



ERIC J. RICHEY

WHATCOM COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

Erik K. Sigmar, Chief Criminal Deputy
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Christopher Quinn, Chief Civil Deputy
Hilary Thomas, Chief of Staff

MEMO TO: Satpal Sidhu, County Executive

FROM: Hilary Thomas, Chief of Staff

DATE: July 16, 2025

RE: State Dept of Commerce – SFY 2026 Victim/Witness Assistance

Attached is a contract between Whatcom County and the State Department of Commerce for your review and signature:

- **Background and Purpose:**

District Court Prosecutors handle a large share of serious domestic violence cases, and it is the only court at the county that facilitates supervision of domestic violence offenders on probation. The legislature requires prosecutors to keep victims informed and to provide emotional support for victims of violence and sex crimes, including having the advocate present at defense interviews and judicial proceedings (R.C.W. 7.69.030). Effective prosecution depends on cooperation from victims of crime. Staffing the position is absolutely necessary to ensure the health and well-being of the community and victims of domestic violence.

- **Funding Amount and Source:**

Funding for this grant award amount will not exceed \$52,029 and is provided by the Washington State Department of Commerce. These funds will be included in the 2026 Budget and the County agrees to pay for the remaining \$ 43,034.00 to cover a portion of the position's salary and benefits expenses. Council approval is required as funding exceeds \$40,000.

- **Differences Between Previous Contract:**

The Prosecutors Office has received this same grant in previous years but with our SFY2026 Victim/Witness Assistance Grant there was a change in the amount received. This year we received \$8,432.00 less than our SFY2025 Victim/Witness Assistance Grant due to cuts in Federal and State funding. This decrease in funding will increase the cost that is incurred by Whatcom County

* This award amount is 100% State funded with no Federal funds included in total amount.

Please contact Hilary Thomas, Chief of Staff at 360-778-5764 (hthomas@co.whatcom.wa.us) if you have any questions or concerns regarding this request.