

RCW 47.04.410 Reducing rural roadway departures program. (1) (a)

When an appropriation is made for this purpose, the department shall establish a reducing rural roadway departures program to provide funding for safety improvements specific to preventing lane departures in areas where the departure is likely to cause serious injuries or death. The program must use data driven methods to determine potential projects, and associated ranking methods for prioritization of funding consistent with chapter 47.05 RCW. Funding under this program may be used to:

(i) Widen roadway shoulders or modify roadway design to improve visibility or reduce lane departure risks;

(ii) Improve markings and paint on roadways, including making markings on roads more visible for vehicles with lane departure technology;

(iii) Apply high friction surface treatments;

(iv) Install rumble strips, signage, lighting, raised barriers, medians, guardrails, cable barriers, or other safety equipment, including deployment of innovative technology and connected infrastructure devices;

(v) Remove or relocate fixed objects from rights-of-way that pose a significant risk of serious injury or death if a vehicle were to collide with the object due to a lane departure;

(vi) Repair or replace existing barriers that are damaged or nonfunctional; or

(vii) Take other reasonable actions that are deemed likely to address or prevent vehicle lane departures in specific areas of concern.

(b) The department must create a program whereby it can distribute funding or install safety improvements based on the prioritization process established under (a) of this subsection. Any installation of safety measures that are not under the jurisdiction of the department must be done with permission from the entity that is responsible for operation and maintenance of the roadway.

(c) The department's program must create a form and application process whereby towns, small cities, counties, and transportation benefit districts may apply for program funding for high risk areas in their jurisdictions in need of safety improvements.

(d) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the department must issue program funding for purposes defined in (a) and (b) of this subsection in a geographically diverse manner throughout the state. Criteria used to assess a location can include the communities inability or lack of resources to make the corrections themselves and to make corrections where there has been historic disparate impacts.

(e) By December 31st of each year when there is funding distributed in accordance with this program, the department must provide the transportation committees of the legislature and the traffic safety commission with a list of locations that received funding and a description of the safety improvements installed there.

(2) During the first five years of the program, the department must track incidence of lane departures at the locations where the new infrastructure is installed and evaluate the effectiveness of the safety improvements. [2022 c 182 § 433.]

Target zero program—2022 c 182: "Washington state's target zero program envisions Washington having policies that will lead to zero

deaths of people using the transportation system. For almost two decades more than 200 people have lost their lives annually in circumstances where a vehicle unintentionally left its lane of travel. Such fatalities made up 48 percent of all traffic-related fatalities in 2019. There are multiple ways to make improvements on the highway system that have been proven in other locations to help reduce lane departures and fatalities. RCW 47.04.410 and 46.68.060 are intended to direct resources towards deploying such improvements by requiring the Washington state department of transportation to create a program that is focused on addressing this specific safety concern." [2022 c 182 § 432.]

Intent—Effective date—2022 c 182: See notes following RCW 70A.65.240.