

Youth Safety and Well-being Statewide Reporting Tool Work Group

July 31, 2020



**Washington State
Office of the
Attorney General
Bob Ferguson**

This document is the report to the Washington State Legislature as directed by the 2019 Legislative Operating Budget codified in House Bill 1109, Section 127 (14).

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Summary of Recommendations

The Youth Safety and Well-being Statewide Reporting Tool Work Group was tasked with making recommendations for the implementation of a statewide 24-hour hotline or mobile application for receiving reports related to youth safety and well-being, including but not limited to, potential self-harm or criminal acts. The complete recommendations as voted on by the Work Group are provided on page 13. A summary of those recommendations is provided below.

Program Creation:

- Create a statewide tip line to support youth safety and well-being, as youth-focused resources are not currently available statewide 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

Program Features:

- The program should receive tips through a mobile application, voice calling, text messaging, postal mail, and the program website.
- The tip line must collaborate with relevant service providers, such as behavioral health service providers, schools, and post-secondary institutions, to provide a connection to intervention services.
- Anyone with a tip, whether they are calling about themselves or another person, should have access to the program.

Confidentiality:

- The identity of the person submitting a tip should be kept confidential.
- The personally identifiable information of the person submitting the tip must be protected from public disclosure requests.

Program Management:

- The Attorney General's Office (AGO) should manage the program and convene an advisory board with other appropriate agencies.

Program Operations:

- An entity operating a 24-hour, seven days per week crisis line should operate the program.

Youth Involvement:

- Youth perspectives should be sought out and elevated throughout the planning and implementation of this program.

Funding:

- Initial funding should be provided for a minimum of four years and additional funding provided after reassessing the needs of the tip line program.
- A robust, coordinated training and marketing campaign must be sufficiently funded to ensure that all Washington residents are made aware of the program throughout its existence.

Contracting:

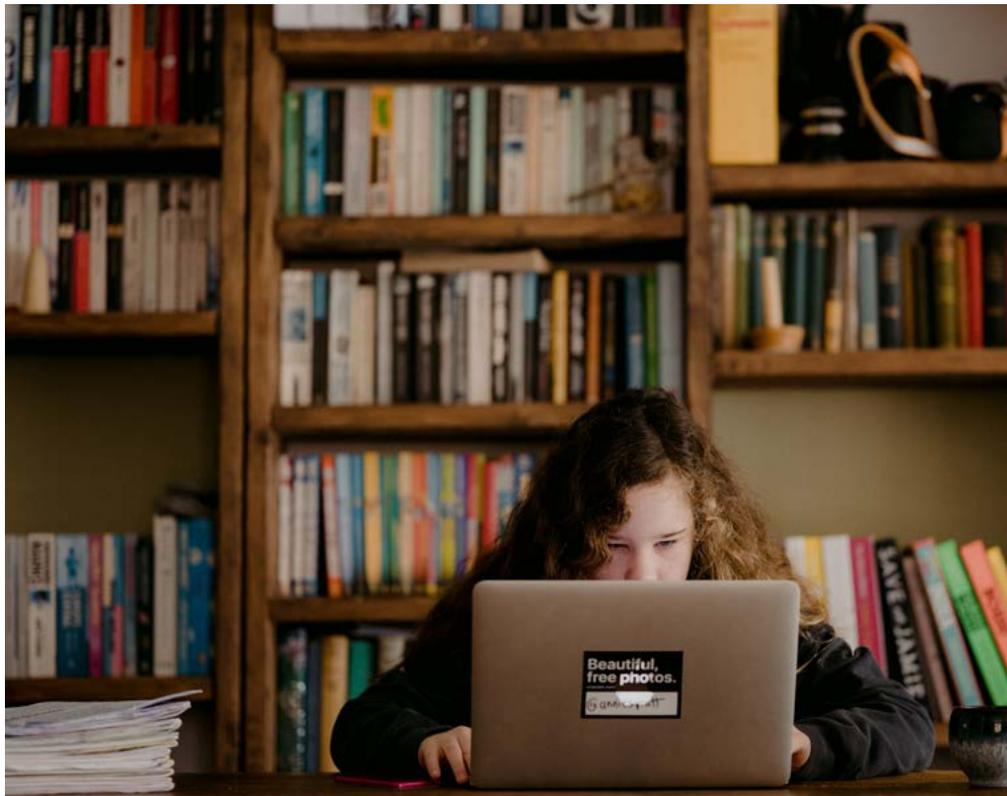
- Any third parties contracted to perform work must obtain and maintain insurance coverage in sufficient amounts, naming the state as additionally insured and indemnifying and holding harmless the state and its agencies and employees in any claims, damages, or expenses arising from any negligent or intentional act or omission while operating or administering the program.
- Prior to contracting out the program operations, priority must be given to represented government employees to perform such work, as needed.

Key Topics & Activities of the Work Group

The AGO convened the Youth Safety and Well-being Statewide Reporting Tool Work Group as directed by Section 127 (14) of the 2019 Legislative Operating Budget codified in House Bill 1109. The Work Group was tasked with making recommendations for the implementation of a statewide 24-hour hotline or mobile application for receiving reports related to youth safety and well-being, including but not limited to, potential self-harm or criminal acts.

The Work Group convened four meetings in 2019 and 2020 in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act codified in RCW 42.30. Those meetings were convened with a quorum of members in attendance on December 10, 2019; June 5, 2020; June 25, 2020; and June 30, 2020.¹ The Work Group also convened small group calls throughout April 2020.

