

**Chapter 36.27 RCW
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY**

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RCW 36.27.005 Defined. Prosecuting attorneys are attorneys authorized by law to appear for and represent the state and the counties thereof in actions and proceedings before the courts and judicial officers. [1963 c 4 § 36.27.005. Prior: 1891 c 55 § 3; RRS § 113.]

RCW 36.27.010 Eligibility to office. No person shall be eligible to the office of prosecuting attorney in any county of this state, unless he or she is a qualified elector therein, and has been admitted as an attorney and counselor of the courts of this state. [2009 c 549 § 4045; 1963 c 4 § 36.27.010. Prior: 1891 c 55 § 4; RRS § 4128. Cf. 1883 p 72 § 7.]

RCW 36.27.020 Duties. The prosecuting attorney shall:

(1) Be legal adviser of the legislative authority, giving it his or her written opinion when required by the legislative authority or the chairperson thereof touching any subject which the legislative authority may be called or required to act upon relating to the management of county affairs;

(2) Be legal adviser to all county and precinct officers and school directors in all matters relating to their official business, and when required draw up all instruments of an official nature for the use of said officers;

(3) Appear for and represent the state, county, and all school districts subject to the supervisory control and direction of the

attorney general in all criminal and civil proceedings in which the state or the county or any school district in the county may be a party;

(4) Prosecute all criminal and civil actions in which the state or the county may be a party, defend all suits brought against the state or the county, and prosecute actions upon forfeited recognizances and bonds and actions for the recovery of debts, fines, penalties, and forfeitures accruing to the state or the county;

(5) Attend and appear before and give advice to the grand jury when cases are presented to it for consideration and draw all indictments when required by the grand jury;

(6) Institute and prosecute proceedings before magistrates for the arrest of persons charged with or reasonably suspected of felonies when the prosecuting attorney has information that any such offense has been committed and the prosecuting attorney shall for that purpose attend when required by them if the prosecuting attorney is not then in attendance upon the superior court;

(7) Carefully tax all cost bills in criminal cases and take care that no useless witness fees are taxed as part of the costs and that the officers authorized to execute process tax no other or greater fees than the fees allowed by law;

(8) Receive all cost bills in criminal cases before district judges at the trial of which the prosecuting attorney was not present, before they are lodged with the legislative authority for payment, whereupon the prosecuting attorney may retax the same and the prosecuting attorney must do so if the legislative authority deems any bill exorbitant or improperly taxed;

(9) Present all violations of the election laws which may come to the prosecuting attorney's knowledge to the special consideration of the proper jury;

(10) Examine once in each year the official bonds of all county and precinct officers and report to the legislative authority any defect in the bonds of any such officer;

(11) Seek to reform and improve the administration of criminal justice and stimulate efforts to remedy inadequacies or injustice in substantive or procedural law;

(12) Participate in the statewide sexual assault kit tracking system established in RCW 43.43.545 for the purpose of tracking the status of all sexual assault kits connected to criminal investigations and prosecutions within the county. Prosecuting attorneys shall begin full participation in the system according to the implementation schedule established by the Washington state patrol. [2016 c 173 § 7; 2012 1st sp.s. c 5 § 2; 1995 c 194 § 4; 1987 c 202 § 205; 1975 1st ex.s. c 19 § 1; 1963 c 4 § 36.27.020. Prior: (i) 1911 c 75 § 1; 1891 c 55 § 7; RRS § 116. (ii) 1886 p 65 § 5; 1883 p 73 § 10; Code 1881 § 2171; 1879 p 93 § 6; 1877 p 246 § 6; 1863 p 408 § 4; 1860 p 335 § 3; 1858 p 12 § 4; 1854 p 416 § 4; RRS § 4130. (iii) 1886 p 61 § 7; 1883 p 73 § 12; Code 1881 § 2168; 1879 p 94 § 8; 1877 p 247 § 8; RRS § 4131. (iv) 1886 p 61 § 8; 1883 p 74 § 13; Code 1881 § 2169; 1879 p 94 § 8; 1877 p 247 § 9; RRS § 4132. (v) 1886 p 61 § 9; 1883 p 74 § 14; Code 1881 § 2170; 1879 p 94 § 9; 1877 p 247 § 10; RRS § 4133. (vi) 1886 p 62 § 13; 1883 p 74 § 18; Code 1881 § 2165; 1879 p 95 § 13; 1877 p 248 § 14; 1863 p 409 § 5; 1860 p 334 § 4; 1858 p 12 § 5; 1854 p 417 § 5; RRS § 4134. (vii) Referendum No. 24; 1941 c 191 § 1; 1886 p 63 § 18; 1883 p 76 § 24; Code 1881 § 2146; 1879 p 96 § 18; RRS § 4136. (viii) Code 1881 § 3150; 1866 p 52 § 10; RRS § 4137. (ix) 1933 ex.s. c 62 § 81, part; RRS § 7306-81, part.]

