 96
including services for criminal and juvenile justice-involved 97
populations and crisis response services, such as psychological 98
first aid. 99

(G) A public health approach to ending Ohio's firearm 100
violence epidemic further requires broader prevention 101
investments in the areas that reduce risk factors for youth and 102
families living in areas at the highest risk of firearm violence 103
victimization. 104

(H) A public health approach to ending Ohio's firearm 105
violence epidemic requires empowering residents and community- 106
based organizations within impacted areas to provide culturally 107
competent care based on lived experience in these areas and 108
long-term relationships of mutual interest that promote safety 109
and stability. 110

(I) A public health approach to ending Ohio's firearm 111
violence epidemic further requires that preventive youth 112
development services for youth in these areas be fully 113
integrated with a team-based model of mental health care to 114
address trauma recovery for those young people at the highest 115
risk of firearm violence victimization. 116

(J) Community revitalization can be an effective violence 117
prevention strategy, provided that revitalization is targeted to 118
the highest risk areas and revitalization efforts are designed 119
and led by individuals living and working in the impacted areas. 120

Sec. 5180.52. (A) The office of firearm violence 121
prevention is established within the department of children and 122
youth. The office shall do both of the following: 123

(1) Coordinate and administer the grant programs described 124
in sections 5180.53 to 5180.55 of the Revised Code; 125

(2) Provide technical assistance and training to grant 126
recipients. 127

(B) The department shall appoint an executive director of 128
violence prevention to manage the office and to perform or 129
oversee the performance of the duties of the office. The 130
executive director shall serve at the pleasure of the 131
department. The executive director shall report the executive 132
director's actions to the director of children and youth, the 133

attorney general, and the governor. The executive director shall 134
receive an annual salary of one hundred seventy thousand 135
dollars, which shall be increased on July 1, 2026, and annually 136
thereafter on that date, by the lesser of three per cent or the 137
percentage increase in the consumer price index for the 138
immediately preceding calendar year. 139

As used in this section, "consumer price index" means the 140
index, as prepared by the United States bureau of labor 141
statistics (U.S. city average for urban wage earners and 142
clerical workers: all items 1982-84=100), or, if that index is 143
no longer published, a generally available comparable index. 144

(C) The director of children and youth shall adopt rules 145
in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code as necessary 146
to establish the office of firearm violence prevention and to 147
implement sections 5180.53 to 5180.56 of the Revised Code. 148

Sec. 5180.53. (A) The office of firearm violence 149
prevention shall administer a violence prevention organization 150
grant program in accordance with this section. Beginning six 151
months after the effective date of this section, the office 152
shall award grants on a competitive basis to violence prevention 153
organizations in eligible counties. 154

(B) (1) The office of firearm violence prevention shall 155
establish a competitive application process for violence 156
prevention organizations from eligible counties seeking to 157
participate in the grant program. In selecting organizations to 158
participate in the grant program, the office shall give 159
preference to organizations that provide services in areas of an 160
eligible county most impacted by firearm violence and that 161
demonstrate expertise in all of the following: 162

(a) Analyzing and leveraging data to identify the 163
individuals who will most benefit from evidence-based violence 164
prevention services in an eligible county; 165

(b) Identifying the conflicts that are responsible for 166
recurring violence; 167

(c) Having relationships with individuals who are most 168
able to reduce conflicts; 169

(d) Addressing the stabilization and trauma recovery needs 170
of individuals impacted by violence by providing direct services 171
for their unmet needs or referring them to other qualified 172
service providers; 173

(e) Having and building relationships with community 174
members and community organizations that provide evidence-based 175
violence prevention services and receive referrals of people who 176
will most benefit from evidence-based violence prevention 177
services; 178

(f) Providing training and technical assistance to local 179
law enforcement agencies to improve their effectiveness without 180
having any role, requirement, or mandate to participate in the 181
policing, enforcement, or prosecution of any crime. 182

(2) Upon reviewing applications, the office of firearm 183
violence prevention shall select not fewer than two and not more 184
than six violence prevention organizations in each eligible 185
county to participate in the grant program. Grants shall be 186
distributed in accordance with rules adopted by the director of 187
children and youth under section 5180.52 of the Revised Code. 188

(3) As a condition of participation in the grant program, 189
selected organizations shall enter into a medicaid provider 190
agreement with the department of medicaid to provide the 191

services specified in section 5164.97 of the Revised Code. 192

(C) Selected violence prevention organizations shall use 193
grant funds to provide the following services: 194

(1) Behavioral health services, including clinical 195
interventions, crisis interventions, and group counseling 196
supports; 197

(2) Capacity-building services, including administrative 198
and programmatic support, services, and resources; 199

(3) Legal aid services, including funding for staff 200
attorneys and paralegals to provide education, training, legal 201
services, and advocacy for individuals serviced by the 202
organization. Legal aid services do not include advocacy for 203
criminal justice issues. 204