Work Group meetings included staff briefings, presentations from experts and stakeholders, information sharing, and discussion. Work Group members also independently consulted with stakeholders and advocates to inform the discussions, decisions, and recommendations made by the Work Group. The Work Group engaged in discussion on a wide range of issues related to the implementation of a statewide reporting tool and issues related to youth safety and well-being.



Tip Line Programs in Other States and Best Practice Models

The Work Group researched tip line programs in Arizona, Michigan, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Wisconsin, and Wyoming as directed by House Bill 1109, Section 127 (2019). Work Group staff expanded research to include perspectives from all states with tip line programs by participating in monthly National Tip Line Conference Calls coordinated by the Illinois State Police Statewide Terrorism and Intelligence Center. These calls brought together experts operating tip line programs nationwide. Work group staff also gathered information at the 2019 Annual National Summit of State Tip Lines: Intersection of Law Enforcement, Education, and Mental Health in Reno, Nevada, which was sponsored by the State of Nevada Department of Education, Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment, and Nevada Department of Public Safety Investigation. Work Group staff also developed and deployed a survey to gather information from states with tip line programs in May 2020. Representatives from four states completed the survey by providing information related to their state tip line programs. In addition, the following groups participated in a panel discussion during the June 5, 2020 Work Group meeting:

- Representatives currently performing tip line management, oversight and operations, and
- School administrators responding to tips from both rural and densely populated regions from Oregon, Michigan, and Utah.

Engaging Key Stakeholders Across Washington

The Work Group solicited youth-led organizations across Washington state to provide their perspectives related to the challenges faced by youth and the gaps in available resources for youth in Washington.

Youth-led Organizations

- Black and Brown Minds Matter
- Burien Youth Council
- Mercer Island High School Student Council
- Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) School Safety and Student Well-being Advisory Committee Youth Advisory Council
- School Safety Operations and Coordination Center Student Safety Summit Leaders
- Washington State Legislative Youth Advisory Council

The Work Group also engaged and solicited perspectives from state agencies, educators, school nurses, school safety specialists, school insurance risk pools,² law enforcement, behavioral and community health, 9-1-1 and public safety communications, crisis hotlines, and parents. Key stakeholders shared their perspectives and expertise during and outside of meetings to enrich the robust conversation among the Work Group and to inform the development of Work Group recommendations.

State Agencies

- Department of Health (DOH)
- Health Care Authority (HCA)
- Office of Financial Management
- OSPI
- University of Washington Forefront Suicide Prevention Center

Educators and School Nurses

- Several school nurses from across the state
- Washington Education Association

School Safety Specialists and School Insurance Risk Pools

- Education Service District³ (ESD) 105 School Safety Operations and Coordination
- Lake Washington School District Risk and Safety Department
- Tacoma Public Schools Safety and Security Department
- Clear Risk Solutions
- Washington Schools Risk Management Pool

Law Enforcement

- Washington Council of Police and Sheriffs
- Washington School Safety Organization
- Washington State Fusion Center
- Washington State Patrol (WSP)

Behavioral and Community Health

- Benton-Franklin Community Health Alliance
- ESD 113 Behavioral Health and Student Support

9-1-1 and Public Safety Communications

- Valley Communications Center
- Washington chapter of the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials and the National Emergency Number Association

Crisis Hotlines

- Clark County Teen Talk
- Crisis Connections

Parents

- Washington State Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

Evaluating Risk

Work Group staff researched how tip line programs in other states manage risk and liability associated with the implementation and ongoing operations of a tip line. The Work Group considered how to manage risks that may result from failures to 1) protect confidential or personally identifiable information from disclosure, 2) robustly oversee the program, 3) properly review and direct tips to law enforcement or mental health officials, 4) provide sufficient training, or 5) make appropriate, immediate referrals of psychiatric emergencies. The Work Group staff evaluated the landscape of relevant Washington law to determine how best to manage these risks. Staff also assessed relevant Washington law related to processes for contracting with third parties to operate the tip line.

Funding and Sustainability

Work Group staff also researched how tip line programs in other states are funded and learned that tip lines across the nation are primarily funded by Legislative appropriations. Some existing tip lines receive supplemental funding from private grants and federal grants, such as the Student, Teachers, and Officers Preventing (STOP) School Violence grant program offered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.⁴

Background on Statewide Tip Lines Across the U.S.

Across the nation, states have implemented statewide tip line programs to receive reports of suspicious activity and threats to youth safety and well-being. These tip line programs feature a statewide youth-centered, 24-hour communication tool for receiving confidential reports related to youth safety and well-being through a mobile application, voice calling, and the program website.

Tip line program budgets, number of reports received, and entities tasked with program management and operations vary widely across states, as shown in Table I.

Table I: Key Components of Select Tip Lines in Other States

State	Tip Reporting Medium	Program Management	Operations	Tips Received	Total Budget Annually
Colorado Safe2Tell ⁵	Web, mobile app, voice	AGO	Information Analytics Center at the Department of Public Safety (DPS)	2018 to 2019 school year: 22,332	\$800,000
Michigan Ok2Say ⁶	Web, mobile app, voice, email, text	AGO	Michigan State Police Intelligence Operations Center	2018: 5,265	\$875,000: \$600,000 to AGO \$275,000 to State Police
Nevada SafeVoice ⁷	Web, mobile app, voice	Department of Education (DOE)	DPS Investigations Division	Data not available	\$608,000: \$350,000 to DOE \$258,000 to DPS
Oregon SafeOregon ⁸	Web, mobile app, voice, email, text	Oregon State Police (OSP)	Sprigeo Communications Center	2019: 2,397	\$325,000: \$200,000 to Sprigeo \$125,000 of OSP general fund for 1.5 FTEs
Utah SafeUT ⁹	Web, mobile app, voice, text, crisis intervention, warm handoff ¹⁰	School Safety and Crisis Line Commission	University of Utah Neuropsychiatric Institute	2019: 32,418	\$1.8 million
Wyoming Safe2Tell ¹¹	Web, mobile app, voice	Highway Patrol	P3 communications center	2019: 1,759	\$230,000

