

Chapter 2.56 RCW
ADMINISTRATOR FOR THE COURTS

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RCW 2.56.010 Office created—Appointment of administrator.

There shall be a state office to be known as the administrative office of the courts. The executive officer of the administrative office of the courts is the administrator for the courts, who shall be appointed by and hold office at the pleasure of the supreme court of this state. The administrator's salary shall be fixed by the supreme court. [2005 c 282 s 5; 1984 c 20 s 1; 1979 ex.s. c 255 s 7; 1974 ex.s. c 156 s 1; 1969 c 93 s 1; 1957 c 259 s 1.]

Effective date—1979 ex.s. c 255: See note following RCW 43.03.010.

RCW 2.56.020 Appointment, compensation of assistants—Administrator, assistants not to practice law. (1) The administrator for the courts, with the approval of the chief justice of the supreme court of this state, shall appoint and fix the compensation of such assistants as are necessary to enable performance of the power and duties vested in the administrative office of the courts.

(2) Neither the administrator nor any assistant shall engage in the private practice of law except as otherwise provided for in this section.

(3) Except as provided in subsection (4) of this section, nothing in this section prohibits the administrator or any assistant from:

(a) Performing legal services for himself or herself or his or her immediate family; or

(b) Performing legal services of a charitable nature.

(4) The legal services identified in subsection (3) of this section may not be performed if they would interfere with the duties of the administrator or any assistant and no services that are performed shall be deemed within the scope of employment. [2005 c 282 s 6; 1957 c 259 s 2.]

RCW 2.56.030 Powers and duties. The administrator for the courts shall, under the supervision and direction of the chief justice:

(1) Examine the administrative methods and systems employed in the offices of the judges, clerks, stenographers, and employees of the courts and make recommendations, through the chief justice, for the improvement of the same;

(2) Examine the state of the dockets of the courts and determine the need for assistance by any court;

(3) Make recommendations to the chief justice relating to the assignment of judges where courts are in need of assistance and carry out the direction of the chief justice as to the assignments of judges to counties and districts where the courts are in need of assistance;

(4) Collect and compile statistical and other data and make reports of the business transacted by the courts and transmit the same

to the chief justice to the end that proper action may be taken in respect thereto;

(5) Prepare and submit budget estimates of state appropriations necessary for the maintenance and operation of the judicial system and make recommendations in respect thereto;

(6) Collect statistical and other data and make reports relating to the expenditure of public moneys, state and local, for the maintenance and operation of the judicial system and the offices connected therewith;

(7) Obtain reports from clerks of courts in accordance with law or rules adopted by the supreme court of this state on cases and other judicial business in which action has been delayed beyond periods of time specified by law or rules of court and make report thereof to supreme court of this state;

(8) Act as secretary of the judicial conference referred to in RCW 2.56.060;

(9) Submit annually, as of February 1st, to the chief justice, a report of the activities of the administrator's office for the preceding calendar year including activities related to courthouse security;

(10) Administer programs and standards for the training and education of judicial personnel;

(11) Examine the need for new superior court and district court judge positions under an objective workload analysis. The results of the objective workload analysis shall be reviewed by the board for judicial administration which shall make recommendations to the legislature. It is the intent of the legislature that an objective workload analysis become the basis for creating additional district and superior court positions, and recommendations should address that objective;

(12) Provide staff to the judicial retirement account plan under chapter 2.14 RCW;

(13) Attend to such other matters as may be assigned by the supreme court of this state;

(14) Within available funds, develop a curriculum for a general understanding of child development, placement, and treatment resources, as well as specific legal skills and knowledge of relevant statutes including chapters 13.32A, 13.34, and 13.40 RCW, cases, court rules, interviewing skills, and special needs of the abused or neglected child. This curriculum shall be completed and made available to all juvenile court judges, court personnel, and service providers and be updated yearly to reflect changes in statutes, court rules, or case law;

(15) Develop, in consultation with the entities set forth in RCW 2.56.150(3), a comprehensive statewide curriculum for persons who act as guardians ad litem under Title 13 or 26 RCW. The curriculum shall be made available July 1, 2008, and include specialty sections on child development, child sexual abuse, child physical abuse, child neglect, domestic violence, clinical and forensic investigative and interviewing techniques, family reconciliation and mediation services, and relevant statutory and legal requirements. The curriculum shall be made available to all superior court judges, court personnel, and all persons who act as guardians ad litem;

(16) Develop a curriculum for a general understanding of hate crime offenses, as well as specific legal skills and knowledge of RCW 9A.36.080, relevant cases, court rules, and the special needs of hate crime offense victims. This curriculum shall be made available to all

superior court and court of appeals judges and to all justices of the supreme court;