Finding—Intent—2016 c 173: See note following RCW 43.43.545.

Intent—1987 c 202: See note following RCW 2.04.190.

Annual report to include number of child abuse reports and cases: RCW 26.44.075.

RCW 36.27.030 Disability of prosecuting attorney. When from illness or other cause the prosecuting attorney is temporarily unable to perform his or her duties, the court or judge may appoint some qualified person to discharge the duties of such officer in court until the disability is removed.

When any prosecuting attorney fails, from sickness or other cause, to attend a session of the superior court of his or her county, or is unable to perform his or her duties at such session, the court or judge may appoint some qualified person to discharge the duties of such session, and the appointee shall receive a compensation to be fixed by the court, to be deducted from the stated salary of the prosecuting attorney, not exceeding, however, one-fourth of the quarterly salary of the prosecuting attorney: PROVIDED, That in counties wherein there is no person qualified for the position of prosecuting attorney, or wherein no qualified person will consent to perform the duties of that office, the judge of the superior court shall appoint some suitable person, a duly admitted and practicing attorney-at-law and resident of the state to perform the duties of prosecuting attorney for such county, and he or she shall receive such reasonable compensation for his or her services as shall be fixed and ordered by the court, to be paid by the county for which the services are performed. [2009 c 549 § 4046; 1963 c 4 § 36.27.030. Prior: (i) 1891 c 55 § 5; RRS § 114. (ii) 1893 c 52 § 1; 1886 p 62 § 14; 1883 p 74 § 19; Code 1881 § 2166; 1879 p 95 § 14; 1877 p 248 § 15; 1863 p 409 § 6; 1860 p 335 § 5; 1858 p 13 § 6; 1854 p 417 § 6; RRS § 4135.]

RCW 36.27.040 Appointment of deputies—Special and temporary deputies. The prosecuting attorney may appoint one or more deputies who shall have the same power in all respects as their principal. Each appointment shall be in writing, signed by the prosecuting attorney, and filed in the county auditor's office. Each deputy thus appointed shall have the same qualifications required of the prosecuting attorney, except that such deputy need not be a resident of the county in which he or she serves. The prosecuting attorney may appoint one or more special deputy prosecuting attorneys upon a contract or fee basis whose authority shall be limited to the purposes stated in the writing signed by the prosecuting attorney and filed in the county auditor's office. Such special deputy prosecuting attorney shall be admitted to practice as an attorney before the courts of this state but need not be a resident of the county in which he or she serves and shall not be under the legal disabilities attendant upon prosecuting attorneys or their deputies except to avoid any conflict of interest with the purpose for which he or she has been engaged by the prosecuting attorney. The prosecuting attorney shall be responsible for the acts of his or her deputies and may revoke appointments at will.

Two or more prosecuting attorneys may agree that one or more deputies for any one of them may serve temporarily as deputy for any

other of them on terms respecting compensation which are acceptable to said prosecuting attorneys. Any such deputy thus serving shall have the same power in all respects as if he or she were serving permanently.

The provisions of chapter 39.34 RCW shall not apply to such agreements.

