

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 2579

C 123 L 96

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Consolidating and enhancing services for victims of sexual abuse.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Law & Justice (originally sponsored by Representatives Costa, Ballasiotes, Radcliff, Sheahan, Romero, Dellwo, Chopp, Murray, Robertson, Hickel, Mitchell, Cooke, Conway and Cody).

House Committee on Law & Justice
House Committee on Appropriations
Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background: Both the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) administer grant programs that provide treatment services to sexual assault victims.

Victims of Sexual Assault Act:

The Victims of Sexual Assault Act requires DSHS to maintain a centralized office to coordinate programs relating to sexual assault, to facilitate dissemination of information relating to sexual assault, and to develop a biennial statewide plan to aid organizations that serve sexual assault victims.

CTED Grant Program:

Grants from CTED are available to local governments and nonprofit groups to provide treatment to victims of sex offenders. Applicants representing well-established programs or new programs in areas where no program exists receive funding priority. Grants are awarded based on purposes and criteria set forth in the chapter.

Treatment Services for Sexually Abused Children:

DSHS must provide comprehensive sexual assault services by licensed professionals to sexually abused children. The department may use funds appropriated for this purpose for contracts or direct purchases of treatment services from community organizations and private service providers.

Washington State Sexual Assault Services Advisory Committee:

The Washington State Sexual Assault Services Advisory Committee, which is composed of members of government, tribal, and nonprofit agencies that serve sexual assault victims, has made several recommendations about delivery of services to sexual assault victims: (1) consolidate administration and funding of sexual assault and abuse services in one agency; (2) adopt a funding allocation plan to pool all funds for sexual assault services and to distribute them across the state to ensure the delivery of core and specialized services; (3) establish service, data collection, and management standards and outcome measures for recipients of grants; and (4) create a data collection system to gather pertinent data concerning delivery of sexual assault services.

Summary: The Legislature adopts many of the recommendations of the Washington State Sexual Assault Services Advisory Committee.

Amendments to the Victims of Sexual Assault Act:

The bill transfers responsibilities of DSHS to CTED.

Funding is made available to community sexual assault programs. Those programs are community-based social service agencies that provide "core services" to victims of sexual assault. Core services include information and referral, crisis intervention, medical advocacy, legal advocacy, support, and system coordination. Permissible uses of grant funds are expanded to include supervision of victims' advocates, and assistance of victims and their families in the treatment process following a sexual assault.

The definition of "sexual assault" under the act is expanded to include assault with intent to commit rape of a child, child molestation, sexual misconduct with a minor, and crimes with a sexual motivation.

Amendments to CTED Grant Program:

The statement of the program's objectives is amended to emphasize a victim-focused mission and adoption of consistent standards and policies.

Grant funds will go to applicants that emphasize victim-focused sexual abuse services and are qualified to provide core services to victims of sexual assault. Grant applicants are required to demonstrate capacity to provide treatment services, and how the applicant will comply with service, data collection, and management standards established by the department.

Treatment Services for Sexually Abused Children:

The powers of DSHS to provide services and funding for services to sexually abused children are transferred to CTED. CTED is required to provide services to the families of sexually abused children, as well as to the child victims.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	97	0
Senate	48	0

Effective: July 1, 1996