

RCW 43.330A.020 Created—Duties—Reports. (1) The Washington office of firearm safety and violence prevention is created within the department for the purposes of coordinating and promoting effective state and local efforts to reduce firearm violence.

(2) The duties of the office include, but are not limited to:

(a) Working with law enforcement agencies, county prosecutors, researchers, and public health agencies throughout the state to identify and improve upon available data sources, data collection methods, and data-sharing mechanisms. The office will also identify gaps in available data needed for ongoing analysis, policy development, and the implementation of evidence-based firearm violence intervention and prevention strategies;

(b) Researching, identifying, and recommending legislative policy options to promote the implementation of statewide evidence-based firearm violence intervention and prevention strategies;

(c) Researching, identifying, and applying for nonstate funding to aid in the research, analysis, and implementation of statewide firearm violence intervention and prevention strategies;

(d) Working with the office of crime victim[s] advocacy to identify opportunities to better support victims of firearm violence, a population that is currently underrepresented among recipients of victim services;

(e) Contract [Contracting] for a statewide helpline, counseling, and referral services for victims, friends, and family members impacted by gun violence and community professionals and providers who engage with them;

(f) Contract [Contracting] with the University of Washington to develop a best practice guide for therapy for gun violence victims;

(g) Administering the Washington firearm violence intervention and prevention grant program as outlined in RCW 43.330A.050.

(3) The office shall report to the appropriate legislative policy committees by December 1st every odd-numbered year on its progress and findings in analyzing data, developing strategies to prevent firearm violence, and recommendations for additional legislative policy options. The first report must be submitted by December 1, 2021.
[2020 c 313 s 3.]

Finding—Intent—2020 c 313: "The legislature finds that firearm violence is a significant public health and safety concern in Washington. From 2014 to 2018, over one thousand people in Washington were murdered and well over half of those victims were murdered with a gun. Thousands more were hospitalized or treated in emergency departments after surviving gunshot injuries. The legislature recognizes that firearm violence in Washington disproportionately impacts low-income communities and communities of color, with young men of color being particularly vulnerable. This violence imposes a high physical, emotional, and financial toll on families and communities across the state. In Washington, the overall estimate of the annual economic cost of gun violence is three billion eight hundred million dollars.

The legislature recognizes that rates of suicide have been growing in the United States as well as in the state of Washington. Seventy-nine percent of all firearm deaths in Washington state are suicides. More people die of suicide by firearm than by all other means combined.

The legislature intends to establish the Washington office of firearm safety and violence prevention to provide statewide leadership, coordination, and technical assistance to promote effective state and local efforts to reduce preventable injuries and deaths from firearm violence. The office will work with government entities, law enforcement agencies, community-based organizations, and individuals through the state to develop evidence-based policies, strategies, and interventions to reduce the impacts of firearm violence in Washington's communities. The office will also administer the Washington firearm violence intervention and prevention grant program which will provide for intentional, coordinated, and sustained investments in evidence-based violence reduction strategies to reduce the human and financial costs of firearm violence and enhance firearm safety." [2020 c 313 s 1.]