

Ensuring access to vital behavioral health care

Over the past five years, the governor has made significant efforts to transform the state's behavioral health system. The century-old model of treating people at large state hospitals wasn't working. People are healthier and better served when they can be closer to their family, friends and communities during treatment. The governor launched a plan to dedicate our state hospitals to treating forensic patients, while significantly expanding the number and types of community facilities that allow non-forensic patients to access treatment closer to their home. Since 2018, the state has greatly expanded its community behavioral health system through significant investments. But even with this strong progress, demand for services continues to rise. Behavioral health challenges impact all Washingtonians and the state must push harder to ensure access to this vital care. The governor proposes a five-part strategy to address these critical and acute needs.

Behavioral health services for children and youth

To assist the most vulnerable behavioral health clients, this budget includes investments intended to maintain access to inpatient treatment and provide navigator resources for families trying to access inpatient treatment services for their children. The budget includes specialty inpatient treatment rates and trainings to support children with co-occurring behavioral health and development disability needs. Additionally, it continues a pilot project that provides intensive outpatient and partial hospitalization services originally funded in the 2022 supplemental budget.

(\$20 million, GF-S; \$8 million, GF-S)

Increase bed capacity

As the state transitions from treatment delivered in large state hospitals to treatment in settings closer to home, a number of key capital investments from previous budgets will be completed. DSHS will open the following:

- A 16-bed civil residential treatment facility (RTF) and a 30-bed facility for forensic patients on the Maple Lane campus in fiscal year 2023.
- 30 additional beds will open on the Maple Lane campus in fiscal year 2025.
- A 48-bed civil RTF in Clark County will open in fiscal year 2025.
- A 16-bed facility will open in Stanwood in fiscal year 2025.

Additionally, the University of Washington Behavioral Health Teaching Hospital will open June 2024, bringing on 150 beds for short- and long-term treatment in a first-of-its-kind facility. In total, there are 173 new state-owned behavioral health beds opening by the end of the 2025-27 biennium.

A focus of the governor's plan to move treatment to community settings includes more individuals receiving care in non-state operated facilities. These include behavioral health hospitals, evaluation and

treatment centers, and behavioral health units in community hospitals. To increase capacity in these settings, this budget includes a psychiatric bed day rate increase and a new acuity-based rate increase to reflect a higher payment for harder-to-place patients.

Finally, in response to increasing waitlists for forensic beds at Western State Hospital, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and Health Care Authority (HCA) will contract for additional capacity. This capacity will be in two behavioral health hospitals — an evaluation and treatment center, and in the South Correctional Entity (SCORE) in King County to increase community civil bed capacity — which will increase forensic bed capacity.

(\$190.1 million, GF-S; \$100.3 million, GF-F)

Increase behavioral health workforce and provider rates

This budget includes key investments to support a crucial part of the state's mental health workforce that is experiencing an unprecedented demand for these services. There are rate increases for services funded through the state's Apple Health Medicaid program, as well as services that Medicaid does not cover and services for those who do not qualify for federal programs. There are also supports for state workers in our state hospitals such as increases to direct staffing and violence reduction programs to ensure a safe and healthy environment for patients and staff.

(\$106.6 million, GF-S; \$101.6 million, GF-F)

Expand community services

Expand 988/crisis services

This budget builds upon previous investments to the state's crisis response system by enhancing the crisis service system to better align with best practices for crisis services. This includes expanding mobile crisis services, crisis stabilization services, and additional training to support the crisis response workforce. The statewide 988 behavioral health crisis response and suicide prevention line tax will fund these investments.

(\$74 million, Statewide 988 Behavioral Health & Suicide Prevention Line Account; \$27.4 million, GF-F)

Distributor opioid settlement

This budget includes funding opioid prevention and treatment services with the *State v. McKesson Corp.* lawsuit settlement. Funded items include the following:

- Support delivering parents with substance use disorders post-birth
- Public education campaign about synthetic drugs, such as fentanyl, and harm reduction
- Prescriber education and support
- Fentanyl technical assistance and training for those in the legal system
- Clinical consultation and discharge planning for emergency departments
- Substance use disorder professional scholarships targeted toward increasing the number of BIPOC professionals

- Technical support for jails offering medical opioid use disorder treatment
- Data tracking resources
- Expand substance use disorder prevention activities
- Expand syringe service programs

(\$49.1 million, Distributor Opioid Abatement Settlement Account; \$3.3 million, GF-F)

Settlement funds are also provided for tribes to use to benefit their communities.

