

RCW 43.70.825 School-based health center program office. (1)

The school-based health center program office is established within the department, with the objective to expand and sustain the availability of school-based health center services to K-12 students in public schools, with a focus on historically underserved populations.

(2) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the school-based health center program office shall:

(a) Develop funding criteria and metrics for monitoring and evaluation in partnership with a statewide nonprofit organization providing training and technical assistance to school-based health centers;

(b) Award grant funding for school-based health centers. The department may grant funding for the following purposes:

(i) Planning a school-based health center;

(ii) Start-up costs associated with setting up a school-based health center; and

(iii) Ongoing costs of operating a school-based health center;

(c) Monitor and evaluate school-based health centers that receive grant funding from the program office;

(d) Partner with a statewide nonprofit organization to provide training and technical assistance to school-based health centers; and

(e) Coordinate with the statewide nonprofit organization providing training and technical assistance, educational service districts, the health care authority, hosting school districts, and the office of the insurance commissioner, to provide support to school-based health centers.

(3) For purposes of this section, a "school-based health center" means a collaboration between the community, the school, and a sponsoring agency that operates the school-based health center, which is a student-focused health center located in or adjacent to a school that provides integrated medical, behavioral health, and other health care services such as dental care. [2021 c 68 s 2.]

Findings—Intent—2021 c 68: "(1) The legislature finds that:

(a) Research shows that school-based health centers provide a crucial link between health and education, improving outcomes for students in both areas;

(b) Health and academic disparities are increasing during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly for students of color;

(c) School-based health centers advance equity by providing health care access and support at schools;

(d) School-based health centers have been operating across the state for more than 30 years;

(e) Local control and decision making for school-based health centers is important; and

(f) In 2016, the legislature created the Washington integrated student supports protocol as a strategy to close educational opportunity gaps through school-based coordination of academic and nonacademic supports for students.

(2) Therefore, the legislature intends to create a school-based health center program office within the department of health to award grants and coordinate with other agencies and entities to provide support, training, and technical assistance to school-based health centers." [2021 c 68 s 1.]