

Date of Hearing: April 21, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Ash Kalra, Chair
AB 1932 (Elhawary) – As Amended April 16, 2026

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES: C.R.I.S.E.S. GRANT PILOT PROGRAM

KEY ISSUE: SHOULD THE LEGISLATURE EXTEND THE C.R.I.S.E.S. ACT AND SLIGHTLY MODIFY IT TO AUTHORIZE THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES TO ISSUE GRANTS TO COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS TO DEVELOP NON-LAW ENFORCEMENT CRISIS RESPONSE ALTERNATIVES?

SYNOPSIS

In 2021, the Legislature enacted the Community Response Initiative to Strengthen Emergency Systems (C.R.I.S.E.S.) Act via AB 118 (Kamlager) Chap. 694, Stats. 2021. The goal of the original program was to bolster non-law enforcement response options to mental health and substance abuse crises. As originally crafted, the C.R.I.S.E.S. Act authorized the Department of Social Services (CDSS) to award grant funds to local governments, and tasked those governments with collaborating with community based organizations to develop programs to provide alternatives to law enforcement response units. The C.R.I.S.E.S. Act is set to sunset this summer. This bill seeks to extend the C.R.I.S.E.S. program, and makes a number of straightforward changes. First, rather than require local governments to act as a middle-man, this bill requires the department to solicit applications directly from community-based organizations. Second, the bill makes the program subject to an appropriation of the annual budget, rather than making it contingent on an allocation from a single year's budget.

This bill is co-sponsored by Communities United for Restorative Justice (CURYJ), the Anti Police-Terror Project (APTP), and the Youth Justice Coalition (YJC). It enjoys support from an impressive list of community-based organizations, civil rights advocacy organizations, and restorative justice advocates. There is no known opposition.

This bill was previously heard by the Assembly Committee on Human Services where it was approved on a vote of 6-0.

SUMMARY: Renews the Community Response Initiative to Strengthen Emergency Systems (C.R.I.S.E.S.) Act. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Expands the definition of “community-based organization” to also include a public or nonprofit organization that is exempt from federal income taxation under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or exempt from state income taxation under Section 23701d of the Revenue and Taxation Code.
- 2) Redefines “grantee” to mean a community-based organization that receives a grant pursuant to the Act.
- 3) Makes the C.R.I.S.E.S. Grant Pilot Program subject to an appropriation in the annual Budget Act.

- 4) Directs the department and stakeholder workgroup to award grants to eligible grantees, as determined by the department and stakeholder workgroup, based on grant eligibility criteria developed in partnership with the stakeholder workgroup.
- 5) Removes authority for grantees to solicit partnerships with community-based organizations and award the same authority to the department, and makes conforming changes.
- 6) Specifies that an eligible grantee is a community-based organization and that law enforcement agencies and organizations, and organizations partnered with law enforcement, are not eligible grantees.
- 7) Strikes authority for a grantee and community-based organization that receives funds to collaborate on program planning and implementation of community-based alternatives to law enforcement, as specified.
- 8) Requires the department to convene regular meetings with the stakeholder workgroup at least quarterly.
- 9) Requires the department, within 30 days after the effective date of the Act, to review existing appointments to the stakeholder workgroup and, as necessary, identify vacancies or members who are no longer able or willing to serve. Requires the department to confirm in writing that each stakeholder has acknowledged their ability and willingness to serve.
 - a) Requires the department, no later than 45 days after the effective date of the Act, to issue a public solicitation for applications from interested stakeholders to fill any vacancies. Requires the solicitations to be posted on the department's internet website and distributed to organizations and individuals with relevant expertise or interest in community-based crisis response.
 - b) Requires the department, no later than 75 days after the effective date of the Act, to fill any vacancies and reconvene the stakeholder workgroup.
- 10) Deems any member of the stakeholder workgroup who has not attended three or more consecutive meetings without prior notice to the department to have vacated their seat and requires the department to fill the vacancy within 90 days.
- 11) Requires the department to fill vacancies to the stakeholder workgroup as they occur within 90 days of the vacancy.
- 12) Requires the department, upon allocation of funding to eligible entities, to report to the Legislature, and post publicly on its internet website, information about the grants funded, including which specific eligible entities received grants, the grant award number for each eligible entity, and the length of time each pilot program or project will be administered.
- 13) Removes the requirement that the department include resulting policy recommendations to provide guidance to the Legislature and Governor in fully implementing and sealing a permanent program in its public report.