(4) Housing services, including grants for emergency and 205
temporary housing for individuals at immediate risk of firearm 206
violence; 207

(5) Workforce development services, including grants for 208
job coaching, intensive care management, employment training and 209
placement, and retention services; 210

(6) Services that assist individuals exiting the state or 211
county criminal justice systems to reintegrate into their 212
communities; 213

(7) Victim services, including assessments and screening 214
of victim needs, planning sessions related to assessments, 215
service planning and goal setting, assessing intervention needs, 216
and assisting participants through public assistance processes 217
for victims. 218

(D) Violence prevention organizations participating in the 219

grant program established under this section shall collaborate 220
with other violence prevention organizations providing services 221
within the same county. The office of firearm violence 222
prevention shall designate one participating violence prevention 223
organization in each eligible county to serve as the lead 224
organization. Each designated lead organization shall do all of 225
the following: 226

(1) Organize and lead monthly meetings of participating 227
violence prevention organizations to improve the effectiveness 228
of evidence-based violence prevention services; 229

(2) Attend other meetings in the county that discuss 230
firearm violence and strategies to resolve ongoing conflicts; 231

(3) Make recommendations to the office of firearm violence 232
prevention concerning ways to reduce violent conflict within 233
eligible counties; 234

(4) Share knowledge and strategies for reducing firearm 235
violence with youth development organizations participating in 236
the grant program described in section 5180.54 of the Revised 237
Code. 238

(E) The office of firearm violence prevention shall 239
provide technical assistance and training to violence prevention 240
organizations participating in the grant program, including all 241
of the following: 242

(1) Training for violence prevention professionals on how 243
to provide violence prevention services and other professional 244
development services; 245

(2) Management training on how to manage violence 246
prevention professionals; 247

(3) Training and assistance on how to develop a memorandum 248
of understanding for referral services; 249

(4) Sharing lessons learned among other violence 250
prevention organizations participating in the grant program; 251

(5) Technical assistance and training on human resources, 252
grant management, capacity building, and fiscal management 253
strategies. 254

Sec. 5180.54. (A) The office of firearm violence 255
prevention shall administer a youth development grant program in 256
accordance with this section. Beginning six months after the 257
effective date of this section, the office shall award grants on 258
a competitive basis to youth development organizations in 259
eligible counties. 260

(B) (1) The office of firearm violence prevention shall 261
establish a competitive application process for youth 262
development organizations from eligible counties seeking to 263
operate evidence-based youth development programs. In selecting 264
organizations to participate in the grant program, the office 265
shall give preference to organizations that provide services in 266
areas of an eligible county most impacted by firearm violence 267
and that serve the following impacted individuals: 268

(a) Youth who have past involvement with the criminal 269
justice system; 270

(b) Students who attend or have attended a secondary 271
school where seventy-five per cent or more of enrolled students 272
have either stopped attending or have failed their courses since 273
entering ninth grade; 274

(c) Family members of individuals working with violence 275
prevention organizations; 276

<u>(d) Youth living in high-violence areas.</u>	277
<u>(2) Upon reviewing applications, the office of firearm</u>	278
<u>violence prevention shall select not fewer than four and not</u>	279
<u>more than eight youth development organizations in each eligible</u>	280
<u>county to participate in the grant program. Grants shall be</u>	281
<u>distributed in accordance with rules adopted by the director of</u>	282
<u>children and youth under section 5180.52 of the Revised Code.</u>	283
<u>(C) (1) Each youth development organization participating</u>	284
<u>in the grant program shall use a portion of grant funds to</u>	285
<u>provide an individualized needs assessment to each individual</u>	286
<u>the organization serves. The needs assessment shall examine the</u>	287
<u>physical and mental condition of each individual based on an</u>	288
<u>individual's connection to family, financial resources, past</u>	289
<u>substance use, involvement in the criminal justice system, and</u>	290
<u>trauma related to chronic exposure to firearm violence.</u>	291
<u>(2) Each individual served by a participating youth</u>	292
<u>development organization shall receive individualized services</u>	293
<u>based on the results of the needs assessment described in</u>	294
<u>division (C) (1) of this section. Individuals shall receive</u>	295
<u>services that empower them with the social and emotional skills</u>	296
<u>necessary to forge paths of health development and disengagement</u>	297
<u>from high-risk behaviors with the goal of building resilience</u>	298
<u>and the skills associated with healthy social, emotional, and</u>	299
<u>identity development.</u>	300
<u>(D) Youth development organizations participating in the</u>	301
<u>grant program shall collaborate with other youth development</u>	302
<u>organizations within the same eligible county to do all of the</u>	303
<u>following:</u>	304
<u>(1) Build knowledge of the teens and their social</u>	305