Tip Lines Were Initially Created to Prevent School Shootings

Tip lines have been used effectively as an early intervention tool to prevent tragedies by expanding information sharing and centering youth as the most knowledgeable source for information about threats affecting their safety and well-being. Tip lines leverage technologies commonly utilized by youth to serve as a confidential, often anonymous, direct access point for support, resources, and reports about potential attacks and safety concerns.

According to the School Shooting Database Project, there have been more than 1,300 school shootings in the United States since 1970.¹² In a study of school shootings that occurred from 1974 to 2000, the United States Secret Service and the U.S. Department of Education found that 93% of school shooters planned the attack in advance and, in at least 75% of those incidents, someone other than the attacker knew the incident was going to happen but did not report or act on that knowledge.¹³ In nearly all of those cases, the person who knew was a peer, friend, schoolmate, or sibling. Anecdotal information suggests that tip lines increase the likelihood that threats will be reported by removing barriers to information-sharing and providing youth with a confidential or anonymous tool to report critical, lifesaving information. See Figure A on page 7, for example.

The first tip line of this kind was created in 2004 in response to school shootings to prevent tragedies and keep schools and students safe in Colorado. The Colorado tip line, named Safe2Tell, now serves as a statewide anonymous resource to receive reports 24-hours a day, seven days per week, 365 days each year. The reporting tool can be accessed from the Safe2Tell website, calling into the hotline, or through an application downloaded on a mobile phone. When a tip is submitted to Safe2Tell, it is reviewed by Safe2Tell analysts at the Colorado Department of Public Safety Information Analytics Center. Analysts have the ability to conduct two-way dialogue with the tipsters in order to acquire more information as needed. The tip is then forwarded to school teams or local law enforcement teams. See Figures B and C for examples of how a tip is processed from Michigan's Ok2Say tip line and Nevada's SafeVoice tip line, respectively. From August 1, 2018 through July 31, 2019, Safe2Tell received a total of 22,332 tips. This total includes test tips (88), duplicate reports (1,730), pranks (405), and hang-ups (248). The total number of actionable tips received, excluding these categories, was 19,861. This is a 28% increase in the number of tips received compared to the 2017-2018 school year.¹⁴

Figure A: Michigan OK2SAY Tip Results

WHEN YOU STOP THE SILENCE, YOU HELP END THE VIOLENCE.

Here are a few examples of OK2SAY's work in 2019:

- OK2SAY received a tip that a 14-year-old student was suicidal. She posted a message stating that she had relapsed into cutting herself with razors and was trying to distract herself from thinking about suicide. OK2SAY referred the information and screenshots of the student's messages to local law enforcement. An officer contacted the student and she was transported to the hospital.
- When a high school student was selling drugs at school, a text to OK2SAY alerted authorities. The school searched the student's locker and found drugs and weapons.
- OK2SAY received a tip about a student who posted a video of himself holding an assault weapon and bragging about shooting up the school. OK2SAY contacted the school and local law enforcement who investigated the tip. The student had put together a hit-list and had access to several weapons. The guns were removed from the house for safekeeping. The student was expelled from school and faced criminal charges.
- When a middle school student was planning to run away with a 26-year-old man from another state, a tip to OK2SAY alerted her school. The school immediately contacted the student's parents. A meeting was held with the students, parents and school counselor. The phone was confiscated with the father's permission and turned over to the police department.

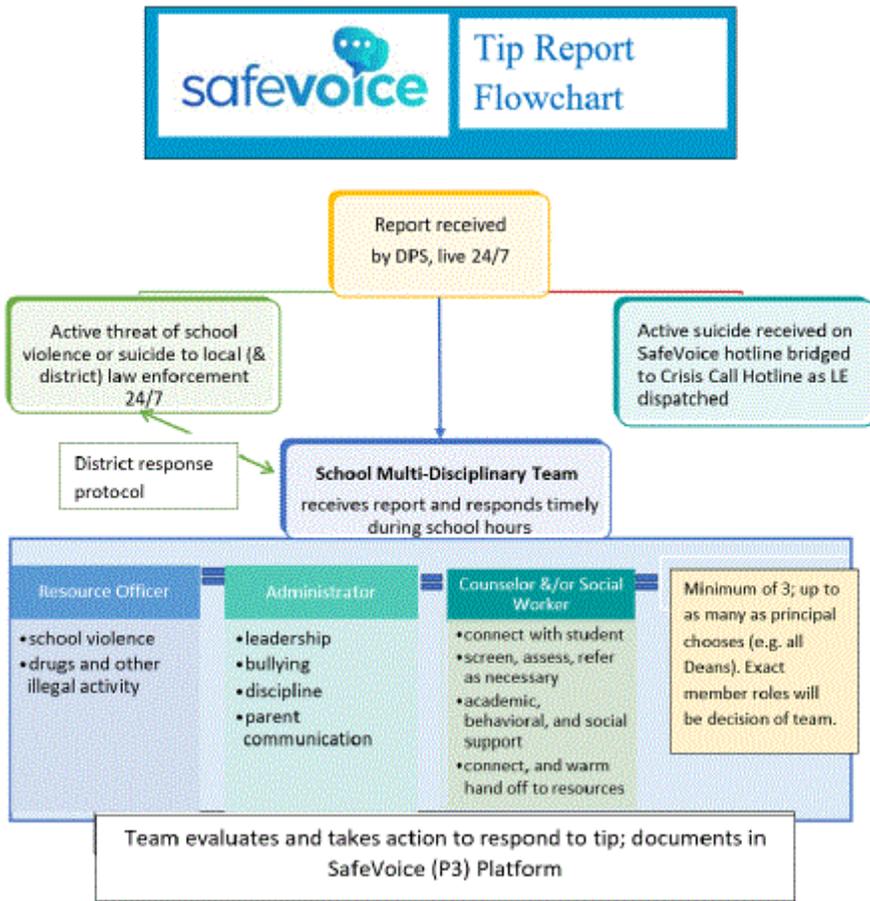
Source: Michigan OK2SAY 2019 Annual Report

