

---

**SENATE BILL 5780**

---

**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2024 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Torres, Dhingra, Padden, Boehnke, L. Wilson, Braun, Frame, Hasegawa, Kuderer, Lovick, Mullet, Nguyen, Warnick, and J. Wilson

Prefiled 12/04/23. Read first time 01/08/24. Referred to Committee on Law & Justice.

1 AN ACT Relating to expanding training opportunities for public  
2 defense; adding a new section to chapter 2.70 RCW; and creating a new  
3 section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the current  
6 generation entering the public defense profession seeks comprehensive  
7 training and mentorship. Training and peer support are needed to  
8 build the confidence and skills necessary to establish and maintain  
9 public defense careers, particularly in rural and underserved areas.  
10 However, training offered by local public defense programs varies,  
11 and rural and less-populated jurisdictions may lack the resources to  
12 conduct in-house training programs. High quality national training  
13 programs are inaccessible to many due to high costs and the time  
14 commitment required to attend. The legislature finds that it can  
15 encourage participation and longevity in public defense practice by  
16 funding the office of public defense to expand its criminal defense  
17 training academy program to serve as a statewide training resource  
18 for both new public defense practitioners and those seeking to  
19 achieve advanced qualifications.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 2.**    A new section is added to chapter 2.70 RCW  
2 to read as follows:

3        Subject to appropriations, the office of public defense shall  
4 expand the capacity of its criminal defense training academy program  
5 to train practitioners who are new to public defense. The program  
6 must include and prioritize training for practitioners in underserved  
7 areas and rural areas of the state. The program must offer intensive  
8 trial skill development, incorporate public defense best practices  
9 and applicable standards, and offer networking opportunities.  
10 Trainings may incorporate in-person, remote, and recorded resources.  
11 By June 30, 2026, the office of public defense shall expand program  
12 offerings to also provide training to public defense practitioners  
13 who are seeking to achieve advanced qualifications.

--- END ---