- 14) Authorizes the department to enter into agreements with one or more entities to facilitate implementation of the program by providing technical assistance to members of the stakeholder workgroup.
- 15) Includes a sunset date of January 1, 2032.
- 16) Includes an urgency clause and makes findings relevant to the urgency.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Creates the C.R.I.S.E.S. Act, and establishes the C.R.I.S.E.S. Grant Pilot Program, administered by CDSS, to award grants to CBOs that create, strengthen or provide community-based alternatives to law enforcement for crisis response, with stakeholder workgroup oversight, reporting, and evaluation. (Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Sections 18999.90 – 18999.95.)
- 2) Creates the Miles Hall Lifeline and Suicide Prevention Act and establishes the 988 Suicide Behavioral Health Crisis System to implement a statewide 988 crisis response system that includes crisis call centers, mobile crisis teams, and crisis stabilization services, and to coordinate implementation with the Office of Emergency Services to ensure interoperability between the 988 and 911 systems. (Government Code Section 53123.1 – 23123.6.)

FISCAL EFFECT: As currently in print this bill is keyed fiscal.

COMMENTS: There is substantial data supporting the use of non-law enforcement crisis-response tools. Law enforcement officers receive extensive training in how to respond in situations involving threats of violence, such as active shooter risks or other equivalent threats. However, when a person is experiencing mental health or substance-use crises, interaction with law enforcement may be more harmful to all parties involved. Between 2017 and 2020, over 40% of incidents involving fatal injuries included a report of mental health conditions, increasing to nearly 60% in 2022. (McConville and Premkumar, *A Closer Look at Behavioral Health Crises and Police Responses - Public Policy Institute of California* (May 15, 2025) Public Policy Institute of California available at: <https://www.ppic.org/blog/a-closer-look-at-behavioral-health-crises-and-police-responses/>.)

In 2021, the Legislature established the original Community Response Initiative to Strengthen Emergency Systems (C.R.I.S.E.S.) Act via AB 118 (Kamlager) Chap. 694, Stats. 2021. As detailed in the legislative history, the goal of the original program was to bolster non-law enforcement response options to crises: “AB 118 scales up community-based responses to emergencies in specific situations instead of the police. Too frequently, police respond to level two emergency calls about homelessness, substance abuse, mental health and other issues with level 10 force. Professionals at community-based organizations have the expertise, relationships and networks to meet the needs of their communities.” (Senate Committee on Governmental Organization Analysis, July 6, 2021.) The original C.R.I.S.E.S program, codified at Welfare and Institutions Code Section 18999.90 *et seq* entrusted the Department of Social Services the authority to award grants to local governments who were then tasked with awarding program funds to “qualifying community-based organizations, to create and strengthen community-based alternatives to law enforcement[.]” (Welfare and Institutions Code Section 18999.93 (b)(1).) The department awarded \$9.5 million to community-based organizations for emergency response pilots in Oakland, Marin County, Sacramento County, and Santa Cruz County. (Community

Response Initiative to Strengthen Emergency Systems (C.R.I.S.I.S.) Act Grant Pilot Program Award Announcement.) The C.R.I.S.E.S. Program is set to sunset in June of this year. According to the author:

Every day, people experiencing mental health or substance use crises are met not with care, but with uniforms and armed response that can escalate already intense situations. These moments of vulnerability call for compassion, understanding, and specialized support, yet too often, the system sends the wrong kind of help. When law enforcement is asked to respond to crises they are not trained to handle, situations can escalate quickly. Too many of these encounters have ended in unnecessary trauma, injury, or loss of life, all which could have been prevented with the right response. Filling a gap between enforcement and those needing help, AB 1932 seeks to provide culturally competent care that will ultimately save lives. By using community-based response measures, the outcomes of emergencies that require a lacking presence of enforcement are rather met with support. This bill does not create a new system but instead extends the already working response of capable organizations serving as cost effective lifesaving resources.

This bill seeks to renew the C.R.I.S.E.S. Program with a few key differences. First, rather than issuing grants to local governments who would then serve as a conduit to local community-based organizations, this bill authorizes the department to instead solicit applications directly from qualified nonprofits. The bill maintains the Department of Social Services as the oversight body for the program, but also requires the department to establish a stakeholder work group to issue those awards based on eligibility set in collaboration between the department and the work group. The bill also establishes a sunset of 2032 and makes the program subject to an appropriation of the annual Budget Act, rather than limiting the appropriation to a single year's budget. The bill retains the existing immunity language, shielding the state from any liability that may stem from activity conducted pursuant to a grant. While broad immunity protections such as this one are typically ill-advised, to the extent this measure seeks to encourage innovation on the subject of crisis response, such a shield is understandable.