(\$12.4 million, Distributor Opioid Abatement Settlement Account)

Trueblood settlement

This budget includes funding to expand implementation efforts in the third phase of the *Trueblood v. DSHS* lawsuit settlement agreement. The agreement requires the state to invest in resources for competency evaluation, competency restoration, Forensic Housing and Recovery through Peer Services, Forensic Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness, crisis diversion and supports, education and training and workforce development.

Phase 1, funded in the 2019–21 biennial budget, included Pierce and Spokane counties, as well as the Southwest region of the state. Phase 2, funded in the 2021-23 biennial budget, expanded into King County. Phase 3 will expand into two more yet-to-be-named regions.

(\$22.5 million, GF-S)

The budget also adds additional funding for Phase 2 activities *(\$10.7 million GF-S)*, more resources for the Trueblood diversion program *(\$3.9 million, GF-S)* and Trueblood court monitor costs *(\$830,000, GF-S)*.

There are other further investments to increase the number of competency evaluations to meet increasing demands *(\$7.6 million, GF-S)*, and establish a forensic evaluation pilot in King County that will reduce delays and create efficiencies for Trueblood class members. *(\$1.5 million, GF-S)*

Additionally, as referenced in the bed capacity section, to address immediate needs, this budget includes funding to contract for additional forensic services at two behavioral health hospitals and an evaluation and treatment center. It also proposes expanding opportunities for early treatment and intervention that will free up beds at forensic facilities.

Governor’s budget continues expansion of early childhood education

During the first five years of life, the brain develops faster than at any other stage. In these critical years, children need to be exposed to high-quality learning experiences and have positive relationships to maximize brain development and reduce the need for interventions later in life¹.

The Early Childhood Education and Assistance program (ECEAP) is a key tool in this effort. This program is the state’s preschool program for 3- and 4-year-olds from families with an income at or below 36% of the state median income (SMI) or tribal children from a family with income at or below 100% SMI. ECEAP delivers kindergarten readiness outcomes for low-income children and the children who participate in ECEAP benefit more from full-school day slots than part-day slots². Full-day slots also better meet the needs of working families.

Washington has long recognized the importance of early childhood education. Since 2013, we have expanded ECEAP by 8,900 slots. ECEAP currently serves about 11,000 children.

Enrollment in ECEAP declined during COVID-19 but has recently reached pre-pandemic levels. Washington was one of only a few states to increase preschool enrollment and spending during the 2020-21 pandemic school year³. The state added 1,616 slots in the 2021-23 biennium and increased slot rates by 10%. We also invested in an additional two months of ECEAP during summer months to help mitigate learning loss among our youngest learners.

While ECEAP enrollment is increasing again, there are more children eligible for ECEAP than we have slots for. As of December 2020, there were 33,528 children eligible for ECEAP but only 16,278 slots⁴. This deprives some of our state’s early learners from fully developing and preparing for kindergarten.

Average spend per child		
Transitional kindergarten	Head Start	ECEAP
\$14,660	\$15,284	\$9,662

¹Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, “In Brief – The Science of Early Child Development.”

²Washington State Institute for Public Policy, “Evaluation of the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program: Kindergarten Readiness for School and Part-Day Enrollees”.

³National Institute for Early Education Research, “Washington Increased Preschool Enrollment and Spending Amid Pandemic”.

⁴Washington Department of Children, Youth and Families, “2020-21 ECEAP and Head Start Saturation Study.”

Additionally, ECEAP is the state’s highest quality early learning program but lowest in terms of ‘per child’ spending⁵.

