
HOUSE BILL 1673

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2023 Regular Session

By Representatives McEntire, Leavitt, Rule, and Pollet

Read first time 01/30/23. Referred to Committee on Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning.

1 AN ACT Relating to supporting child welfare workers; amending RCW
2 74.14B.010; reenacting and amending RCW 74.14B.005; and adding a new
3 section to chapter 74.14B RCW.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 74.14B.005 and 2019 c 470 s 18 and 2019 c 64 s 26
6 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

7 The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter
8 unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

9 (1) "Child welfare worker" means an employee of the department
10 whose job includes supporting or providing child welfare services as
11 defined in RCW 74.13.020 or child protective services as defined in
12 RCW 26.44.020.

13 (2) "Department" means the department of children, youth, and
14 families.

15 ((+2)) (3) "Secretary" means the secretary of the department of
16 children, youth, and families.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 74.14B
18 RCW to read as follows:

19 (1) No child welfare worker may be required to respond to a
20 private home or other private location to provide services to,

1 monitor, or investigate a family when the child welfare worker has
2 concerns that violence could occur based on a family member's history
3 of violence unless a second trained individual, determined by the
4 child welfare worker and their supervisor, accompanies them.

5 (2) The second trained individual that may accompany a child
6 welfare worker under this section may be:

7 (a) A law enforcement officer;

8 (b) A mental health professional; or

9 (c) Another first responder, such as a firefighter or emergency
10 medical personnel.

11 (3) No retaliation may be taken against a child welfare worker
12 who, following consultation with their supervisor under subsection
13 (1) of this section, refuses to provide services, monitor, or
14 investigate a family.

15 **Sec. 3.** RCW 74.14B.010 and 2019 c 470 s 27 are each amended to
16 read as follows:

17 (1) Child welfare workers shall meet minimum standards
18 established by the department. Comprehensive training for child
19 welfare workers shall be completed before such child welfare workers
20 are assigned to case-carrying responsibilities as the sole worker
21 assigned to a particular case. Intermittent, part-time, and standby
22 child welfare workers shall be subject to the same minimum standards
23 and training. The minimum training standards under this section must
24 include training related to de-escalation strategies.

25 (2) Ongoing specialized training shall be provided for child
26 welfare workers responsible for investigating child sexual abuse.
27 Training participants shall have the opportunity to practice
28 interview skills and receive feedback from instructors.

29 (3) The department, the criminal justice training commission, the
30 Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs, and the
31 Washington association of prosecuting attorneys shall design and
32 implement statewide training that contains consistent elements for
33 persons engaged in the interviewing of children, including law
34 enforcement, prosecution, and child protective services.

35 (4) The training required by this section shall: (a) Be based on
36 research-based practices and standards; (b) minimize the trauma of
37 all persons who are interviewed during abuse investigations; (c)
38 provide methods of reducing the number of investigative interviews
39 necessary whenever possible; (d) assure, to the extent possible, that

1 investigative interviews are thorough, objective, and complete; (e)
2 recognize needs of special populations, such as persons with
3 developmental disabilities; (f) recognize the nature and consequences
4 of victimization; (g) require investigative interviews to be
5 conducted in a manner most likely to permit the interviewed persons
6 the maximum emotional comfort under the circumstances; (h) address
7 record retention and retrieval; (i) address documentation of
8 investigative interviews; and (j) include self-care for child welfare
9 workers.

10 (5) The identification of domestic violence is critical in
11 ensuring the safety of children in the child welfare system. It is
12 also critical for child welfare workers to support victims of
13 domestic violence while victims continue to care for their children,
14 when possible, as domestic violence perpetrated against someone other
15 than the child does not constitute negligent treatment or
16 maltreatment in and of itself as provided in RCW 26.44.020. For these
17 reasons, ongoing domestic violence training and consultation shall be
18 provided to child welfare workers, including how to use the
19 department's practice guide to domestic violence.

20 (6) By January 1, 2021, the department shall:

21 (a) Develop and implement an evidence-informed curriculum for
22 supervisors providing support to child welfare workers to better
23 prepare candidates for effective supervisory and leadership roles
24 within the department;

25 (b) Develop specialized training for child welfare workers that
26 includes simulation and coaching designed to improve clinical and
27 analytical skills;

28 ~~((Based on the report required under RCW 43.216.7501(3),~~
29 ~~develop)) Develop and implement training for child welfare workers
30 that incorporates trauma-informed care and reflective supervision
31 principles.~~

32 ~~((7) For purposes of this section, "child welfare worker" means~~
33 ~~an employee of the department whose job includes supporting or~~
34 ~~providing child welfare services as defined in RCW 74.13.020 or child~~
35 ~~protective services as defined in RCW 26.44.020.))~~

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