

---

## Public Safety Committee

---

### HB 1759

**Brief Description:** Addressing procedures for communicating with crime victims and survivors of crime victims.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Ortiz-Self, Orwall, Gregerson and Jinkins.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy to coordinate a work group to examine local practices for family notification of a homicide.
- Requires law enforcement officers responding to incidents with crime victims or survivors present to provide the victims or survivors with information about crime victim services.

**Hearing Date:** 2/6/17

**Staff:** Omeara Harrington (786-7136).

#### Background:

The Office of Crime Victims Advocacy (OCVA) is a program of the Department of Commerce. The OCVA assists communities in planning and implementing services for crime victims, advocates on behalf of crime victims in obtaining needed services and resources, and advises the state and local governments on practices, policies, and priorities that impact crime victims. In addition, the OCVA administers grant programs for services to victims of crime and crime prevention activities.

The OCVA administers the Crime Victim Service Center program, which provides services to victims of crime and survivors of homicide victims. Advocates at crime victim service centers provide crisis intervention, information and referral services, and advocacy related to medical and legal needs. Some centers additionally provide support groups and mental-health related services.

---

*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

A 24-hour Washington State Crime Victims Service Center Hotline provides crisis intervention and referral to local crime victim service centers. In addition, the Department of Commerce maintains a direct services line for referral to local crime victim services.

**Summary of Bill:**

Family Notification Work Group.

The Department of Commerce, through the OCVA, must convene and coordinate a work group to examine the practices around the state regarding notification of family members when a person has died from a suspected homicide or other criminal means. The work group must meet at least twice, in person, for a minimum of eight hours.

The work group's membership must include: the OCVA; law enforcement; coroners and medical examiners; prosecutors; chaplain services; victim support services; and a private citizen who has been directly impacted by the homicide of a family member. Persons who work directly with local victim notification processes in Whatcom, Snohomish, King, Franklin, Yakima, and Grant counties must be represented among the work group membership.

The work group must gather information regarding the current processes around the state for family notification of a homicide or death by other criminal means, identify gaps in current local processes for family notification, and generate best practices for family notification. Best practices may include identification of:

- who is responsible in a local jurisdiction for providing notification;
- appropriate timelines for notification;
- alternative processes when a family member is suspected of causing the death;
- overcoming language barriers in the notification process;
- collaboration between law enforcement and victim services organizations; and
- other best practices identified by the work group.

A report summarizing the information collected by the work group and the work group's recommendations is due to the Governor and the appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 1, 2017.

Notification to Crime Victims and Survivors of Support Services.

When a peace officer responds to a call in which a crime has been committed and a victim or survivor of a victim is present at the scene, or is later interviewed by the officer, the officer must provide the victim or survivor with information about crime victim services. At a minimum, the officer must provide the telephone number for a statewide crime victims service center hotline.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 1, 2017.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.