The provisions of *RCW 41.56.030(2) shall not be interpreted to permit a prosecuting attorney to alter the at-will relationship established between the prosecuting attorney and his or her appointed deputies by this section for a period of time exceeding his or her term of office. Neither shall the provisions of *RCW 41.56.030(2) require a prosecuting attorney to alter the at-will relationship established by this section. [2009 c 549 § 4047; 2000 c 23 § 2; 1975 1st ex.s. c 19 § 2; 1963 c 4 § 36.27.040. Prior: 1959 c 30 § 1; 1943 c 35 § 1; 1903 c 7 § 1; 1891 c 55 § 6; 1886 p 63 § 17; 1883 p 76 § 23; Code 1881 § 2142; 1879 p 95 § 16; Rem. Supp. 1943 § 115.]

***Reviser's note:** RCW 41.56.030 was alphabetized pursuant to RCW 1.08.015(2)(k), changing subsection (2) to subsection (12). RCW 41.56.030 was subsequently amended by 2011 1st sp.s. c 21 § 11, changing subsection (12) to subsection (11). RCW 41.56.030 was subsequently amended by 2020 c 298 § 1, changing subsection (11) to subsection (12).

RCW 36.27.045 Employment of legal interns. Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, nothing in this chapter shall be deemed to prevent a prosecuting attorney from employing legal interns as otherwise authorized by statute or court rule. [1974 ex.s. c 6 § 1.]

RCW 36.27.050 Special emoluments prohibited. No prosecuting attorney shall receive any fee or reward from any person, on behalf of any prosecution, or for any of his or her official services, except as provided in this title, nor shall he or she be engaged as attorney or counsel for any party in any action depending upon the same facts involved in any criminal proceeding. [2009 c 549 § 4048; 1963 c 4 § 36.27.050. Prior: 1888 p 189 § 1; 1886 p 62 § 12; 1883 p 74 § 17; Code 1881 § 2164; 1879 p 94 § 12; 1877 p 248 § 13; 1863 p 409 § 8; 1860 p 335 § 7; 1858 p 13 § 8; 1854 p 417 § 7; RRS § 4138.]

RCW 36.27.060 Private practice prohibited in certain counties—

Deputy prosecutors. (1) The prosecuting attorney, and deputy prosecuting attorneys, of each county with a population of eighteen thousand or more shall serve full time and except as otherwise provided for in this section shall not engage in the private practice of law.

(2) Deputy prosecuting attorneys in a county with a population of from eighteen thousand to less than one hundred twenty-five thousand may serve part time and engage in the private practice of law if the county legislative authority so provides.

(3) Except as provided in subsection (4) of this section, nothing in this section prohibits a prosecuting attorney or deputy prosecuting attorney in any county from:

(a) Performing legal services for himself or herself or his or her immediate family; or

(b) Performing legal services of a charitable nature.

(4) The legal services identified in subsection (3) of this section may not be performed if they would interfere with the duties of a prosecuting attorney, or deputy prosecuting attorney and no services that are performed shall be deemed within the scope of employment of a prosecutor or deputy prosecutor. [1991 c 363 § 55; 1989 c 39 § 1; 1973 1st ex.s. c 86 § 1; 1971 ex.s. c 237 § 2; 1969 ex.s. c 226 § 2; 1963 c 4 § 36.27.060. Prior: 1941 c 46 § 2; Rem. Supp. 1941 § 4139-1.]

Purpose—Captions not law—1991 c 363: See notes following RCW 2.32.180.

Effective date—1973 1st ex.s. c 86: "This 1973 amendatory act shall take effect on the second Monday in the month of January, 1975." [1973 1st ex.s. c 86 § 2.]

Severability—Effective date—1971 ex.s. c 237: See notes following RCW 36.17.020.

RCW 36.27.070 Office at county seat. The prosecuting attorney of each county in the state of Washington must keep an office at the county seat of the county of which he or she is prosecuting attorney. [2009 c 549 § 4049; 1963 c 4 § 36.27.070. Prior: 1909 c 122 § 1; RRS § 4139.]

