

RCW 40.14.026 Division of archives and records management—Competitive grant program to improve technology information systems for public records and related training—Review of program and training services—Public records request log—Agency reporting requirements—Duties of the joint legislative audit and review committee.

(1) The division of archives and records management in the office of the secretary of state must establish and administer a competitive grant program for local agencies to improve technology information systems for public record retention, management, and disclosure, and any related training. The division of archives and records management may use up to six percent of amounts appropriated for the program for administration of the grant program.

(2) Any local agency may apply to the grant program. The division of archives and records management in the office of the secretary of state must award grants annually. The division of archives and records management must consult with the chief information officer to develop the criteria for grant recipient selection with a preference given to small local governmental agencies based on the applicant agency's need and ability to improve its information technology systems for public record retention, management, and disclosure. The division of archives and records management may award grants for specific hardware, software, equipment, technology services management and training needs, indexing for local records and digital data, and other resources for improving information technology systems. To the extent possible, information technology systems, processes, training, and other resources for improving information technology systems for records retention and distribution may be replicated and shared with other governmental entities. Grants are provided for one-time investments and are not an ongoing source of revenue for operation or management costs. A grantee may not supplant local funding with grant funding provided by the office of the secretary of state.

(3) The joint legislative audit and review committee must conduct a review of the attorney general's consultation program and the state archivist's training services created under section 4, chapter 303, Laws of 2017, and the local government competitive grant program created under this section. The review must include:

(a) (i) Information on the number of local governments served, the types of consultation and training provided, and the implementation of any practices adopted from the attorney general's consultation program and the state archivist's training services; and

(ii) The effectiveness of the consultation program and the training services in providing assistance for local governments; and

(b) (i) Information on the number of local governments that applied for and participated in the competitive grant program under this section, the amount of funding awarded through the grant program, and how such funding was used; and

(ii) The effectiveness of the grant program in improving local government technology information systems for public records retention, management, disclosure, and training.

(4) Each agency shall maintain a log of public records requests submitted to and processed by the agency, which shall include but not be limited to the following information for each request: The identity of the requestor if provided by the requestor, the date the request was received, the text of the original request, a description of the records produced in response to the request, a description of the records redacted or withheld and the reasons therefor, and the date of

the final disposition of the request. The log must be retained by the agency in accordance with the relevant record retention schedule established under this chapter, and shall be a public record subject to disclosure under chapter 42.56 RCW.

(5) To improve best practices for dissemination of public records, each agency with actual staff and legal costs associated with fulfilling public records requests of at least one hundred thousand dollars during the prior fiscal year must, and each agency with such estimated costs of less than one hundred thousand dollars during the prior fiscal year may, report to the joint legislative audit and review committee by July 1st of each subsequent year the following metrics, measured over the preceding year:

(a) The number of requests where the agency provided the requested records within five days of receiving the request.

(b) The number of requests where the agency provided a time estimate for providing responsive records beyond five days after receiving the request.

(c) The average and median number of days from receipt of request to the date the request is closed.

(d) The number of requests where the agency formally sought additional clarification from the requestor;

(e) The number of requests denied in full or in part and the most common reasons for denying requests;

(f) The number of requests abandoned by requestors;

(g) To the extent the information is known by the agency, requests by type of requestor, including individuals, law firms, organizations, insurers, governments, incarcerated persons, the media, anonymous requestors, current or former employees, and others;

(h) Which portion of requests were fulfilled electronically compared to requests fulfilled by physical records;

(i) The number of requests where the agency scanned physical records electronically to fulfill disclosure;

(j) The total estimated agency staff time spent on each individual request;

(k) The estimated costs incurred by the agency in fulfilling records requests, including costs for staff compensation and legal review, and a measure of the average cost per request;

(l) The number of claims filed alleging a violation of chapter 42.56 RCW or other public records statutes in the past year involving the agency, categorized by type and exemption at issue, if applicable;

(m) The costs incurred by the agency litigating claims alleging a violation of chapter 42.56 RCW or other public records statutes in the past year, including any penalties imposed on the agency;

(n) The costs incurred by the agency with managing and retaining records, including staff compensation and purchases of equipment, hardware, software, and services to manage and retain public records; and

(o) Expenses recovered by the agency from requestors for fulfilling public records requests, including any customized service charges.

(6) The joint legislative audit and review committee must consult with state and local agencies to develop a reporting method and clearly define standardized metrics in accordance with this section.

(7) By December 1, 2019, the joint legislative audit and review committee must report to the legislature on its findings from the review, including recommendations on whether the competitive grant program, the attorney general's consultation program, and the state

archivist's training services should continue or be allowed to expire.
[2019 c 372 s 1; 2017 c 303 s 6.]