Figure B: Michigan OK2SAY Tip Report Flowchart



Source: Michigan OK2SAY 2017 Annual Report

Figure C: Nevada SafeVoice Tip Report Flowchart



Source: Introduction to SafeVoice Tip Reporting System Report

Figure D: Utah SafeUT Tips By Subject



Source: SafeUT 2018-2019 Annual Report

Most Tips Relate to Bullying and Threats of Suicide

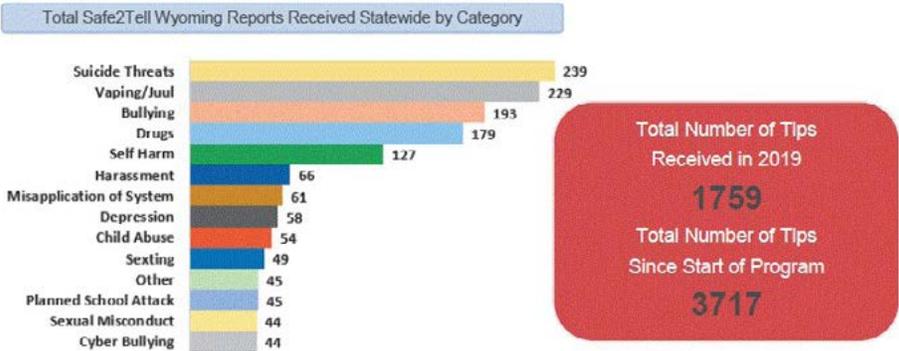
Other states have followed Colorado’s Safe2Tell model and created similar youth safety and well-being tip lines. Tip lines have evolved to serve as a proactive tool to identify and resolve a wide range of threats to youth safety and well-being and are not limited to receiving reports from students. Nationwide trends show that youth most frequently use tip lines to report threats related to suicide, self-harm, depression, harassment, bullying, and cyber bullying. See Figures D, E and F for examples of the most frequent subject of tips from Utah’s SafeUT tip line, Wyoming’s Safe2Tell tip line, and Michigan’s OK2SAY tip lines, respectively.

Tip lines improve awareness of resources to support youth and avert threats to safety. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s 2019 nationwide Youth Risk Behavior Survey revealed that within the 12-month period before completing the survey, nearly 9% of high school students reported being in a physical fight on school property at least once, approximately 6% of students reported being threatened or injured with a weapon (for example, a gun, knife, or club) on school property, and about 7% of students reported that they had not gone to school at least one day in the past 30 days because they felt they would be unsafe at school or on their way to or from school.¹⁵ These threats to youth safety and well-being are not just a school problem or a law enforcement problem; they involve and affect families and entire communities. These threats may not be reported because a young person may not know where to go for the support they need, may not want to identify themselves, or may not want to get a peer in trouble.

Figure E: Safe2Tell Wyoming Tips By Subject



This data represents the number of reports received statewide by Safe2Tell Wyoming for the period 1/1/2019 to 12/31/2019



Source: Safe2Tell Wyoming 2019 Annual Report

Figure F: Michigan OK2SAY Tips By Subject



Source: Michigan OK2SAY 2017 Annual Report

Currently Available Resources

A number of phone and online resources are currently available in Washington to address mental health and safety concerns commonly reported to tip lines. These resources vary widely ranging from locally and nationally available behavioral health crisis hotlines catered to a specific demographic or concern, warm lines¹⁶ to provide support and share relevant available mental health and recovery resources, and crime reporting tip lines. The following list of resources is not exhaustive but intended to provide an overview of some of the resources currently available in Washington.

Youth-Focused Resources Available in Washington

- Safe Schools Alert, a tip line for youth enrolled in Washington public schools provided by school insurance risk pools. Tips can be submitted 24-hours a day, seven days per week, but there is not a response center available to review tips. School administrators are responsible for responding to tips.
- Teen Link, a peer-to-peer confidential help line available for a few hours during weekday evenings for teens. Information about school-related incidents is not communicated to the school for response.
- Clark County Teen Talk, a peer-to-peer confidential help line available for a few hours during weekday evenings for teens in Clark County. Information about school-related incidents is not communicated to the school for response.
- School Mobilization Assistance Response Teams (SMART), a mobile crisis response team providing emotional first aid and practical support in Clark County schools during or after a crisis or emergency situation.

