

RCW 13.34.040 Petition to court to deal with dependent child—Application of federal Indian child welfare act. (1) Any person may file with the clerk of the superior court a petition showing that there is within the county, or residing within the county, a dependent child and requesting that the superior court deal with such child as provided in this chapter. There shall be no fee for filing such petitions.

(2) Except where the department is the petitioner, in counties having paid probation officers, these officers shall, to the extent possible, first determine if a petition is reasonably justifiable.

(3) Every petition filed in proceedings under this chapter shall contain a statement alleging whether there is a reason to know that the child is or may be an Indian child as defined in RCW 13.38.040. If there is a reason to know that the child is or may be an Indian child chapter 13.38 RCW shall apply.

(4) Every order or decree entered under this chapter shall contain a finding that the federal Indian child welfare act or chapter 13.38 RCW does or does not apply. Where there is a finding that the federal Indian child welfare act or chapter 13.38 RCW does apply, the decree or order must also contain a finding that all notice requirements and evidentiary requirements under the federal Indian child welfare act and chapter 13.38 RCW have been satisfied.

(5) Each petition shall be verified and contain a statement constituting a dependency, including the names, residence, and contact information, if known to the petitioner, of each parent, guardian, or custodian of the alleged dependent child. If the petitioner is seeking removal of the child from a parent, guardian, or custodian the petition shall contain a clear and specific statement as to the harm that will occur if the child remains in the care of the parent, guardian, or custodian, and the facts that support that conclusion. [2021 c 211 § 3; 2018 c 17 § 1; 2011 c 309 § 23; 2004 c 64 § 3; 2000 c 122 § 2; 1977 ex.s. c 291 § 32; 1913 c 160 § 5; RRS § 1987-5. Formerly RCW 13.04.060.]

Effective date—2021 c 211: "Sections 1 through 10 of this act take effect July 1, 2023." [2021 c 211 § 12.]

Short title—2021 c 211: "This act may be known and cited as the keeping families together act." [2021 c 211 § 1.]

Finding—Intent—2021 c 211: "(1) The legislature recognizes that children and families are better served when the state provides support to allow children to be cared for by their loved ones and in their communities. The legislature finds that decades of research show that black and indigenous children are still disproportionately removed from their families and communities despite reform efforts.

(2) For these reasons, it is the intent of the legislature to safely reduce the number of children in foster care and reduce racial bias in the system by applying a standard criteria for determining whether to remove a child from a parent when necessary to prevent imminent physical harm to the child due to child abuse or neglect, including that which results from sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or a pattern of severe neglect." [2021 c 211 § 2.]

Effective dates—Severability—1977 ex.s. c 291: See notes following RCW 13.04.005.