(17) Develop, in consultation with the criminal justice training commission and the commissions established under chapters 43.113, 43.115, and 43.117 RCW, a curriculum for a general understanding of ethnic and cultural diversity and its implications for working with youth of color and their families. The curriculum shall be available to all superior court judges and court commissioners assigned to juvenile court, and other court personnel. Ethnic and cultural diversity training shall be provided annually so as to incorporate cultural sensitivity and awareness into the daily operation of juvenile courts statewide;

(18) Authorize the use of closed circuit television and other electronic equipment in judicial proceedings. The administrator shall promulgate necessary standards and procedures and shall provide technical assistance to courts as required;

(19) Develop a Washington family law handbook in accordance with RCW 2.56.180;

(20) Administer state funds for improving the operation of the courts and provide support for court coordinating councils, under the direction of the board for judicial administration;

(21) Administer the family and juvenile court improvement grant program;

(22)(a) Administer and distribute amounts appropriated under RCW 43.08.250(2) for district court judges' and qualifying elected municipal court judges' salary contributions. The administrator for the courts shall develop a distribution formula for these amounts that does not differentiate between district and elected municipal court judges.

(b) A city qualifies for state contribution of elected municipal court judges' salaries under (a) of this subsection if:

(i) The judge is serving in an elected position;

(ii) The city has established by ordinance that a full-time judge is compensated at a rate equivalent to at least ninety-five percent, but not more than one hundred percent, of a district court judge salary or for a part-time judge on a pro rata basis the same equivalent; and

(iii) The city has certified to the office of the administrator for the courts that the conditions in (b)(i) and (ii) of this subsection have been met;

(23) Subject to the availability of funds specifically appropriated therefor, assist courts in the development and implementation of language access plans required under RCW 2.43.090. [2025 c 55 s 11; 2019 c 271 s 5; 2009 c 479 s 2. Prior: 2008 c 291 s 4; 2008 c 279 s 3; 2007 c 496 s 302; prior: 2005 c 457 s 7; 2005 c 282 s 7; 2002 c 49 s 2; 1997 c 41 s 2; 1996 c 249 s 2; 1994 c 240 s 1; 1993 c 415 s 3; 1992 c 205 s 115; 1989 c 95 s 2; prior: 1988 c 234 s 2; 1988 c 109 s 23; 1987 c 363 s 6; 1981 c 132 s 1; 1957 c 259 s 3.]

Effective date—2009 c 479: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect July 1, 2009." [2009 c 479 s 76.]

Part headings not law—2007 c 496: See note following RCW 26.09.002.

Intent—2005 c 457: See note following RCW 43.08.250.

Declaration—2002 c 49: See note following RCW 2.56.180.

Intent—1996 c 249: "It is the intent of this act to make improvements to the guardian and guardian ad litem systems currently in place for the protection of minors and incapacitated persons."
[1996 c 249 s 1.]

Intent—1993 c 415: "Pursuant to the work of the juvenile justice task force created by the 1991 legislature to undertake a study of Washington state's juvenile justice system, the department of social and health services and the commission on African American affairs commissioned an independent study of racial disproportionality in the state's juvenile justice system. The study team, which documented evidence of disparity in the treatment of juvenile offenders of color throughout the system, provided recommendations to the legislature on December 15, 1992. The study recommends cultural diversity training for juvenile court and law enforcement personnel, expanded data collection on juvenile offenders throughout the system, development of uniform prosecutorial standards for juvenile offenders, changes to the consolidated juvenile services program and funding formula, dissemination of information to families and communities regarding juvenile court procedures, and examination of juvenile disposition standards for racial and/or ethnic bias.

It is the intent of the legislature to implement the recommendations of this study in an effort to discourage differential treatment of youth of color and their families who come in contact with the juvenile courts in this state, and to promote racial and ethnic sensitivity and awareness throughout the juvenile court system." [1993 c 415 s 1.]

Part headings not law—Severability—1992 c 205: See notes following RCW 13.40.010.

Construction—Severability—1989 c 95: See notes following RCW 9A.36.080.

Legislative findings—1988 c 234: "The legislature recognizes the need for appropriate training of juvenile court judges, attorneys, court personnel, and service providers in the dependency system and at-risk youth systems." [1988 c 234 s 1.]

Effective date—1988 c 109: See note following RCW 2.10.030.

Ethnic and cultural diversity—Development of curriculum for understanding—Training: RCW 43.101.280.

RCW 2.56.032 Youth-level secure detention data—Uniform data standards—Annual reports. (1)(a) All juvenile courts shall transmit youth-level secure detention data and juvenile diversion agreement data to the administrative office of the courts.

