

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To promote mental wellness and resilience and prevent and heal mental health, behavioral health, and psychosocial conditions through developmentally and culturally appropriate community programs, and award grants for the purpose of establishing, operating, or expanding community-based mental wellness and resilience programs, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To promote mental wellness and resilience and prevent and heal mental health, behavioral health, and psychosocial conditions through developmentally and culturally appropriate community programs, and award grants for the purpose of establishing, operating, or expanding community-based mental wellness and resilience programs, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Community Mental
3 Wellness and Resilience Act of 2023”.

4 **SEC. 2. GRANT PROGRAM FOR COMMUNITY MENTAL**
5 **WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE PROGRAMS.**

6 Title III of the Public Health Service Act is amended
7 by inserting after section 317V, as added by section 2201
8 of the PREVENT Pandemics Act (Public Law–117–328)
9 the following:

10 **“SEC. 317W. GRANT PROGRAM FOR COMMUNITY MENTAL**
11 **WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE PROGRAMS.**

12 “(a) GRANTS.—

13 “(1) PLANNING GRANTS.—

14 “(A) AWARDS.—The Secretary, acting
15 through the Director of the Centers for Disease
16 Control and Prevention, in consultation with
17 the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and
18 Substance Use and the Administrator of the
19 Health Resources and Services Administration,
20 shall award grants to eligible organizations—

21 “(i) to organize a resilience coordi-
22 nating network;

23 “(ii) to perform assessments of need
24 with respect to community mental wellness
25 and resilience; and

1 “(iii) to prepare an application for a
2 grant under paragraph (2).

3 “(B) AMOUNT.—The amount of a grant
4 under subparagraph (A), with respect to any el-
5 igible organization seeking such a grant shall
6 not exceed \$250,000.

7 “(C) ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATION DE-
8 FINED.—In this paragraph, the term ‘eligible
9 organization’ means an organization that—

10 “(i) is a nonprofit or community-
11 based entity eligible to be a part of the re-
12 silience coordinating network under sub-
13 section (c); and

14 “(ii) has documented support from at
15 least 3 other such entities.

16 “(2) PROGRAM GRANTS.—

17 “(A) AWARDS.—The Secretary, acting
18 through the Director of the Centers for Disease
19 Control and Prevention, in consultation with
20 the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and
21 Substance Use and the Administrator of the
22 Health Resources and Services Administration,
23 shall carry out a program of awarding grants to
24 resilience coordinating networks, on a competi-
25 tive basis, for the purpose of establishing, oper-

1 ating, or expanding community mental wellness
2 and resilience programs.

3 “(B) AMOUNT.—The amount of a grant
4 under subparagraph (A) shall not exceed
5 \$500,000 each year over a period not to exceed
6 4 years.

7 “(C) RURAL SET ASIDE.—

8 “(i) IN GENERAL.—Of the funds ap-
9 propriated to carry out this section for a
10 fiscal year, 20 percent of such funds shall
11 be reserved to award grants to community
12 mental wellness and resilience programs in
13 rural areas.

14 “(ii) RURAL AREA DESCRIBED.—For
15 purposes of clause (i), a rural area is a re-
16 gion outside of an urban or suburban area.

17 “(iii) INCLUSION.—For purposes of
18 clause (ii), a rural area may include indi-
19 viduals and organizations from multiple
20 towns in the county or region involved.

21 “(b) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—A program carried
22 out using funds awarded under subsection (a)(2) shall
23 take a public health approach to mental health prevention
24 and promotion, using the best available evidence, to

1 strengthen the entire community’s psychological and emo-
2 tional wellness and resilience, including by—

3 “(1) collecting and analyzing information from
4 residents of the community as well as quantitative
5 data to identify—

6 “(A) protective factors that enhance and
7 sustain the community’s capacity for mental
8 wellness and resilience; and

9 “(B) risk factors that undermine such ca-
10 pacity;

11 “(2) strengthening such protective factors and
12 addressing such risk factors;

13 “(3) building awareness, skills, tools, and lead-
14 ership in the community to—

15 “(A) facilitate using a public health ap-
16 proach to mental health; and

17 “(B) detect, prevent, and heal mental
18 health, behavioral health, and psychosocial con-
19 ditions among all adults and youth; and

20 “(4) developing, implementing, and continually
21 evaluating and improving a comprehensive strategic
22 plan for carrying out the activities described in para-
23 graphs (1), (2) and (3) that includes utilizing devel-
24 opmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate

1 evidence-based, evidence-informed, promising-best,
2 or indigenous practices for—

3 “(A) engaging residents in building social
4 connections, including across cultural, geo-
5 graphic, and economic boundaries;

6 “(B) enhancing local economic, social, and
7 environmental conditions, including with respect
8 to the build environment;

9 “(C) becoming trauma-informed and learn-
10 ing simple self-administrable mental wellness
11 and resilience skills;

12 “(D) engaging in community activities that
13 strengthen mental wellness and resilience;

14 “(E) partaking in nonclinical group and
15 community-minded prevention and recovery pro-
16 grams; and

17 “(F) other activities to promote mental
18 wellness and resilience and prevent or heal indi-
19 vidual and community traumas.