RCW 36.27.100 Statewide drug prosecution assistance program—Created. The legislature recognizes that, due to the magnitude or volume of offenses in a given area of the state, there is a recurring need for supplemental assistance in the prosecuting of drug and drug-related offenses that can be directed to the area of the state with the greatest need for short-term assistance. A statewide drug prosecution assistance program is created within the criminal justice training commission to assist county prosecuting attorneys in the prosecution of drug and drug-related offenses. [2010 c 271 § 501; 1995 c 399 § 41; 1989 c 271 § 236.]

Purpose—Effective date—2010 c 271: See notes following RCW 43.330.005.

Severability—1989 c 271: See note following RCW 9.94A.510.

RCW 36.27.110 Statewide drug prosecution assistance program—Advisory committee—Selection of project director. There is established a statewide advisory committee comprised of the attorney general, the chief of the Washington state patrol, both United States attorneys whose offices are located in Washington state, and three county prosecuting attorneys appointed by the Washington association of prosecuting attorneys, who will also act as supervising attorneys. The statewide advisory committee shall select one of the supervising

attorneys to act as project director of the drug prosecution assistance program. [1989 c 271 § 237.]

Severability—1989 c 271: See note following RCW 9.94A.510.

RCW 36.27.120 Statewide drug prosecution assistance program—Personnel—Review of assignments—Supervision of special deputies. The project director of the drug prosecution assistance program shall employ up to five attorneys to act as special deputy prosecuting attorneys. A county or counties may request the assistance of one or more of the special deputy prosecuting attorneys. The project director after consultation with the advisory committee shall determine the assignment of the special deputy prosecutors. Within funds appropriated for this purpose, the project director may also employ necessary support staff and purchase necessary supplies and equipment.

The advisory committee shall regularly review the assignment of the special deputy prosecuting attorneys to ensure that the program's impact on the drug abuse problem is maximized.

During the time a special deputy prosecuting attorney is assigned to a county, the special deputy is under the direct supervision of the county prosecuting attorney for that county. The advisory committee may reassign a special deputy at any time: PROVIDED, That adequate notice must be given to the county prosecuting attorney if the special deputy is involved in a case scheduled for trial. [1989 c 271 § 238.]

Severability—1989 c 271: See note following RCW 9.94A.510.

RCW 36.27.130 Felony resentencing. (1) The prosecutor of a county in which an offender was sentenced for a felony offense may petition the sentencing court or the sentencing court's successor to resentence the offender if the original sentence no longer advances the interests of justice.

(2) The court may grant or deny a petition under this section. If the court grants a petition, the court shall resentence the defendant in the same manner as if the offender had not previously been sentenced, provided the new sentence, if any, is no greater than the initial sentence.

(3) The court may consider postconviction factors including, but not limited to, the inmate's disciplinary record and record of rehabilitation while incarcerated; evidence that reflects whether age, time served, and diminished physical condition, if any, have reduced the inmate's risk for future violence; and evidence that reflects changed circumstances since the inmate's original sentencing such that the inmate's continued incarceration no longer serves the interests of justice. Credit shall be given for time served.

(4) The prosecuting attorney shall make reasonable efforts to notify victims and survivors of victims of the petition for resentencing and the date of the resentencing hearing. The prosecuting attorney shall provide victims and survivors of victims access to available victim advocates and other related services. The court shall provide an opportunity for victims and survivors of victims of any crimes for which the offender has been convicted to present a statement personally or by representation. The prosecuting attorney

and the court shall comply with the requirements set forth in chapter 7.69 RCW.

(5) A resentencing under this section shall not reopen the defendant's conviction to challenges that would otherwise be barred. [2020 c 203 § 2.]

Intent—2020 c 203: "It is the intent of the legislature to give prosecutors the discretion to petition the court to resentence an individual if the person's sentence no longer advances the interests of justice. The purpose of sentencing is to advance public safety through punishment, rehabilitation, and restorative justice. When a sentence includes incarceration, this purpose is best served by terms that are proportionate to the seriousness of the offense and provide uniformity with the sentences of offenders committing the same offense under similar circumstances. By providing a means to reevaluate a sentence after some time has passed, the legislature intends to provide the prosecutor and the court with another tool to ensure that these purposes are achieved." [2020 c 203 § 1.]