Resources Available in Washington – Not Marketed for Youth Exclusively

- County Mental Health Crisis Lines, 24-hour crisis lines available in every county in the state. Required by HCA through contracting.
- Washington Warm Line, a peer support help line for people living with emotional and mental health challenges.
- 211, a resource line for information on health and human services.
- Washington Listens, a support program that provides information about community resources to people experiencing elevated stress due to COVID-19. Managed by HCA.
- Washington Recovery Help Line, 24-hour emotional support and treatment referrals for substance use disorders, mental health and gambling. Funded in part by HCA and DOH.
- Vancouver Trauma Intervention Program, a mental health dispatch provide immediate emotional and practical support and referrals to ongoing care or support services when a traumatic event has occurred.

Law Enforcement Tip Lines – Not Marketed for Youth Exclusively

- Crime Stoppers of Puget Sound, a crime reporting tool available 24-hours statewide providing cash rewards if reports lead to an arrest with charges.
- Rapid Responder Easy Alert, a browser-based crime reporting tool provided by the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs available 24-hours statewide.
- We-Tip, a crime reporting tool available 24-hours nationwide.

Resources Available Nationwide – Marketed to Both Youth and the General Public

- Trevor Line, a 24-hour, toll free suicide hotline for LGBTQ youth.
- Teen Line, a peer-to-peer confidential help line for teens.
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, a 24-hour crisis line for people experiencing a suicidal crisis or emotional distress.
- National Runaway Safeline, a 24-hour resource help line that assists youth who have run away, or are considering running away, and their families.
- National Sexual Assault Hotline, a 24-hour help line providing support to sexual assault survivors and their loved ones.
- National Alliance on Mental Illness Helpline, a 24-hour help line providing treatment referral and mental health resources.



Key Findings and recommendations to the Legislature



KEY FINDINGS

A Tip Line Would Address Some Gaps in Existing Resources

Critical work remains to continue building, strengthening, and sustaining healthy climates for youth across Washington. The new youth-centered tip line will help bridge a gap in existing resources by 1) offering 24-hours a day, seven days per week availability, 2) inviting tips related to any issue concerning youth safety and well-being, and 3) providing connections to existing crisis support and intervention services, school officials, and law enforcement, as appropriate.

Youth-focused help lines and hotlines currently available to Washington youth either do not address the spectrum of youth concerns, or are not available statewide 24-hours a day, seven days a week. The limited operating hours and absence of statewide campaigns or presence creates inequities in access, leaving many youth in Washington without the support they may need. In addition, some existing youth-focused resources do not communicate with schools about school-related incidents, limiting the effectiveness of the response.

Safe Schools Alert does provide information to school officials so they can respond appropriately to school-related incidents. However, school administrators, in addition to their existing duties, are tasked with monitoring and responding to tips. Safe Schools Alert does not provide a 24-hour response center. Work Group members with direct experience monitoring and responding to reports received from Safe Schools Alert shared that their schools have challenges responding to reports and marketing the program. Work Group members who work in schools across Washington shared that many of them, as well as their students, were unaware that the program existed.

Other existing tip lines in the state are not youth-focused and are marketed as crime reporting tools with triage limited to the dispatch of law enforcement responders. Youth that participated in a youth-led organization panel during a Work Group meeting expressed that this has a chilling effect, deterring youth from contacting the tip lines out of fear that they would get their peers into trouble, or be outed for reporting the tip. In addition, youth may simply not know if the threat rises to the level wherein law enforcement should be dispatched.

A new youth safety and well-being tip line will collaborate with and refer tipsters to existing resources available in Washington, as appropriate. Rather than engaging in crisis counseling, the tipster would be connected to the appropriate resources and the concern triaged to the appropriate responder. However, parts of the state lack access to follow-up services such as behavioral health services. The Work Group acknowledges that follow-up services addressing the subject of the tip are not consistently available across the state. This lack of follow-up services will impact the efficiency and effectiveness of the tip line. The tip line program will only be as effective as the resources available for ongoing services addressing such issues as bullying and suicide threats. In order to build a robust wrap-around program that is capable of not only receiving and appropriately directing tips, but also addressing threats to youth safety and well-being equitably across the state, resources must be allocated to expand follow-up services throughout the state. For example, youth-focused regional mobile crisis teams, such as the School Mobilization Assistance Response Teams available in Clark County, are not available statewide.

Risks May be Mitigated but Not Completely Eliminated

The inherent risks associated with a tip line arise from the potential for 1) improper exposure of confidential or personally identifiable information, 2) failure to robustly oversee the program, 3) failure to properly review and direct tips to law enforcement or mental health providers, 4) failure to provide sufficient training, and 5) failure to make appropriate, immediate referrals of psychiatric emergencies. The Work Group concluded that this exposure to potential liability may be mitigated but not completely eliminated. A mitigating measure available to the state is the inclusion of provisions in requests for proposals requiring any third parties contracted to perform work to obtain and maintain insurance coverage naming the state as an additionally insured and indemnifying and holding harmless the state and its agencies and employees in any claims, damages, or expenses arising from any negligent or intentional act or omission while operating or administering the program.

Personally Identifiable Information Must be Protected from Improper Exposure

The Work Group recognizes the importance of protecting personally identifiable information from improper exposure. Improper exposure has a potential to render a tip line ineffective and unnecessarily expose to the public the identities of vulnerable populations. If the tip line program fails to take reasonable steps to protect personally identifiable information, this will have a chilling effect on those who the tip line is intended to support. Those contacting a tip line are often reaching out for help with a sensitive subject in circumstances where the events may be life threatening. The populations utilizing the tip line are inherently vulnerable youth. Failing to protect them will diminish trust in the program and eventually deter those the tip line is intended to support from utilizing the tip line.