<u>organization in the areas in which they serve;</u>	306
<u>(2) Coordinate services between youth development</u>	307
<u>organizations and share knowledge and strategies between</u>	308
<u>organizations;</u>	309
<u>(3) Meet on an emergency basis with other youth</u>	310
<u>development organizations when conflicts concerning individuals</u>	311
<u>receiving services from the organizations arise.</u>	312
<u>(E) The office of firearm violence prevention shall</u>	313
<u>provide technical assistance and training to youth development</u>	314
<u>organizations participating in the grant program, including all</u>	315
<u>of the following:</u>	316
<u>(1) Training for youth development workers on how to</u>	317
<u>provide outreach services;</u>	318
<u>(2) Management training on how to manage youth development</u>	319
<u>workers;</u>	320
<u>(3) Training and assistance on how to develop a memorandum</u>	321
<u>of understanding for referral services;</u>	322
<u>(4) Sharing lessons learned among other youth development</u>	323
<u>organizations participating in the grant program;</u>	324
<u>(5) Technical assistance and training on human resources,</u>	325
<u>grant management, capacity building, and fiscal management</u>	326
<u>strategies.</u>	327
<u>Sec. 5180.55. (A) Beginning six months after the effective</u>	328
<u>date of this section, the office of firearm violence prevention</u>	329
<u>shall administer a grant program that awards grants on a</u>	330
<u>competitive basis to counties that are not eligible to receive</u>	331
<u>grants under sections 5180.53 and 5180.54 of the Revised Code.</u>	332

(B) In determining which counties are eligible to receive 333
grants under this section, the office shall examine which 334
counties have experienced the largest concentration of firearm 335
violence in the five years immediately preceding the effective 336
date of this section. The office shall consider the following 337
factors: 338

(1) The total number of fatal and nonfatal firearms 339
victims; 340

(2) The per capita rate of fatal and nonfatal firearms 341
victims; 342

(3) The number of children and youth that make up the 343
total number of fatal and nonfatal firearms victims. 344

(C) Using the criteria specified in division (B) of this 345
section, the office of firearm violence prevention shall select 346
five counties to receive grants under this section. Grant funds 347
shall be distributed to selected counties using a formula 348
established by the office. 349

(D) (1) A county selected to receive grant funds under this 350
section shall establish a local advisory council. The council 351
shall seek recommendations from the community on how grant funds 352
should be allocated within the county and make recommendations 353
to the office of firearm violence prevention concerning the 354
allocation of grant funds within the county. 355

(2) The office of firearm violence prevention shall 356
consider the recommendations of a local advisory council when 357
distributing grants within a selected county. If the office does 358
not adhere to the recommendations of a council, the office shall 359
provide written notice to the council explaining why the 360
recommendations were not followed. 361

Sec. 5180.56. (A) Beginning one year after the effective 362
date of this section, and annually thereafter, the office of 363
firearm violence prevention shall prepare a report detailing all 364
of the following: 365

(1) Outcomes concerning the grant programs described in 366
sections 5180.53 to 5180.55 of the Revised Code, including any 367
reduction in firearm violence that occurs in communities 368
receiving grant funds; 369

(2) Recommendations the office of firearm violence 370
prevention receives from violence prevention organizations to 371
improve grant program outcomes and reduce firearm violence; 372

(3) Recommendations of the office of firearm violence 373
prevention to help reduce firearm violence statewide. 374

(B) The report shall be submitted to the general assembly 375
in accordance with section 101.68 of the Revised Code. 376

Section 2. Sections 5180.50, 5180.51, 5180.52, 5180.53, 377
5180.54, 5180.55, and 5180.56 of the Revised Code take effect 378
January 1, 2025. 379

Section 3. All items in this act are hereby appropriated 380
as designated out of any moneys in the state treasury to the 381
credit of the designated fund. For all operating appropriations 382
made in this act, those in the first column are for fiscal year 383
2024 and those in the second column are for fiscal year 2025. 384
The operating appropriations made in this act are in addition to 385
any other operating appropriations made for these fiscal years. 386

Section 4. 387

388

	1	2	3	4	5
A			KID DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH		
B			General Revenue Fund		
C	GRF	830413	Firearm Violence Prevention	\$0	\$500,000
D			TOTAL GRF General Revenue Fund	\$0	\$500,000
E			TOTAL ALL BUDGET FUND GROUPS	\$0	\$500,000

FIREARM VIOLENCE PREVENTION 389

The foregoing appropriation item 830413, Firearm Violence 390
Prevention, shall be used to support the establishment of the 391
Office of Firearm Violence Prevention within the Department of 392
Children and Youth, in accordance with section 5180.52 of the 393
Revised Code. 394

Section 5. Within the limits set forth in this act, the 395
Director of Budget and Management shall establish accounts 396
indicating the source and amount of funds for each appropriation 397
made in this act, and shall determine the manner in which 398
appropriation accounts shall be maintained. Expenditures from 399
operating appropriations contained in this act shall be 400
accounted for as though made in, and are subject to all 401
applicable provisions of, H.B. 33 of the 135th General Assembly. 402

Section 6. This act shall be known as the "Building Safer 403
Communities for Ohio's Children Act." 404