(b) Data may either be entered into the statewide management information system for juvenile courts or securely transmitted to the administrative office of the courts at least monthly. Juvenile courts

shall provide, at a minimum, the name and date of birth for the youth and the referral number or court case number associated with the event. For secure detention events, courts shall provide the reasons for admission to the juvenile detention facility, the date of admission, the date of exit, and the time the youth spent in secure confinement. For diversion agreement events, the courts shall provide the date of the diversion agreement and the outcome of the agreement.

(c) Courts are also encouraged to report individual-level data reflecting:

(i) Whether a detention alternative, such as electronic monitoring, was used, and the time spent in detention alternatives; and

(ii) Informal diversion events where no formal diversion agreement is entered into.

(d) The administrative office of the courts and the juvenile court administrators must work to develop uniform data standards for detention and diversion.

(2) The administrative office of the courts shall deliver an annual statewide report to the legislature that details the number of Washington youth who are placed into detention facilities during the preceding calendar year. The first report shall be delivered by March 1, 2017, and shall detail the most serious reason for detention and youth gender, race, and ethnicity. The report must have a specific emphasis on youth who are detained for reasons relating to a truancy, at-risk youth, or a child in need of services petition. The report must:

(a) Consider the written findings described in RCW 7.21.030(2)(e)(ii)(B), and provide an analysis of the rationale and evidence used and the less restrictive options considered;

(b) Monitor the utilization of alternatives to detention;

(c) Track trends in the use of at-risk youth petitions;

(d) Track trends in the use of secure residential programs with intensive wraparound services; and

(e) Track the race and gender of youth with at-risk petitions.

(3) The administrative office of the courts shall deliver an annual statewide report to the legislature that details, disaggregated by age, race, ethnicity, gender, tribal affiliation if known, and county (including the rate per 1,000 youth), the number of Washington youth who enter into a formal diversion agreement each calendar year. The report must indicate:

(a) How many diversions are entered into before filing an information and how many diversions are entered into after an information is filed;

(b) The number of successfully completed diversions;

(c) The rate of successfully completed diversions;

(d) The types of alleged offenses referred to diversion;

(e) The number and rate of refused diversions and whether the diversion was refused by the youth or the court;

(f) The number and type of disposition alternatives granted each calendar year and how many are revoked;

(g) The number of law enforcement referrals to a prosecuting attorney alleging the commission of a juvenile offense each calendar year organized by referring agency; and

(h) The number of school referrals to a prosecuting attorney alleging the commission of a juvenile offense each calendar year organized by school district. [2025 c 140 s 6; 2019 c 312 s 17; 2016 c 205 s 19.]

Findings—Intent—2025 c 140: See note following RCW 13.40.080.

Effective date—Findings—Intent—2019 c 312: See notes following RCW 7.21.080.

RCW 2.56.038 Definition—Single judge court. For purposes of this title and Title 3 RCW, unless the context clearly requires otherwise, "single judge court" means a court or judicial district that has only one judge. [2022 c 74 s 1.]

RCW 2.56.040 Distribution of work of courts by chief justice—Unavailability of presiding judge in single judge court. (1) The chief justice shall consider all recommendations of the administrator for the assignment of judges, and, in the discretion of the chief justice, direct any judge whose calendar, in the judgment of the chief justice, will permit, to hold court where need therefor exists, to the end that the courts in this state shall function with maximum efficiency, and that the work of other courts shall be equitably distributed. It shall be the duty of every judge to obey such direction of the chief justice unless excused by the chief justice for sufficient cause.

(2)(a) If due to illness, incapacity, resignation, death, or other unavailability the presiding judge in a single judge court is unable to fulfill the duties of the office, and either (i) no person has been designated by the presiding judge to serve as presiding judge pro tempore or (ii) the previously designated presiding judge pro tempore resigns, is removed from office, or is no longer able to serve, the chief justice may appoint another judicial officer or other person as the presiding judge pro tempore who meets the qualifications of a judge pro tempore, subject to (c) of this subsection, during the remaining period of unavailability or until a vacancy is filled as provided by law.

(b) The chief justice may appoint someone other than the previously designated or appointed individual to serve as presiding judge pro tempore whenever the chief justice determines that the administration of justice would be better served by appointment of someone else to fulfill the presiding judge duties, subject to (c) of this subsection, during the remaining period of unavailability or until the vacancy is filled as provided by law.

(c) The chief justice, or designee, shall consult with the local legislative and executive authorities before removing or appointing a presiding judge pro tempore under (a) or (b) of this subsection.

(d) Nothing in this section is intended to modify the role of the commission on judicial conduct as provided in Article IV, section 31 of the Washington state Constitution and chapter 2.64 RCW. [2022 c 74 s 2; 2005 c 182 s 1; 1957 c 259 s 4.]

Visiting judge: RCW 2.08.140 through 2.08.170, 2.08.200.