To protect this information from improper disclosure through public records requests, a Public Records Act exemption must be drafted into the enacted legislation, specifically identifying which personally identifiable information must be exempt from public records requests. Consistent with Washington's open government policy and law, this type of exemption would be narrower than public disclosure exemptions enacted by other states with tip line programs, as noted in the Figure I.

Figure I: Example Public Disclosure Exemptions

State of Arizona Senate Bill 1519, section 41-1711

“INFORMATION THAT IS REPORTED PURSUANT TO THIS PARAGRAPH IS CONFIDENTIAL AND DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A PUBLIC RECORD. THE PROGRAM AND THE PERSONS IMPLEMENTING OR OPERATING THE PROGRAM MAY BE COMPELLED TO DISCLOSE INFORMATION REPORTED PURSUANT TO THIS PARAGRAPH OR PRODUCE RELATED MATERIALS ONLY BEFORE A COURT AND PURSUANT TO A COURT ORDER. ANY SUCH REVIEW SHALL BE LIMITED TO AN INSPECTION OF MATERIALS THAT ARE MATERIAL TO THE SPECIFIC CASE PENDING BEFORE THE COURT.”

State of Colorado Senate Bill 07-197, section 16-15.8-104 (2) (a)

“RECORDS AND INFORMATION CREATED OR OBTAINED THROUGH IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SAFE-2-TELL HOTLINE ARE CONFIDENTIAL, AND NO PERSON SHALL DISCLOSE THE RECORDS OR INFORMATION. THE SAFE-2-TELL PROGRAM, IN IMPLEMENTING A SAFE-2-TELL HOTLINE, MAY BE COMPELLED TO PRODUCE THE RECORDS OR INFORMATION ONLY BEFORE A COURT OR OTHER TRIBUNAL AND ONLY PURSUANT TO COURT ORDER FOR AN IN CAMERA REVIEW. ANY SUCH REVIEW SHALL BE LIMITED TO AN INSPECTION OF RECORDS AND INFORMATION THAT ARE RELEVANT TO THE SPECIFIC CASE PENDING BEFORE THE COURT.”

Sustainable Funding is Needed

The Work Group found that tip line programs across the nation are primarily funded by Legislative appropriations and a few receive supplemental funding from private or federal grants, such as the STOP School Violence grant program offered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. Work Group members indicated that, based on their professional experience with underfunded programs in the state, sustainability requires a diversification of funding sources and staff committed to the exploration of available funding beyond Legislative appropriations.

The Work Group recommends that initial funding should be provided for a minimum of four years and additional funding provided after reassessing the needs of the tip line program. An estimate of the funding required for implementation and ongoing operations of the tip line program is provided on page 13:

- **Program Operations:** The cost of contracting with third-party providers for developing a mobile application and operating a call center that responds to incoming tips ranges from \$332,000 to \$466,860 annually. This range is based on the number of K-12 students in Washington and reflects estimates provided by several service providers. Program operators also typically provide a program website and digital or print marketing materials, either physical items, such as banners, stickers and posters, or online downloadable items. Another contractor provides services at a higher rate (approximately \$2.4 million for the first year of the program) and provides considerably different services, including expanded marketing, training, program funding support, and program legislation and policy drafting support.
- **Program Management:** The program manager will identify, retain, and train at least four but ideally seven full-time employees to manage the program. This estimate is based on the number of dedicated program manager staff in other states with tip lines. Program managers often supplement marketing provided by the third-party with in-person training for schools on how to utilize the program and respond to reports. Program managers may also create statewide public service announcements, carry out social media campaigns, and execute digital marketing, such as “geofencing”¹⁷ mobile devices of those who attended specific events to receive tip line advertisements. These activities are critical to expanding the reach of the tip line and require sufficient staffing, as well as additional funding to purchase television, radio, or online advertisements.

AGO Questions Whether it Would be the Best Program Manager

The Work Group recommended the AGO manage and oversee the tip line program. However, the AGO questions whether it is the best suited agency to ensure that the program is instituted and operated with fidelity. Specifically, the AGO does not have experience contracting with third-party direct service providers, a function required to identify and properly oversee the vendor operating the tip line. Other state agencies have extensive experience contracting with third-party direct service providers. The AGO also does not have the subject matter expertise gained from managing programs intended to support behavioral health. In contrast, other state agencies have experience managing existing phone and online resources that address behavioral health and well-being concerns.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LEGISLATURE

The Youth Safety and Well-being Statewide Reporting Tool Work Group voted and passed the following recommendations on June 30, 2020. All of the text below was voted on by the Work Group.

Program Creation:

Recommendation: The State of Washington should implement a tip line to support youth safety and well-being statewide.

Unanimous

Program Features:

Recommendation: Tip Reporting Medium: The methods and mediums of accessing the program should be expanded to include as many mediums of communication as possible. This should include, but is not limited to, receiving tips through a mobile application, voice calling, text messaging, postal mail, and the program website.

Unanimous

Recommendation: Warm Connection or Transfer: The program should prioritize integration and collaboration with relevant service providers, including but not limited to behavioral health service providers, schools, and post-secondary institutions, to provide a warm transfer to those providing relevant crisis intervention services.

Unanimous

Confidentiality:

Recommendation: Tipster Confidentiality vs. Anonymity: The identity of the person submitting a tip should be kept confidential. Anonymous tips will be accepted if the individual refuses to provide identifying information. Procedures must be established to breach confidentiality and trace the tip to provide necessary information to first responders in the event that there is a specific threat to life.