20 “(c) RESILIENCE COORDINATING NETWORK.—

21 “(1) IN GENERAL.—In this section, the term
22 ‘resilience coordinating network’ means a network
23 that is composed of 1 or more representatives from
24 at least 5 of the categories listed in paragraph (2).

1 “(2) CATEGORIES.—The categories listed in
2 this paragraph are the following:

3 “(A) Grassroots groups, community-based
4 organizations, neighborhood associations, and
5 volunteer civic organizations.

6 “(B) Elementary and secondary schools,
7 high-needs schools, institutions of higher edu-
8 cation, including community colleges, job-train-
9 ing programs, and other education or training
10 agencies or organizations.

11 “(C) Youth serving organizations, such as
12 youth after-school and summer programs.

13 “(D) Parental, family, and early childhood
14 education programs.

15 “(E) Faith and spirituality organizations.

16 “(F) Senior care organizations.

17 “(G) Climate change mitigation and adap-
18 tation, and environmental conservation, groups
19 and organizations.

20 “(H) Social and environmental justice
21 groups and organizations.

22 “(I) Disaster preparedness and emergency
23 response groups and organizations.

24 “(J) Businesses and business associations.

1 “(K) Organizations involved with commu-
2 nity safety, security, and the justice system.

3 “(L) Social work, mental health, behavioral
4 health, substance use, physical health, public
5 health, and other professionals, groups, organi-
6 zations, agencies, and institutions in the human
7 health and social services fields.

8 “(M) The general public, including individ-
9 uals who have experienced adverse mental
10 health or behavioral health conditions who can
11 represent and engage with populations relevant
12 to the community.

13 “(d) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary shall
14 provide, directly or through grants to, or contracts with
15 public or private entities, to eligible organizations and re-
16 silience coordinating networks technical assistance—

17 “(1) in developing applications for grants under
18 paragraph (1) or (2) of subsection (a); and

19 “(2) by sharing best practices learned from re-
20 silience coordinating networks.

21 “(e) REPORT.—

22 “(1) SUBMISSION.—Not later than December
23 31, 2028, the Secretary shall submit a report to
24 Congress on the results of the grants under sub-
25 section (a)(1).

1 health, behavioral health, and psychosocial
2 conditions result from numerous inter-
3 related personal, family, social, economic,
4 and environmental factors that require
5 multipronged community-based interven-
6 tions; and

7 “(iii) using the best available evidence
8 to take action and implement strategies
9 that support mental health prevention and
10 recovery efforts.

11 “(2) The term ‘community’ means people,
12 groups, and organizations that reside in or work
13 within a specific geographic area, such as a city,
14 neighborhood, subdivision, or urban, suburban, or
15 rural locale.

16 “(3) The term ‘community trauma’ means a
17 traumatic event or events that are shared by a com-
18 munity and that have lasting adverse effects on the
19 health and well-being of the community.

20 “(4) The term ‘protective factors’ means
21 strengths, skills, resources, and characteristics
22 that—

23 “(A) are associated with a lower likelihood
24 of negative outcomes of adversities; or

1 “(B) reduce the impact on people of toxic
2 stresses or a traumatic experience.

3 “(5) The term ‘mental wellness’ means a state
4 of well-being in which an individual experiences posi-
5 tive emotional functioning, pursues self-defined
6 goals, establishes and maintains meaningful relation-
7 ships, and feels a sense of meaning and purpose. At
8 the individual level, well-being is based on funda-
9 mental social, cognitive, and emotional skills that
10 help individuals react, cope, and adapt in healthy
11 ways to stress, uncertainty, adversity, trauma, and
12 change. At the community level, well-being is influ-
13 enced by the social, economic, educational, and envi-
14 ronmental factors and conditions that either enhance
15 or diminish well-being within the community.

16 “(6) The term ‘psychosocial problem’ refers to
17 social and environmental structures and processes
18 that adversely effect and influence an individual’s
19 mental state.

20 “(7) The term ‘resilience’ means that people de-
21 velop cognitive, psychological, emotional capabilities
22 and social connections that enable them to calm
23 their body, mind, emotions, and behaviors during
24 toxic stresses or traumatic experiences in ways that
25 enable them to—

1 “(A) respond without negative con-
2 sequences for themselves or others; and

3 “(B) use the experiences as catalysts to de-
4 velop a constructive new sense of meaning, pur-
5 pose, and hope.

6 “(8) The term ‘toxic stress’ means exposure to
7 prolonged, severe, and stressful situations with no
8 period of recovery or support.

9 “(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

10 “(1) IN GENERAL.—To carry out this section,
11 there is authorized to be appropriated \$36,000,000
12 for the period of fiscal years 2024 through 2028.

13 “(2) LIMITATION.—Of the amount made avail-
14 able to carry out this section for a fiscal year, not
15 more than 5 percent of such funds may be used to
16 carry out subsection (d).”.