

RCW 36.28A.430 Sexual assault kit initiative project—

Definitions. (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs shall establish and administer the Washington sexual assault kit initiative project.

(2) The project is created for the purpose of providing funding through a competitive grant program to support multidisciplinary community response teams engaged in seeking a just resolution to sexual assault cases resulting from evidence found in previously unsubmitted sexual assault kits.

(3) In administering the project, the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs has the following powers and duties:

(a) Design and implement the grant project with the elements included in this section;

(b) Screen and select eligible applicants to receive grants;

(c) Award grants and disburse funds to at least two eligible applicants, at least one located in western Washington and at least one located in eastern Washington;

(d) Adopt necessary policies and procedures to implement and administer the program;

(e) Monitor use of grant funds and compliance with the grant requirements;

(f) Create and implement reporting requirements for grant recipients;

(g) Facilitate the hosting of a sexual assault kit summit in the state of Washington through a grant recipient or directly through the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs, subject to the availability of funds, which may include a combination of public and private dollars allocated for the particular purpose; and

(h) Report to the appropriate committees of the legislature, the joint legislative task force on sexual assault forensic examination best practices, and the governor by December 1, 2017, and each December 1st of each subsequent year the project is funded and operating, regarding the status of grant awards, the progress of the grant recipients toward the identified goals in this section, the data required by subsection (4) of this section, and any other relevant information or recommendations related to the project or sexual assault kit policies.

(4) Grant recipients must:

(a) Perform an inventory of all unsubmitted sexual assault kits in the jurisdiction's possession regardless of where they are stored and submit those sexual assault kits for forensic analysis through the Washington state patrol or another laboratory with the permission of the Washington state patrol;

(b) Establish a multidisciplinary cold case or sexual assault investigation team or teams for follow-up investigations and prosecutions resulting from evidence from the testing of previously unsubmitted sexual assault kits. Cold case or sexual assault investigative teams must: Include prosecutors, law enforcement, and victim advocates for the duration of the project; use victim-centered, trauma-informed protocols, including for victim notification; and use protocols and policies established by the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs. The grant funds may support personnel costs, including hiring and overtime, to allow for adequate follow-up investigations and prosecutions. Grant awards must be prioritized for eligible applicants with a commitment to colocate assigned

prosecutors, law enforcement, and victim advocates for the duration of the grant program;

(c) Require participants in the multidisciplinary cold case or sexual assault investigation team or teams to participate in and complete specialized training for victim-centered, trauma-informed investigation and prosecutions;

(d) Identify and address individual level, organizational level, and systemic factors that lead to unsubmitted sexual assault kits in the jurisdiction and development of a comprehensive strategy to address the issues, including effecting changes in practice, protocol, and organizational culture, and implementing evidence-based, victim-centered, trauma-informed practices and protocols;

(e) Appoint an informed representative to attend meetings of and provide information and assistance to the joint legislative task force on sexual assault forensic examination best practices;

(f) Identify and maintain consistent, experienced, and committed leadership of their sexual assault kit initiative; and

(g) Track and report the following data to the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs, in addition to any data required by the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs: The number of kits inventoried; the dates collected and submitted for testing; the number of kits tested; the number of kits with information eligible for entry into the combined DNA index system; the number of combined DNA index system hits; the number of identified suspects; including serial perpetrators; the number of investigations conducted and cases reviewed; the number of charges filed; and the number of convictions.

(5) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the project may also allocate funds for grant recipients to:

(a) Create and employ training in relation to sexual assault evidence, victimization and trauma response, and other related topics to improve the quality and outcomes of sexual assault investigations and prosecutions;

(b) Enhance victim services and support for past and current victims of sexual assault; or

(c) Develop evidence collection, retention, victim notification, and other protocols needed to optimize data sharing, case investigation, prosecution, and victim support.

(6) For the purposes of this section:

(a) "Eligible applicants" include: Law enforcement agencies, units of local government, or combination of units of local government, prosecutor's offices, or a governmental nonlaw enforcement agency acting as fiscal agent for one of the previously listed types of eligible applicants. A combination of jurisdictions, including contiguous jurisdictions of multiple towns, cities, or counties, may create a task force or other entity for the purposes of applying for and receiving a grant, provided that the relevant prosecutors and law enforcement agencies are acting in partnership in complying with the grant requirements.

(b) "Project" means the Washington sexual assault kit initiative project created in this section.

(c) "Unsubmitted sexual assault kit" are sexual assault kits that have not been submitted to a forensic laboratory for testing with the combined DNA index system-eligible DNA methodologies as of the effective date of the mandatory testing law in *RCW 70.125.090. Unsubmitted sexual assault kits includes partially tested sexual

assault kits, which are sexual assault kits that have only been subjected to serological testing, or that have previously been tested only with noncombined DNA index system-eligible DNA methodologies. The project does not include untested sexual assault kits that have been submitted to forensic labs for testing with combined DNA index system-eligible DNA methodologies but are delayed for testing as a result of a backlog of work in the laboratory. [2017 c 290 § 1.]

***Reviser's note:** RCW 70.125.090 was recodified as RCW 5.70.040 pursuant to 2020 c 26 § 18.