Unanimous

Recommendation: A Public Records Act exemption must be drafted into the enacted legislation to ensure that the personally identifiable information of the person submitting the tip and the subject of the tip are protected from public disclosure requests.

Unanimous

Program Management:

Recommendation: The program management and oversight must be performed by an agency with the expertise, capacity, and experience necessary to ensure that the program is instituted and operated with fidelity. The AGO is especially well suited to lead the management and oversight of the program. [See agency concerns on page 13.]

Unanimous

Recommendation: AGO must convene an advisory board with other appropriate agencies around the state, including but not limited to the HCA, DOH, OSPI, WSP, Washington Student Achievement Council, and Washington Association of Educational Service Districts.

Unanimous

Program Operations:

Recommendation: Program operations should be performed by an entity operating a 24-hour, seven days per week crisis line(s) or tip line in Washington thus having the knowledge, experience, and infrastructure necessary to stand up and maintain the operations of the program. Program operations must include the infrastructure and technology necessary to receive tips 24-hours and seven days per week through the following mediums: mobile application, voice calling, text messaging, postal mail, and the program website.

Unanimous

Recommendation: Anyone with a tip, whether they are calling about themselves or another person, should have access to the program and must not be turned away when contacting the program operations center.

Unanimous

Recommendation: This program is not intended to replace existing crisis response procedures already in place but to enhance the ability of communities across Washington to be alerted of and respond to crises while encouraging cooperation among local responders.

Unanimous

Recommendation: The program operator should collaborate with school districts and post-secondary education sectors as partners in determining how the program should be rolled out in each school and post-secondary institution and how schools and institutions will respond when tips are referred. Teams at each school and post-secondary institution should be identified and trained to respond when tips are referred.

Unanimous

Recommendation: Procedures for referral and follow-up on tips should be established to identify which tips will be referred to school or post-secondary institution teams, local crisis services, law enforcement and/or other appropriate entities. Tips should be assessed based on the level of severity, urgency, and assistance needed and triaged appropriately.

Unanimous

Program Training and Marketing:

Recommendation: Meaningful youth engagement is critical to the success of the program. Youth perspectives should be sought out and elevated throughout the planning and implementation of this program. Youth should be consulted in the creation of marketing campaigns, and the creation of marketing materials. The perspectives of youth representing marginalized and minority communities must be prioritized and elevated as invaluable insight.

Unanimous

Recommendation: Sufficiently fund a robust, coordinated training and marketing campaign to ensure that all Washington residents are made aware of the program throughout its existence. Funding should be provided to develop a professional campaign, including distributing marketing assets that school districts and post-secondary educational sectors can use. In addition, schools and post-secondary educational institutions are encouraged to supplement the

campaign as appropriate to their region. Training on how to use the tip line should be provided for school and post-secondary institution staff, parents, and students.

Unanimous

Contracting:

Recommendation: Any third parties contracted to perform work necessary to implement or sustain the program must be done in accordance with RCW 41.06.142 and first priority given to represented government employees to perform such work, as needed.

8 Yes, 1 No (Benton-Franklin Community Health Alliance), 1 Abstain (Mercer Island PTA)

Recommendation: The program manager should include provisions in the request for proposals requiring any third parties contracted to perform work to obtain and maintain insurance coverage listing the state as additionally insured and to indemnify the state in any claims, damages, or expenses arising from any negligent or intentional act or omission while operating or administering the program.

Unanimous

Funding and Sustainability:

Recommendation: Initial funding should be provided for a minimum of four years and additional funding provided after reassessing the needs of the tip line program.

Unanimous

Recommendation: It is imperative that this program be funded by the Legislature and a portion of the funding allocated for AGO staff to explore additional funding opportunities. Funding from local, private, and federal grants such as the STOP School Violence Act may supplement Legislative funding and provide the resources to ensure that the program is sustainable. The program manager will work with OSPI, HCA, DOH, and other key stakeholders to identify additional gaps in funding and community resources. Program sustainability must focus on equitable access to resources across the state.

Unanimous

Recommendation: Funding should be allocated to the program manager to engage in robust multi-agency collaboration, contract with the program operator, provide training and program marketing, and perform data analysis and report on program utilization, focusing on evaluating whether the program is being implemented equitably across the state.

Unanimous

Recommendation: Funding should be allocated to school districts and post-secondary educational sectors to market and support the program as stated above.

Unanimous

APPENDIX I: Work Group Authorizing Budget Proviso

Budget proviso – Section 127 (14) of Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1109

\$200,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2020 is provided solely for a work group to study and institute a statewide program for receiving reports and other information for the public regarding potential self-harm, potential harm, or criminal acts including but not limited to sexual abuse, assault, or rape. Out of this amount:

(a) The work group must review the aspects of similar programs in Arizona, Michigan, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Wisconsin, and Wyoming; and must incorporate the most applicable aspects of those programs to the program proposal;

(b) The program proposal must include a plan to implement a 24-hour hotline or app for receiving such reports and information; and

(c) The program proposal and recommendations must be submitted to legislative fiscal committees by July 31, 2020.