In sum, this bill reasonably extends what has appeared to be a meaningful program to promote development of non-law enforcement alternatives to crises response.

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: This bill is co-sponsored by Communities United for Restorative Justice (CURYJ), the Anti Police-Terror Project (APTP), and the Youth Justice Coalition (YJC). It enjoys support from an impressive list of community-based organizations, civil rights advocacy organizations, and restorative justice advocates. In support of the measure, the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color submit:

In light of recent immigration enforcement actions that have intensified fear in many immigrant communities, it is crucial to invest in community-based alternatives to law enforcement responses, including, but not limited to, providing mobile crisis teams or community para-medicine teams to respond to emergencies involving mental health, intimate partner violence, community violence, substance abuse, or natural disasters. These community-based emergency response teams shall not include law enforcement officers or agencies as first responders or co-responders.

Vulnerable populations facing a psychiatric emergency, an overdose, displacement after a wildfire, intimate partner violence, community violence, or homelessness may hesitate to call law enforcement if they fear police violence or arrest for themselves or their loved ones. **This**

fear can delay lifesaving care, worsen health outcomes, and increase overall risk to the broader community.

Community-led response teams—composed of trusted local organizations—can provide culturally competent, trauma-informed, linguistically accessible care without the threat of violence or arrest. By separating emergency care from policing, these models build trust, encourage early intervention, and ensure that vulnerable residents can safely access support in moments of acute need. Investing in such alternatives promotes public health, strengthens disaster resilience, and enhances community safety for everyone.

In many counties across the state, community organizations are successfully responding to emergency situations involving people experiencing a public health crisis. Despite their positive impact and the cost savings that community-oriented responses to emergencies present, California needs to do more to support and scale these efforts. Instead, armed officers continue to respond to emergencies that would be better addressed by community organizations with trained peer support experts, mental health providers, or crisis counselors.

In many cases, involving armed officers can heighten feelings of fear and instability, increasing the risk of arrest, deportation, or harm to the person experiencing a crisis. It can also lead to unnecessary expenses, including the time and resources required for officers to respond. The arrival of armed officers can quickly escalate a crisis and intensify an already volatile situation. In the most tragic circumstances, the use of force against someone in crisis has resulted in preventable deaths and serious injuries—outcomes that underscore the need for responses led by trained care and support practitioners rather than armed enforcement.

The CRISES Act program addresses a critical gap in emergency response services for vulnerable communities. It ensures that undocumented people, young people of color, people with disabilities, gender-nonconforming individuals, those disproportionately impacted by police contact, formerly incarcerated individuals, and unhoused people can access safe, high-quality emergency support. These services are delivered by trained practitioners who provide culturally responsive care and who have established, trusted relationships within the communities they serve.

For many individuals in these groups, deep-rooted fears and stigma create significant barriers to engaging with armed officers. In such situations, support from community-based practitioners with a demonstrated history of service and trust can be far more effective and beneficial than a law enforcement response.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Anti Police-terror Project (co-sponsor)

Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice (CURYJ) (co-sponsor)

Youth Justice Coalition (co-sponsor)

A New Path (parents for Addiction Treatment & Healing)

All of US or None (HQ)

Alliance for Boys and Men of Color

Bend the Arc: Jewish Action California

Black Arts Movement Business District CDC (BAMD-CDC)

Black Lives Matter California
Buen Vecino
Cal Voices
California Coalition for Women Prisoners
California Faculty Association
California Peer Watch
California United for a Responsible Budget (CURB)
Californians for Safety and Justice (CSJ)
Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice
Community Coalition
Courage California
Disability Rights California
Ella Baker Center for Human Rights
Empowering Marginalized Asian Communities (EMAC)
Felony Murder Elimination Project
Glide Foundation
Greater Sacramento Urban League
Haywood Burns Institute
Health Care for US
Health in Partnership
Justice Teams Network
Justice2jobs Coalition
Kindred
LA Defensa
Legal Services for Prisoners With Children
Mental Health America of California
National Compadres Network
Next Door Solutions to Domestic Violence
Orange County Rapid Response Network
Peace and Justice Law Center
Prevention Institute
San Francisco Public Defender's Office
Sister Warriors Freedom Coalition
Silicon Valley De-bug
South Bay People Power
Street Level Health Project
The Collective for Liberatory Lawyering
The Collective Healing and Transformation Project
Trabajadores Unidos Workers United
Transformative Programming Works
Transitions Clinic Network
Urban Peace Institute
Youth Leadership Institute

Opposition

None on file

Analysis Prepared by: Manuela Boucher-de la Cadena / JUD. / (916) 319-2334