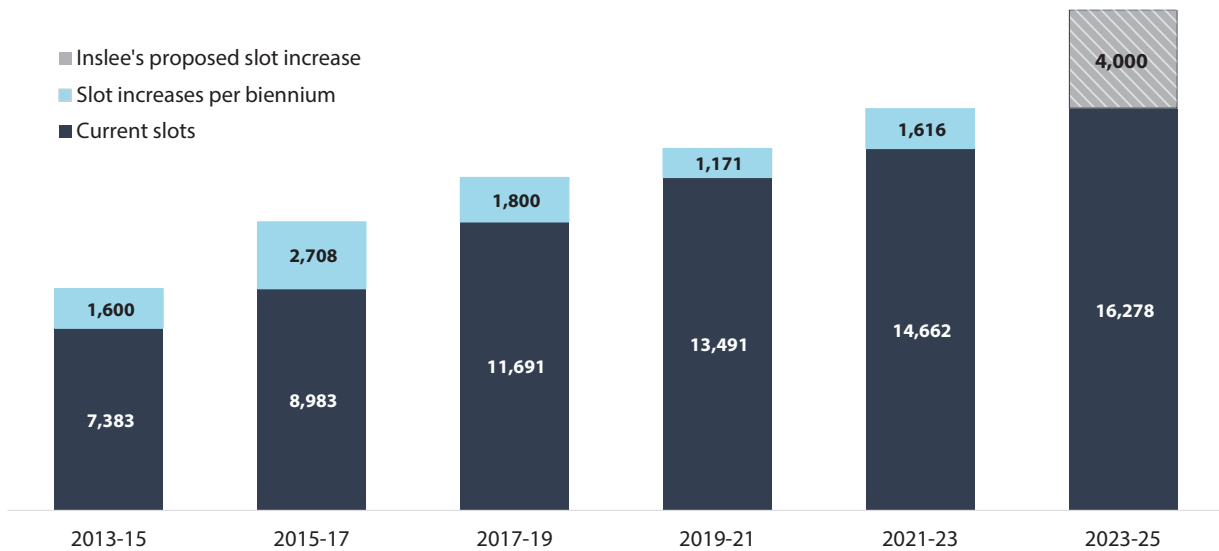
A low slot rate makes ECEAP providers susceptible to staff turnover. It also means classrooms are at risk for operating at reduced capacity, compromising overall quality and availability. Relying on a quality early learning program to deliver positive outcomes while being limited with a low slot rate is not realistic.

The governor’s 2023-25 biennial budget proposes:

- A 40% rate increase for school- and working-day slots. This will stabilize and encourage growth among ECEAP providers and align ECEAP rates with similar rates.
- Adding 2,000 slots per year (1,700 school day and 300 working day) to increase access to ECEAP as a quality early learning program.

The price of ECEAP as a quality early learning program has gone up. The governor’s budget targets rate increases on the slots we know working families need and harnesses what brain science tells us about dosage: school and working day slots deliver stronger kindergarten readiness outcomes. This funding seizes the momentum of our state’s investment in ECEAP as a premier early learning program and grows it by providing 4,000 more slots this biennium to reach more children across the state. (\$148.8 million GF-S; \$41.8 million Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund II)

New preschool slots added by biennium



Source: Office of Financial Management

⁵National Institute for Early Education Research, “The State of Preschool 2021.”

Human Services/Operating

Department of Social and Health Services: Aging, long-term care and development disabilities services

Increase Consumer Directed Employer program rate

Individual providers help aging and disabled clients live in their own homes. In April 2022, the Consumer Directed Employer (CDE) became the employer for 46,000 individual providers. The state created a new board to recommend a rate for the CDE to pay adequate wages and benefits to this critical workforce. This will help aging and disabled adults live independently in their own community.

(\$341 million General Fund-State; \$421 million General Fund-Federal)

Address increased costs and workforce shortages for Medicaid providers

Long-term care providers who accept Medicaid patients have faced workforce shortages, higher costs due to inflation and supply-chain shortages during the pandemic. A rate increase will help these providers recruit and retain direct care workers in skilled nursing homes and assisted living settings. The state will also adjust rates for nursing services, specialty dementia care and enhanced services.

In skilled nursing facilities, the pandemic led to a lower number of patients and higher costs for staffing and supplies. The state will adjust the occupancy threshold for these facilities from 90% to 80% and will annually rebase the costs during the 2023-25 biennium. This rate

adjustment will more accurately reflect the higher costs that these facilities incurred during the pandemic.

Rates will also be increased for assisted living, enhanced residential care and adult residential care. This will help providers cover higher employee wage and services costs during the pandemic.

(\$206.5 million GF-S; \$207.1 million GF-F)

Help patients transition from hospitals and institutions to the community

Aging and long-term care services help Medicaid patients transition from acute care hospitals, state hospitals and community psychiatric hospitals and into settings in the community with more appropriate levels of care. Lack of affordable housing solutions sometimes prevents clients from transitioning out of higher-cost care settings to live independently with appropriate supports. This budget offers flexible funding solutions to aging and long-term services that help clients transition from hospitals and institutions to community settings.