RCW 2.56.050 Judges, clerks, other officers, to comply with requests of administrator. The judges and clerks of the courts and all other officers, state and local, shall comply with all requests made by the administrator, after approval by the chief justice, for

information and statistical data bearing on the state of the dockets of such courts and such other information as may reflect the business transacted by them and the expenditure of public moneys for the maintenance and operation of the judicial system. [1957 c 259 s 5.]

RCW 2.56.060 Annual conference of judges—Judge's expenses. The supreme court of this state may provide by rule or special order for the holding in this state of an annual conference of the judges of the courts of record of this state, judges of the courts of limited jurisdiction, and invited members of the bar, for the consideration of matters relating to judicial business, the improvement of the judicial system and the administration of justice. Each judge attending such annual judicial conference shall be entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060 as now existing or hereafter amended, to be paid from state appropriations made for the purposes of this chapter. [1981 c 331 s 15; 1975-'76 2nd ex.s. c 34 s 6; 1957 c 259 s 6.]

Court Congestion Reduction Act of 1981—Purpose—Severability—1981 c 331: See notes following RCW 2.32.070.

Effective date—Severability—1975-'76 2nd ex.s. c 34: See notes following RCW 2.08.115.

RCW 2.56.070 Holding court in another county—Reimbursement for expenses. For attendance while holding court in another county or district pursuant to the direction of the chief justice, a judge shall be entitled to receive from the county to which he or she is sent reimbursement for subsistence, lodging, and travel expenses in accordance with the rates applicable to state officers under RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060 as now or hereafter amended. [2011 c 336 s 71; 1981 c 186 s 4; 1957 c 259 s 7.]

RCW 2.56.080 Chapter applies to supreme and superior courts, court of appeals, and courts of limited jurisdiction. This chapter shall apply to the following courts: The supreme court, the court of appeals, the superior courts; and, when and to the extent so ordered by the supreme court, to the courts of limited jurisdiction of this state, including district courts. [1987 c 202 s 108; 1971 c 81 s 14; 1957 c 259 s 8.]

Intent—1987 c 202: See note following RCW 2.04.190.

RCW 2.56.090 Disbursement of appropriated funds. Any moneys appropriated for the purposes of this chapter shall be disbursed, upon order of the chief justice, on warrants drawn by the state auditor on the general fund. [1957 c 259 s 9.]

RCW 2.56.110 Driving while under the influence of intoxicating liquor or any drug—Enhanced enforcement of related laws—Assignment of visiting district judges—Powers, expenses. The administrator for the

courts may assign one or more district judges from other judicial districts to serve as visiting district judges in a judicial district which the administrator determines is experiencing an increase in case filings as the result of enhanced enforcement of laws related to driving, or being in physical control of, a motor vehicle while under the influence of intoxicating liquor or any drug. The prosecuting, city, or town attorney of the county, city, or town in which a judicial district lies, or the presiding judge of the judicial district, may request the administrator for the courts to designate the district as an enhanced enforcement district and to make assignments under this section. An assignment shall be for a specified period of time not to exceed thirty days. A visiting district judge has the same powers as a district judge of the district to which he or she is assigned. A visiting district judge shall be reimbursed for expenses under RCW 2.56.070. [1991 c 290 s 1; 1987 c 202 s 109; 1983 c 165 s 31.]

Intent—1987 c 202: See note following RCW 2.04.190.

Legislative finding, intent—Effective dates—Severability—1983 c 165: See notes following RCW 46.20.308.

Venue, criminal actions: RCW 3.66.070.

RCW 2.56.115 Child safety training—High-potency synthetic opioids and other substances. (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the administrative office of the courts shall develop, deliver, and regularly update training regarding child safety and the risk and danger presented to children and youth by high-potency synthetic opioids and other substances impacting families.

(2) The training established in this section must be:

(a) Informed by the information developed under section 109, chapter 328, Laws of 2024; and

(b) Developed for and made available to judicial officers and system partners in the dependency court system. [2024 c 328 s 110.]

Findings—Intent—2024 c 328: See note following RCW 13.34.050.

RCW 2.56.120 Judicial impact notes—Establishment of procedure—Legislator may request—Copies to be filed. (1) The administrative office of the courts, in cooperation with appropriate legislative committees and legislative staff, shall establish a procedure for the provision of judicial impact notes on the effect legislative bills will have on the workload and administration of the courts of this state. The administrative office of the courts and the office of financial management shall coordinate the development of judicial impact notes with the preparation of fiscal notes under chapters 43.88A and 43.132 RCW.

(2) The administrative office of the courts shall provide a judicial impact note on any legislative proposal at the request of any legislator. The note shall be provided to the requesting legislator and copies filed with the appropriate legislative committees in

accordance with subsection (3) of this section when the proposed legislation is introduced in either house.

