

RCW 26.12.802 Family court pilot program—Created. The administrative office of the courts shall conduct a unified family court pilot program.

(1) Pilot program sites shall be selected through a request for proposal process, and shall be established in no more than three superior court judicial districts.

(2) To be eligible for consideration as a pilot project site, judicial districts must have a statutorily authorized judicial complement of at least five judges.

(3) The administrative office of the courts shall develop criteria for the unified family court pilot program. The pilot program shall include:

(a) All case types under Title 13 RCW, chapters 26.09, 26.12, 26.18, 26.19, 26.20, 26.26A, 26.26B, 26.27, and 28A.225 RCW, and domestic violence protection order cases under chapter 7.105 RCW;

(b) Unified family court judicial officers, who volunteer for the program, and meet training requirements established by local court rule;

(c) Case management practices that provide a flexible response to the diverse court-related needs of families involved in multiple areas of the justice system. Case management practices should result in a reduction in process redundancies and an efficient use of time and resources, and create a system enabling multiple case type resolution by one judicial officer or judicial team;

(d) A court facilitator to provide assistance to parties with matters before the unified family court; and

(e) An emphasis on providing nonadversarial methods of dispute resolution such as a settlement conference, evaluative mediation by attorney mediators, and facilitative mediation by nonattorney mediators.

(4) The administrative office of the courts shall publish and disseminate a state-approved listing of definitions of nonadversarial methods of dispute resolution so that court officials, practitioners, and users can choose the most appropriate process for the matter at hand.

(5) The administrative office of the courts shall provide to the judicial districts selected for the pilot program the computer resources needed by each judicial district to implement the unified family court pilot program.

(6) The administrative office of the courts shall conduct a study of the pilot program measuring improvements in the judicial system's response to family involvement in the judicial system. The administrator for the courts shall report preliminary findings and final results of the study to the governor, the chief justice of the supreme court, and the legislature on a biennial basis. The initial report is due by July 1, 2000, and the final report is due by December 1, 2004. [2021 c 215 § 137; 2019 c 46 § 5023; 2005 c 282 § 31; 1999 c 397 § 2.]

Effective date—2022 c 268; 2021 c 215: See note following RCW 7.105.900.