(\$10.9 million GF-S and \$2.1 million GF-F)

Support children and youth in hospitals

Work with the Health Care Authority to continue expanding funding for youth inpatient navigator teams. These teams provide case management for children with multiple diagnoses who are in inpatient behavioral health settings. More funding will help children with behavioral health and developmental

disabilities transition more effectively from inpatient settings to less restrictive placements in the community.

Continued phasing of intensive and out-of-home supports for children with an intellectual/developmental disability who need intensive behavior supports. This helps support families and may help prevent hospitalization or the need for inpatient care.

Study the Comprehensive Assessment Reporting Evaluation (CARE) tool to identify if the assessments adequately identify and recommend services for children with multiple diagnoses, especially autism spectrum disorder.

(\$11 million GF-S and \$10.2 million GF-F)

Prevent unnecessary hospitalization for clients with developmental disabilities

Expand behavioral stabilization services that help clients with difficult behaviors stabilize in their environment. These services also provide the client with a short-term placement to help resolve behavioral issues. A rate increase will maintain this provider network. It will also help prevent unnecessary hospitalizations and out-of-state placements for clients with challenging behaviors.

(\$6.8 million GF-S and \$4.1 million GF-F)

Increase employment and community inclusion provider rates

Supportive employment and community inclusion services work with clients with developmental disabilities to find employment and community activities that meet the client's goals. These providers experienced financial difficulties during COVID-19 because clients chose not to participate and because of staff

shortages. A rate increase will help stabilize these providers so they can keep offering these community and employment experiences to clients with developmental disabilities.

(\$24 million GF-S and \$19 million GF-F)

Department of Social and Health Services: Economic Services Administration

Support Afghan and Ukrainian refugees

Funds federal awards that will support an estimated 14,357 Afghan and Ukrainian refugees who have arrived in Washington and those yet to arrive. This funding will focus on supporting the well-being of these individuals through a holistic approach. This includes:

- Short-term and permanent housing.
- Services to help children successfully integrate into school.
- Immediate and long-term physical and mental health supports.
- Employment, training and case management services.

(\$49.4 million GF-F)

Extend the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program time limit

Increase access to cash assistance by allowing households the chance to remain on the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program beyond 60 months if they are facing a hardship. This extension ends June 30, 2025, and will serve over 2,000 households per month.

(\$25.3 million GF-F)

Increase cash benefits to help cover the cost of diapers

By funding an increase of \$80 per month to households on the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program for families who have a child under 3 years old, this additional cash benefit helps reduce financial stress for more than 9,000 families per month while making sure they maintain an adequate supply of diapers — a necessity for every infant. The additional diaper benefit begins Nov. 1, 2023 (from Chapter 100, Laws of 2022 (SSB 5838)).

(\$13.9 million GF-F)

Continue funding the Integrated Eligibility and Enrollment IT project

By building an integrated eligibility and enrollment system that acts as a ‘one-stop shop’ for Washingtonians who experience poverty and need related services, the state will simplify the process and create more efficient access. The eligibility system will span programs and agencies, save customers’ time and create a more simplified application process for these individuals. It will also create efficiencies for state workers. These funds support continued work to create a transparent eligibility tracker, select a system platform, work on system architecture design and maintain a project office.

(\$14.7 million GF-S; \$34.4 million GF-F)

Support unaccompanied immigrant children living with a sponsor family

Over 1,200 unaccompanied immigrant children were placed in Washington with sponsor

families by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in 2021. This population has experienced a service gap, and proposed funds will support services for unaccompanied immigrant children and their sponsor families to address emergent needs. This includes housing supports, child care, transportation and household supplies. The funds also establish a work group convened by the Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance to study long-term solutions for supports and case-management activities for these households.

(\$1 million GF-S)

Increase assistance to support independent living

Fund several enhancements to the Ongoing Additional Requirement (OAR) program, which is meant to help participants receiving cash assistance with unmet expenses if they need to continue living independently. Program enhancements include increasing the payment standard for existing services and extending eligibility to those on the Housing and Essential Needs Referral program. Funding would also modernize benefits to include transportation, internet, care for service animals, and certain medical, vision and, dental services (if not covered by Medicaid). The program enhancements should serve an additional 680 clients per year and becomes effective April 1, 2024.