(3) When a judicial impact note is prepared and approved by the administrative office of the courts, copies of the note shall be filed with:

- (a) The chairperson of the committee to which the bill was referred upon introduction in the house of origin;
- (b) The senate committee on ways and means;
- (c) The house of representatives committee on ways and means;
- (d) The senate judiciary committee;
- (e) The house of representatives judiciary committee; and
- (f) The office of financial management.

(4) This section shall not prevent either house of the legislature from acting on any bill before it as otherwise provided by the state Constitution, by law, and by the rules and joint rules of the senate and house of representatives, nor shall the lack of any judicial impact note as provided in this section or any error in the accuracy thereof affect the validity of any measure otherwise duly passed by the legislature. [2005 c 282 s 8; 1986 c 158 s 1; 1984 c 258 s 604.]

Court Improvement Act of 1984—Effective dates—Severability—Short title—1984 c 258: See notes following RCW 3.30.010.

RCW 2.56.130 Juvenile laws and court processes and procedures—Informational materials. The administrator for the courts shall, in cooperation with juvenile courts, develop informational materials describing juvenile laws and juvenile court processes and procedures related to such laws, and make such information available to the public. Similar information shall also be made available for the non-English-speaking youth and their families. [1993 c 415 s 5.]

Intent—1993 c 415: See note following RCW 2.56.030.

RCW 2.56.140 Disposition of school attendance violation petitions—Report. The administrator for the courts shall prepare a report for each school year to be submitted to the legislature no later than December 15th of each year that summarizes the disposition of petitions filed with the juvenile court under RCW 28A.225.030, including the number of contempt orders issued to enforce a court's order under RCW 28A.225.030. [1996 c 134 s 8.]

RCW 2.56.150 Review of mandatory use of court-appointed special advocates as guardians ad litem, certification of guardians ad litem and court visitors. (1) The administrator for the courts shall review the advisability and feasibility of the statewide mandatory use of court-appointed special advocates as described in RCW 26.12.175 to act as guardians ad litem in appropriate cases under Titles 13 and 26 RCW. The review must explore the feasibility of obtaining various sources of private and public funding to implement statewide mandatory use of court-appointed special advocates, such as grants and donations, instead of or in combination with raising court fees or assessments.

(2) The administrator shall also conduct a study on the feasibility and desirability of requiring all persons who act as guardians ad litem or court visitors under Titles 11, 13, and 26 RCW to be certified as qualified guardians ad litem or court visitors prior to their eligibility for appointment.

(3) In conducting the review and study the administrator shall consult with: (a) The presidents or directors of all public benefit nonprofit corporations that are eligible to receive state funds under RCW 43.330.135; (b) the attorney general, or a designee; (c) the secretary of the department of social and health services, or a designee; (d) the superior court judges' association; (e) the Washington state bar association; (f) public defenders who represent children under Title 13 or 26 RCW; (g) private attorneys who represent parents under Title 13 or 26 RCW; (h) professionals who evaluate families for the purposes of determining the custody or placement decisions of children; (i) the office of financial management; (j) persons who act as volunteer or compensated guardians ad litem; and (k) parents who have dealt with guardians ad litem or court visitors in court cases. For the purposes of studying the feasibility of a certification requirement for guardians ad litem acting under Title 11 RCW the administrator shall consult with the advisory group formed under RCW 11.130.155.

(4) The administrator shall also conduct a review of problems and concerns about the role of guardians ad litem in actions under Titles 11, 13, and 26 RCW and recommend alternatives to strengthen judicial oversight of guardians ad litem or court visitors and ensure fairness and impartiality of the process. The administrator must accept and obtain comments from parties designated in subsection (3) of this section. [2020 c 312 s 701; 2005 c 282 s 9; 1996 c 249 s 3.]

Effective dates—2020 c 312: See note following RCW 11.130.915.

Presentation of review and study—Time limit—1996 c 249: "The review and study required under section 3 of this act shall be presented to the governor and to the legislature no later than December 1, 1996." [1996 c 249 s 4.]

Intent—1996 c 249: See note following RCW 2.56.030.

RCW 2.56.160 Processing of warrants pilot program. The administrator for the courts shall establish a pilot program for the efficient statewide processing of warrants issued by courts of limited jurisdiction. The pilot program shall contain procedures and criteria for courts of limited jurisdiction to enter into agreements with other courts of limited jurisdiction throughout the state to process each other's warrants when the defendant is within the processing court's jurisdiction. The administrator for the courts shall establish a formula for allocating between the court processing the warrant and the court that issued the warrant any moneys collected and costs associated with the processing of warrants. [2000 c 111 s 1.]