APPENDIX II: Work Group Voting Record

Members	Program Creation	Program Features	Confidentiality	Program Management ¹				Program Operations		Training & Marketing		Contracting		Funding & Sustainability
				HCA	DOH	AGO Vote #1	AGO Final Vote	Items ² 1-4	Item 5	Item 1	Item 2	Item 1	Item 2	
Allie Franklin	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Camille Goldy	Not Present													
Chris Weedin	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Curt Boyle	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Erin Wick	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Jennifer Stuber	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Joan Fleming	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Kirk Williamson	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
Mike Donlin	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Not Present	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Mike Rupert	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Rich McBride	Not Present													
Scott Emry	Not Present													
Tanya Aggar	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Abstain	Yes	Yes	
Final Tally	10 to 0	10 to 0	10 to 0	2 Yes, 8 No	1 Yes, 9 No	6 Yes, 4 No	9 to 0	10 to 0	9 to 0	10 to 0	8 Yes, 1 No, 1 Abstain	10 to 0	10 to 0	

Notes:
 1) The Work Group considered several state agencies for the program manager. Initially, none of the agencies received enough votes to adopt a recommendation. However, a second vote on the AGO attained enough votes.
 2) Items correspond to the paragraph under that heading in the recommendations section on pages 13-15.

Appendix III – Work Group Member Letter



7102 W. Okanogan Place
Kennewick, WA 99336

www.bfcha.org

August 3, 2020

Ms. Joyce Bruce
Ms. Kelly Richburg
Office of the Attorney General
Delivered by email

Dear Ms. Bruce and Ms. Richburg,

I'm writing to voice my concern about the placement of a call-out section in the final report (p.13) without discussion or consultation with members of the work group. This call-out is headlined "AGO Questions Whether it Would be the Best Program Manager."

As you know, this was the topic of considerable discussion in our last two work group meetings. We voted unanimously (9-0) to recommend the AGO. Here are the reasons I believe we concluded the AGO is best suited to monitor contracts with one or more vendors:

- Of all state agencies, the AGO already has a significant in-house understanding of the operation of the many successful state reporting tools (tip lines) across the country.
- Integrity of the contract holder is essential, and we felt the AGO was less likely to be tempted to blend a 24/7 tip line with other departmental activities as would inevitably be the case with OSPI or DoH.
- The AGO is better suited to monitoring confidentiality and provides a built-in barrier to unintended release of personal information.

Perhaps the most important reason to house the contract management in AGO is that it sends a clear message that the safety and well-being of Washington's youth is not simply a "school problem." As a long-time volunteer in the Kennewick School District and service as a substitute teacher, I believe the issues addressed by a statewide reporting tool are "community problems" and care should be taken to keep that separation clear. This also reflects the analysis of our 2018 Community Safety Summit, which was the first time Washingtonians considered the potential in a public forum.

I would ask that an addendum describing the reasoning above be added to the final version of the Work Group's final report to the Legislature as directed by the 2019 Legislative Operating Budget codified in House Bill 1109, Section 127 (14).

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am at your service should you wish further conversation on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kirk F. Williamson".

Kirk F. Williamson, program manager
Benton-Franklin Community Health Alliance

Copies: Sen. Sharon Brown
Rep. Matt Boehnke
Rep. Brad Klippert

ENDNOTES

1. Due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, meetings of the Youth Safety and Well-being Statewide Reporting Tool Work Group convened in June 2020 were conducted virtually.
2. A risk pool refers to a group of entities coming together to jointly purchase insurance and risk management services.
3. Educational Service Districts are nine regional educational support agencies partnering with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to provide essential services for school districts statewide. Additional information may be located here: <https://www.k12.wa.us/about-ospi/about-school-districts/educational-service-districts>.
4. The STOP School Violence Act of 2018 authorized the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services to provide grants to states, units of local government, and Indian tribes to 1) Develop and operate anonymous reporting systems for threats of school violence, including mobile telephone applications, hotlines, and internet websites; 2) Train school personnel and educate students on preventing student violence against others and themselves; 3) Develop and operate school threat assessment and intervention teams that may include coordination with law enforcement agencies and school personnel as well as specialized training for school officials in responding to mental health crises; and 4) Support any other measure that, in the determination of the BJA Director, may provide a significant improvement in training, threat assessments and reporting, and violence prevention. Additional information related to the STOP School Violence Act of 2018 maybe located here: <https://bja.ojp.gov/program/stop-school-violence-program/overview>.
5. Additional information on the Safe2Tell Colorado program may be located here: <https://safe2tell.org/>.
6. Additional information on the Ok2Say program may be located here: <https://www.michigan.gov/ok2say/>.
7. Additional information on the SafeVoice program may be located here: <http://safevoicenv.org/>.
8. Additional information on the SafeOregon program may be located here: <https://www.safeoregon.com/>.
9. Additional information on the SafeUT program may be located here: <https://healthcare.utah.edu/uni/safe-ut/>.
10. A warm handoff is a transfer of care to behavioral health service providers that occurs while a patient or tipster is on the line.
11. Additional information on the Safe2Tell Wyoming program may be located here: <https://www.safe2tellwy.org/>.
12. Additional information on this study may be located here: https://www.chds.us/ssdb/resources/uploads/2019/04/chds_hsx_k-12_ssdb_fact_sheet_042419.pdf.
13. Additional information on this study may be located here: <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/preventingattacksreport.pdf>.
14. Additional information may be located in the Safe2Tell 2018-2019 Annual Report: <https://safe2tell.org/sites/default/files/u113/18.19.annual.report.FINAL%20102819.pdf>.
15. Additional information on this survey may be located here: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/schoolviolence/fastfact.html>.
16. A warmline is a telephone line that provides assistance for people whose need is not urgent, unlike a crisis hotline that is intended for more immediate crises.
17. Geofencing refers to the creation of a virtual geographic boundary around an area utilizing global positioning systems or radio frequency identification technology, enabling software to trigger a response or alert when a mobile device enters or leaves the area.