(\$1.2 million GF-S)

Eliminate the repayment of cash benefits for Aged, Blind or Disabled recipients

When a recipient of the Aged, Blind or Disabled program is approved for federal Social Security Income (SSI) benefits, they often receive a backdated SSI approval date and a lump sum payment to cover those prior months. The department currently garnishes a portion of the recipient's lump sum SSI payment to repay the state for any ABD cash benefits received during months that overlap with the SSI back payment approval date. Funding is provided to eliminate this garnishment effective Oct. 1, 2023, keeping more financial resources with individuals living in poverty. This means that over 17,000 Aged, Blind or Disabled recipients each month will be able to keep their lump sum SSI payment rather than having to repay the state for the cost of previous assistance.

(\$39.5 million GF-S)

Health Care Authority: Other

Support undocumented immigrant health coverage

Implement a medical assistance program for low-income uninsured immigrants living in Washington. The program would mirror the program provided to other Washingtonians with income below 138% of the federal poverty level for individuals who are not eligible for federal programs.

(\$15.7 million GF-S)

Cover adult cochlear implants

Cochlear devices provide a sense of sound for the hard of hearing and deaf. Providing an Apple Health benefit for adults who need cochlear implants could help 625 adults in the state increase their hearing range.

(\$59,000 GF-S; \$69,000 GF-F)

Support applied behavior analysis services

Increasing reimbursement for applied behavior analysis (ABA) services and clinical support to improve service delivery for individuals living with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) will help support providers who provide services to the most complex clients. HCA will provide additional oversight over the program and support the continuum of care for individuals with co-occurring IDD and behavioral health needs.

(\$5.4 million GF-S, \$5.1 million GF-F)

Health Care Authority: Health Benefit Exchange

Maintain Cascade Care

Providing ongoing funding for the Health Benefit Exchange is crucial to continue the health care premium assistance program. This program helps Washingtonians with incomes less than 250% of the federal poverty level. Maintaining the premium assistance program is essential to keep individuals insured as the public health emergency wanes.

(\$25 million Health Care Affordability Account)

Health Care Authority: Community Behavioral Health

Undocumented immigrant health coverage

Implement a medical assistance program for low-income uninsured immigrants living in Washington. The program would mirror the program provided to other Washingtonians with income below 138% of the federal poverty level for individuals who are not eligible for federal programs.

(\$3 million GF-S)

Department of Corrections

Transform culture in correctional institutions

- Implement reforms to address the unique mental and physical health concerns of individuals and staff in correctional facilities.
- Increase resources to reduce the time an individual spends in restrictive housing through evidence-based practices. This will increase out-of-cell time and expand mental health treatment and programming.
- Establish the practices of normalization and ‘dynamic security’ in prisons. Normalization brings conditions within the facility as close to the community as possible and increases how much incarcerated individuals can participate in the decision-making process for their environment. ‘Dynamic security’ is increased interaction and engagement between staff and incarcerated people to promote positive relationships and better understanding of individual needs and

risks. These changes can lead to improved outcomes for incarcerated individuals and a less stressful environment for staff.

(\$16.3 million GF-S)

Reduce time in total confinement

- Shorten sentence lengths in prison.
- Allow most incarcerated individuals to earn up to 33% time off their sentences and expand ‘earned time’ eligibility to include sentence enhancements in addition to the underlying offense. This will generate \$1.8 million in GF-S savings.

Increase health care resources in prisons

- Expand health care resources for prison violator centers and addiction care needs.
- Provide dedicated health services staff to address the unique and acute care needs of individuals who enter prisons after violating their community supervision.
- Increase access to addiction treatment in prisons with specialized medical staff and medications for opioid use disorder.

(\$12.3 million GF-S)

Department of Children, Youth, and Families: Child Welfare

Support relative placements and guardianships

Provide resources to DCYF that will help more children in out-of-home care be placed with relatives. These resources will provide relative caregivers with initial payments during the early months of caring for a child, and expand longer-term subsidy payments to more caregivers who become guardians.

Children in out-of-home care who are placed with relatives have better outcomes compared to those placed in nonrelative foster care. Unfortunately, kinship caregivers are twice as likely to live in poverty as nonrelative caregivers. Implementing the Keeping Families Together Act and the Washington State Supreme Court's *In re Dependency of K.W.* decision means more children who experience out-of-home placement will be placed with relatives.