Report to legislature—2000 c 111: "The program established by the office of the administrator for the courts pursuant to RCW 2.56.160 shall by June 1, 2003, report to the legislature on the effectiveness and costs of the pilot program. Copies of the report

shall be distributed to the house of representatives judiciary committee and the senate judiciary committee." [2000 c 111 s 8.]

RCW 2.56.170 Judge pro tempore appointments. A judge pro tempore may be authorized under RCW 2.06.150 or 2.08.180 whenever a judge of the court of appeals or the superior court serves on a judicial commission, board, or committee established by the legislature or the chief justice of the supreme court. The judge pro tempore shall be compensated as specified in RCW 2.06.160 or 2.08.180. [2000 c 165 s 1.]

RCW 2.56.180 Family law handbook. (1) The administrative office of the courts shall create a handbook explaining the sections of Washington law pertaining to the rights and responsibilities of marital partners to each other and to any children during a marriage and a dissolution of marriage. The handbook may also be provided in videotape or other electronic form.

(2) The handbook created under subsection (1) of this section shall be provided by the county auditor when an individual applies for a marriage license under RCW 26.04.140.

(3) The handbook created under subsection (1) of this section shall also be provided to the petitioner when he or she files a petition for dissolution, and to the respondent, unless the respondent did not file a response, notice of appearance, or any other paper in the case or did not appear in court. The administrative office of the courts shall on an annual basis reimburse the counties for each copy of the handbook that is distributed directly to family law parties under this section, provided that the county submits documentation of the number of handbooks distributed on an annual basis.

(4) The information contained in the handbook created under subsection (1) of this section shall be reviewed and updated annually. The handbook must contain the following information:

(a) Information on prenuptial agreements as contracts and as a means of structuring financial arrangements and other aspects of the marital relationship;

(b) Information on shared parental responsibility for children, including establishing a residential schedule for the child in the event of the dissolution of the marriage;

(c) Information on notice requirements and standards for parental relocation;

(d) Information on child support for minor children;

(e) Information on property rights, including equitable distribution of assets and premarital and postmarital property rights;

(f) Information on spousal maintenance;

(g) Information on domestic violence, child abuse, and neglect, including penalties;

(h) Information on the court process for dissolution;

(i) Information on the effects of dissolution on children;

(j) Information on community resources that are available to separating or divorcing persons and their children. [2007 c 496 s 202; 2005 c 282 s 10; 2003 c 225 s 1; 2002 c 49 s 3.]

Effective dates—2007 c 496 ss 201, 202, 204, and 501: See note following RCW 26.12.260.

Part headings not law—2007 c 496: See note following RCW 26.09.002.

Declaration—2002 c 49: "The legislature declares that:

(1) Strong marital relationships result in stronger families, children, and ultimately, stronger communities and place less of a fiscal burden on the state; and

(2) The state has a compelling interest in providing couples, applying for a marriage license, information with regard to marriage and, if contemplated, the effects of divorce." [2002 c 49 s 1.]

RCW 2.56.190 Legal financial obligations—Collection—

Distribution of funds. By October 1, 2003, and annually thereafter, the administrative office of the courts shall distribute such funds to counties for county clerk collection budgets as are appropriated by the legislature for this purpose, using the funding formula recommended by the Washington association of county officials. The administrative office of the courts shall not deduct any amount for indirect or direct costs, and shall distribute the entire amount appropriated by the legislature to the counties for county clerk collection budgets. The administrative office of the courts shall report on the amounts distributed to counties to the appropriate committees of the legislature no later than December 1, 2003, and annually thereafter.

The administrative office of the courts may expend for the purposes of billing for legal financial obligations, such funds as are appropriated for the legislature for this purpose. [2003 c 379 s 21.]

Severability—Effective dates—2003 c 379: See notes following RCW 9.94A.728.

Intent—Purpose—2003 c 379 ss 13-27: See note following RCW 9.94A.760.

RCW 2.56.200 Performance audits. The office of the administrator for the courts is encouraged to conduct performance audits of courts under the authority of the supreme court, in conformity with criteria and methods developed by the board for judicial administration that have been approved by the supreme court. In developing criteria and methods for conducting performance audits, the board for judicial administration is encouraged to consider quality improvement programs, audits, and scoring. The judicial branch is encouraged to submit the results of these efforts to the chief justice of the supreme court or his or her designee, and with any other applicable boards or committees established under the authority of the supreme court to oversee government accountability. [2005 c 385 s 10.]

RCW 2.56.210 Court access and accommodations coordinator—

Duties. (1) Washington state courts are required by chapter 49.60 RCW, the law against discrimination, and by 42 U.S.C. Sec. 12101 et seq., the Americans with disabilities act, to provide equal access to persons with disabilities. To assist the courts to comply with these

laws, the administrative office of the courts shall, subject to the availability of funds appropriated for this purpose, create the position of court access and accommodations coordinator.