This governor's budget will do the following:

- Maintain licensing staff ratios.
- Fund initial license maintenance payments for kinship caregivers. Starting in fiscal year 2024, the department may issue initial licenses to unlicensed kinship caregivers. Once the state approves the initial license, it can issue a foster care maintenance payment for up to 90 days. This means the department can work with the caregiver to become fully licensed and tap into longer-term foster care maintenance payments.
- Expand the Guardianship Assistance program (GAP) subsidy to guardianships that include non-Title IVE children (children who don't qualify for federal support), guardianships established by tribes, and foster parents seeking guardianship as an option. GAP provides a monthly subsidy to caregivers on behalf of the child until the child is 18 years old. But it is currently limited to relatives caring for children who qualify for federal support based on 1996 economic standards that fewer and fewer children in foster care meet. The current subsidy

program is not available to support guardianships established in tribal court or nonrelative guardianships.

(\$23.7 million GF-S; \$2.7 million GF-F)

Support caregiver placements

Fund a caregiver support level system that offers support services to relative and nonrelative caregivers and create a new foster care maintenance payment based on child health history data and structured interviews. This system also bolsters supports and services for the needs of the child. The department has experienced challenges finding stable placements for children and youth in foster care, in part because of an inadequate array of supports and services for caregivers. Resources are disproportionately allocated mostly to white, nonrelative foster homes instead of kinship caregivers, which are comprised mostly of Black, Indigenous and persons of color.

(\$45.4 million GF-S; \$6.6 million GF-F)

DCYF settlement agreement

Parties recently reached a settlement agreement in *D.S. v. Department of Children, Youth and Families*. The agreement requires DCYF to engage a compliance monitor to review the state's implementation plan as well as the stakeholder engagement required by the court. The agreement outlines six key areas of investments: supported housing programs for youth ages 16-20, professional therapeutic foster care, hub home model, shared planning

meetings and family team decision making meetings, referral and transition, and qualified residential treatment program assessments.

(\$28.3 million GF-S; \$6.6 million GF-F)

Permanently expand Child Welfare Housing Assistance program

Make the Child Welfare Housing Assistance program permanent statewide. Families involved in the child welfare system demonstrate a high need for housing. The department piloted a child welfare housing program in the 2021-23 biennium to shorten the time that children remain in out-of-home care. This funding permanently expands the reunification-oriented program statewide. It also initiates a prevention component by allowing the department to provide housing supports to families at risk of having a child placed in out-of-home care in two counties. In addition, this funding provides department housing support specialists to work with local housing authorities and coordinate housing resources throughout the state.

(\$8.4 million GF-S; \$24,000 GF-F)

Fund housing for youth

Fund housing support services for youth exiting juvenile rehabilitation and foster care. Youth across juvenile rehabilitation and foster care have a demonstrated need for additional housing supports to help them maintain stability and successfully transition out of public systems. Young adults exiting foster care are eligible for Foster Youth to Independence vouchers if the public child welfare agency provides or arranges their housing support services. This funding leverages that opportunity by providing DCYF

resources to supply housing navigation services for youth exiting the child welfare system and by providing targeted housing resources toward youth exiting juvenile rehabilitation.

(\$3.3 million GF-S)

Expand combined in-home services

Expand combined in-home services to meet the anticipated increase in families that need services. Doing so will also help the department expand culturally relevant in-home services in partnership with tribes and recognized American Indian organizations. The Keeping Families Together Act raised the standard for placing children and youth in out-of-home care. This means there's been an anticipated increase in the number of children who will remain in their homes with families in need of services, which address factors related to abuse and neglect. The Indian Child Welfare Act also requires that the services the state provides to tribes are culturally relevant. This funding helps keep families together while ensuring that more families will have access to needed, culturally-relevant services.

(\$9.6 million GF-S)

Expand young adult transition teams

Maintain the existing LifeSet teams in King and Yakima counties and add four more teams in various counties. This will expand the LifeSet program statewide. This is a comprehensive, community-based intervention model designed to serve young people 17-22 years old who have been involved in the foster care, juvenile justice and mental health systems or young adults who find themselves without the necessary skills and resources to make a successful transition to adulthood.

The department is working to ensure all young people exiting a system of care successfully transition into adulthood. To achieve this goal, a robust array of services developed in partnership with communities is needed. A contract is currently in place with community organizations in King and Yakima counties to deliver LifeSet. This funding will fortify the continuum of care available to young adults going through this transition.

(\$1.9 million GF-S; \$1 million GF-Local)

Establish Family Connections program

Make the Family Connections program permanent. Piloted during the 2021-23 biennium, the program can continue working within its current geographic reach if it's made permanent. The department has contracted with a nonprofit entity to support strong parent-caregiver relationships. This can reduce the trauma associated with children being placed in out-of-home care, improve reunification rates, reduce re-entry into the child welfare system and retain quality foster parents.

(\$998,000 GF-S; \$310,000 GF-F)

New plan for Cost of Care

Funding will help the department work on a long-term plan to discontinue the practice of reimbursing the state for cost of care using any benefits, payments, funds, or accruals paid to or on behalf of a child or youth. This includes developing an implementation plan to conserve funds for the future needs of the child. However, this needs to be done in such a way that the funds conserved for the child do not count against their eligibility for federal

or state means-tested programs and align with any Social Security Administration policies. The department will work with stakeholders to develop the plan. Stakeholders include individuals with disabilities and organizations that represent the interests of individuals with disabilities, youth in juvenile rehabilitation and foster care and their parents, and the Social Security Administration.

(\$280,000 GF-S)

Strengthen substance use disorder prevention

Connect pregnant people who have substance use disorders to voluntary prevention services before birth and at the time of birth. Also connect all DCYF-involved families with SUD supports aimed at reducing child placements. Parental substance use is a risk factor for a child being placed out of home and contributes to 71% of infant removal cases statewide. Black, Indigenous, and infants of color are also removed at disproportionately high rates compared to white infants. This funding offers parents greater access to safe care planning and helps improve equity.

(\$3 million GF-S)

Support foster care school program

Fund the expansion of the Treehouse Graduation Success program statewide to reach 50% of middle school students who are experiencing foster care by June 2025. Changes in home placement, school transitions, and emotional upheaval may cause youth in foster care to fall behind in school. Treehouse has an established program for high school

students that improves graduation rates for this demographic. Research suggests that middle school is the best chance to identify students who are at risk of academic failure and get them back on track in time for high school.

(\$6 million GF-S)

Department of Children, Youth, and Families: Early Learning

Improve child care provider rate

Ensure child care providers are paid a subsidy rate that reflects at least 85th percentile of the 2021 market rate. The Fair Start for Kids Act requires child care subsidy rates to reflect the 85th percentile of market. The 2022 supplemental budget issued a one-time flat-rate increase to providers. This means a subset of providers started to be paid a rate that exceeded the market rate (based on the 2021 market rate survey) while other providers remained under market. This robust investment provides nearly \$100 million to make the one-time rate increase a permanent part of the department's base budget so that it can keep paying providers this amount. It also adds \$142.4 million to bring providers up to 85th percentile of the 2021 market rate, while making sure those providers currently over the market rate subsidy remain there. This will help stabilize child care providers and ensure subsidy child care slots are available to low-income families.

Total: (\$239.1 million; \$2.4 million GF-F – includes base funding)

Expand the Complex Needs Fund

Expand the Complex Needs Fund to bolster

child care and the Early Childhood and Education Assistance program. The Fair Start for Kids Act established a grant fund to support children with developmental and learning gaps who would otherwise start kindergarten developmentally behind. However, the grant fund requests have exceeded demand. This additional funding will support a child's education experience with increased staffing, mental health and behavioral consultations, and supportive and adaptive curriculum.

(\$26.4 million GF-S)

Improve background check process

Fund background check application and fingerprint processing fees for child care workers. This will reduce how long it takes someone to complete a background check by about 3-5 days. The child care industry is struggling with workforce recruitment and retention in a challenging economy. A federal rule prohibits newly hired staff from working until their background check is complete. This one-time funding will help speed up processing time and offer child care providers some relief. OFM will wrap up a background check feasibility study and implementation plan by June 2023 with 2022 funding.

(\$897,000 GF-S)

Expand Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Provide a state match for local contributions to the Imagination Library, a book reading program for early learners. This program distributes books each month to the homes of early learners and develops engagement and skills that form the basis of literacy and educational success. The national program is

sponsored by the internationally acclaimed country singer, Dolly Parton, who has commended Washington for its early adoption of this program. A state match will expand the program to regions of the state where private funding is not readily available.

(§5.2 million GF-S)

Sustain and expand ‘home visiting’

Increase funding for home visiting programs. Home visiting is a voluntary, proven program where trained home visitors and parents work together to strengthen and support families in the child’s first years of life. This will help sustain the home visiting workforce. Funding will also help the state expand home visiting to an additional 167 families.

(§10.8 million GF-S)

Better fund equity grants

Increase funding for equity grants. This will expand students’ access to early learning statewide and will support inclusive, culturally-specific, and linguistically-specific education for early learners. The Fair Start for Kids Act established an equity grant fund. However, due to high interest from providers, funding requests far exceed the amount of money that is available. This one-time funding will help meet the demands put on the equity fund and provide equity supports to more early learning providers.