(2) The coordinator shall:

(a) Review the needs of courts statewide for training and other assistance required to provide access and accommodation for persons with disabilities;

(b) Provide guidance and assistance upon request;

(c) Identify appropriate assistive devices and establish a system to improve courts' access to such devices.

(3) In carrying out the duties under this section, the coordinator shall consult with persons with disabilities, and shall facilitate communication between the administrative office of the courts and such persons and their representative groups. [2008 c 148 s 1.]

RCW 2.56.220 Family and juvenile court improvement grant program—Creation—Purpose. Subject to the availability of funds appropriated therefor, the family and juvenile court improvement grant program is created.

(1) The purpose of the program is to assist superior courts in improving their family and juvenile court systems, especially in dependency cases, with the goals of:

(a) Assuring a stable and well-trained judiciary in family and juvenile law providing consistency of judicial officers hearing all of the proceedings in a case involving one family, especially in dependency cases; and

(b) Ensuring judicial accountability in implementing specific principles and practices for family and juvenile court.

(2) The administrator for the courts shall develop and administer the program subject to requirements in RCW 2.56.230. As part of administering the program, the administrator for the courts shall define appropriate outcome measures, collect data, and gather information from courts receiving grants. [2008 c 279 s 1.]

RCW 2.56.230 Family and juvenile court improvement grant program—Application process—Program standards. (1) A superior court may apply for grants from the family and juvenile court improvement grant program by submitting a local improvement plan with the administrator for the courts. To be eligible for grant funds, a superior court's local improvement plan must meet the criteria developed by the administrator for the courts and approved by the board for judicial administration. The criteria must be consistent with the principles adopted for unified family courts. At a minimum, the criteria must require that the court's local improvement plan meet the following requirements:

(a) Commit to a chief judge assignment to the family and juvenile court for a minimum of two years;

(b) Implementation of the principle of one judicial team hearing all of the proceedings in a case involving one family, especially in dependency cases;

(c) Require court commissioners and judges assigned to family and juvenile court to receive a minimum of thirty hours specialized training in topics related to family and juvenile matters within six

months of assuming duties in family and juvenile court. Where possible, courts should utilize local, statewide, and national training forums. A judicial officer's recorded educational history may be applied toward the thirty-hour requirement. The topics for training must include:

- (i) Parentage;
 - (ii) Adoption;
 - (iii) Domestic relations;
 - (iv) Dependency and termination of parental rights;
 - (v) Child development;
 - (vi) The impact of child abuse and neglect;
 - (vii) Domestic violence;
 - (viii) Substance use disorder, including the risk and danger presented to children and youth;
 - (ix) Mental health;
 - (x) Juvenile status offenses;
 - (xi) Juvenile offenders;
 - (xii) Self-representation issues;
 - (xiii) Cultural competency;
 - (xiv) Roles of family and juvenile court judges and commissioners;
 - (xv) How to apply the child safety framework to crucial aspects of dependency cases, including safety assessment, safety planning, and case planning; and
 - (xvi) The legal standards for removal of a child based on abuse or neglect; and
- (d) As part of the application for grant funds, submit a spending proposal detailing how the superior court would use the grant funds.
- (2) Courts receiving grant money must use the funds to improve and support family and juvenile court operations based on standards developed by the administrator for the courts and approved by the board for judicial administration. The standards may allow courts to use the funds to:
- (a) Pay for family and juvenile court training of commissioners and judges or pay for pro tem commissioners and judges to assist the court while the commissioners and judges receive training;
 - (b) Pay for the training of other professionals involved in child welfare court proceedings including, but not limited to, attorneys and guardians ad litem;
 - (c) Increase judicial and nonjudicial staff, including administrative staff to improve case coordination and referrals in family and juvenile cases, guardian ad litem volunteers or court-appointed special advocates, security, and other staff;
 - (d) Improve the court facility to better meet the needs of children and families;
 - (e) Improve referral and treatment options for court participants, including enhancing court facilitator programs and family treatment court and increasing the availability of alternative dispute resolution;
 - (f) Enhance existing family and children support services funded by the courts and expand access to social service programs for families and children ordered by the court; and
 - (g) Improve or support family and juvenile court operations in any other way deemed appropriate by the administrator for the courts.
- (3) The administrator for the courts shall allocate available grant moneys based upon the needs of the court as expressed in their local improvement plan.

(4) Money received by the superior court under this program must be used to supplement, not supplant, any other local, state, and federal funds for the court.

(5) Upon receipt of grant funds, the superior court shall submit to the administrator for the courts a spending plan detailing the use of funds. At the end of the fiscal year, the superior court shall submit to the administrator for the courts a financial report comparing the spending plan to actual expenditures. The administrator for the courts shall compile the financial reports and submit them to the appropriate committees of the legislature. [2024 c 328 s 108; 2008 c 279 s 2.]

Findings—Intent—2024 c 328: See note following RCW 13.34.050.

RCW 2.56.240 Reconciling duplicate or conflicting no-contact or protection orders. (1) The administrative office of the courts shall develop guidelines by December 1, 2011, for all courts to establish a process to reconcile duplicate or conflicting no-contact or protection orders issued by courts in this state.

(2) The guidelines developed under subsection (1) of this section must include:

(a) A process to allow any party named in a no-contact or protection order to petition for the purpose of reconciling duplicate or conflicting orders; and

(b) A procedure to address no-contact and protection order data sharing between court jurisdictions in this state.

(3) By January 1, 2011, the administrative office of the courts shall provide a report back to the legislature concerning the progress made to develop the guidelines required by this section. [2010 c 274 s 310.]

Intent—2010 c 274: See note following RCW 10.31.100.

RCW 2.56.245 Protection order hope cards program—Provision of information. The administrative office of the courts shall ensure that the information required in RCW 7.105.352 is provided by each court, including through use of consistent court codes, reporting mechanisms, and database entry. [2025 c 222 s 2.]

RCW 2.56.260 Electronic monitoring with victim notification technology. (1) The administrative office of the courts shall:

(a) Develop a list of vendors or enter into a contract with a vendor that provides electronic monitoring with victim notification technology. The office shall provide outreach to counties as to how courts may access the vendor or vendors; and

(b) Create an informational handout on the opportunity to request electronic monitoring with victim notification technology to be provided to individuals seeking a protection order and for which electronic monitoring with victim notification technology is available. The information must include a description of the technology used, requirements for accessing the technology, any limitations on how the technology may or may not assist the person in maintaining the safety of the victim and the victim's family, and how

the person may request electronic monitoring with victim notification technology from the court.

(2) An appointed or elected public official, public employee, or public agency as defined in RCW 4.24.470, or units of local government and its employees, as provided in RCW 36.28A.010, are immune from civil liability for damages resulting from the utilization of electronic monitoring with victim notification technology, unless it is shown that the official, employee, or agency acted with gross negligence or in bad faith.

(3) For purposes of this section, "electronic monitoring" means the same as in RCW 9.94A.030. [2020 c 296 s 6.]

Short title—2020 c 296: See note following RCW 9.94A.030.

RCW 2.56.265 Electronic monitoring model standards—Law enforcement policies. (1) Subject to funds appropriated for this specific purpose, by June 1, 2024, the Washington courts' board for judicial administration must develop model standards:

(a) Establishing best practices for the operation of electronic monitoring with victim notification technology by monitoring agencies, with the goal of improving victim safety;

(b) Establishing protocols for implementing court orders that include electronic monitoring with victim notification, including protocols for the installation and removal of monitoring devices to ensure uninterrupted monitoring services following release from detainment or incarceration; and

(c) Establishing any additional requirements necessary to promote compliance with RCW 2.56.260 and 9.94A.736, which may include, but not be limited to, training requirements for court officials, peace officers, 911 dispatchers, local corrections officers and staff, and other appropriate practitioners.

(2) In developing the standards required under this section, the Washington courts' board for judicial administration must solicit input from courts of general and limited jurisdiction, local governments, monitoring agencies, and statewide associations representing law enforcement leaders, prosecutors, the department of corrections, domestic violence victims, and domestic violence agencies.

(3) Subject to funds appropriated for this specific purpose, the Washington courts' board for judicial administration must develop a model policy on electronic monitoring with victim notification technology based on best practices where the technology is being currently used in Washington. Each law enforcement agency in the state must adopt its own policy based on the model policy.

(4) For the purposes of this section:

(a) "Electronic monitoring" has the meaning provided in RCW 9.94A.030; and

(b) "Monitoring agency" has the meaning provided in RCW 9.94A.736. [2023 c 462 s 101.]

RCW 2.56.900 Construction—Chapter applicable to state registered domestic partnerships—2009 c 521. For the purposes of this chapter, the terms spouse, marriage, marital, husband, wife, widow, widower, next of kin, and family shall be interpreted as

applying equally to state registered domestic partnerships or individuals in state registered domestic partnerships as well as to marital relationships and married persons, and references to dissolution of marriage shall apply equally to state registered domestic partnerships that have been terminated, dissolved, or invalidated, to the extent that such interpretation does not conflict with federal law. Where necessary to implement chapter 521, Laws of 2009, gender-specific terms such as husband and wife used in any statute, rule, or other law shall be construed to be gender neutral, and applicable to individuals in state registered domestic partnerships. [2009 c 521 s 9.]