(§18.7 million GF-S)

Provide early learning grants for tribal children

Provide tribal early learning grants. These one-time grants provide culturally-appropriate

early learning opportunities for tribal children and facilitate tribal cultural connection and reclamation in the classrooms. The early learning needs of tribal children are unique from nontribal children. This is primarily due to the anti-American Indian and cultural assimilation policies of boarding schools that inflicted historical trauma and destroyed tribal culture. Most tribal learners (75%) are taught by nontribal providers, which presents a barrier to connecting tribal children with their culture and unique education needs.

(§10.3 million GF-S)

Department of Children, Youth, and Families: Juvenile Rehabilitation

Improve educational outcomes for students in institutions

Strengthen support for students in institutional education programs. State law recently directed the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families to develop recommendations for institutional education system reform. The draft recommendations include statewide collaboration between the two agencies as well as hands-on support for students accessing education in residential facilities and transitioning out to the community. Agency level staff will increase oversight and provide a more consistent educational experience for these students. Staff at the facility level will also support individual students to achieve educational success.

(§7.4 million GF-S total at DCYF and OSPI)

Department of Veterans Affairs

Address Comprehensive Toxics Act (PACT) implementation

Provides resources to help veterans complete the new veteran benefit claims related to the federal PACT act. This federal law expanded the number of conditions that a veteran or family member can apply for compensation from the federal Department of Veterans Affairs. Through this effort, veteran benefit specialists will connect veterans and families to these federal benefits. This will help veterans who are experiencing health effects from their service.

(§1.3 million GF-S)

Department of Health

Invest in foundational public health and COVID-19 partnerships

Continue investments in foundational public health services. As COVID-19 ramps down and becomes part of regular operations, local health jurisdictions, tribes and the Department of Health (DOH) will need shared investments and services to make sure Washingtonians have the tools and information to make informed health choices. This budget continues public health system investments with \$100 million GF-S. Another \$20 million in fiscal year 2024 will help wind down COVID-19 services and make sure partnerships among local health jurisdictions, the tribes and DOH meet these needs.

(§120 million GF-S)

Secure reproductive rights

Provide funding to reimburse health clinics for the cost of providing patients with abortion and support services. This includes the cost of helping patients travel to Washington clinics and secure child care. Funding will also help the department conduct a public awareness campaign to educate people about non-health care facilities that do not provide full and complete information to pregnant people about their reproductive rights.

(§16 million GF-S)

Department of Labor and Industries

Enhance the Prevailing Wage program

Continue to fund enhancements to the Prevailing Wage program through IT system changes. These changes will be more efficient for external and internal users and increase the number of investigators. This means the state can better address the growing number of prevailing wage complaints. The prevailing wage law is designed to protect workers' wages and benefits. The Department of Labor and Industries establishes and enforces wage requirements for a wide range of occupational activities involved in government construction projects.

(§2.9 million Public Works Administration Account-State)

Strengthen apprenticeships

Washington is recognized as a leader in developing and maintaining a quality registered

apprenticeship system that establishes many high-skill, high-wage careers. This budget proposes a two-year continuation of the apprenticeship support service grant (E2SSB 5600). The grant provides support services to those in apprenticeship programs, including those in the clean energy sector. Services can include child care, health care, transportation to job sites and other supports that apprentices need to complete their program.

(\$2.5 million Climate Commitment Account-State; \$2.0 million Workforce Education Investment Account-State)

Create equity research center

Fund the creation of the Center for Work Equity Research to study and systematically address employer and employment factors that place historically marginalized workers at increased risk for work-related injuries and illnesses as well as social and economic hardship. The center plans to focus on a small number of occupations at a time, starting with agricultural, food service and janitorial workers. Creating the center aligns with the department's Pro-Equity Anti-Racism (PEAR) plan.

(\$857,000 Accident Account-State; \$855,000 Medical Aid Account-State)

Enhance provider support and outreach

Fund the department's capacity to improve medical and vocational providers' access to the Workers' Compensation program. The department will do this by expanding the number of navigators that help providers in

underserved communities and make sure they can access high quality and reliable interpreter services. Direct real-time navigator support makes it easier for providers to do business with the department and promotes improved access to care for injured workers.

(\$1.3 million Medical Aid Account-State)

Equity for underserved workers

Improve access to information and services for workers with limited English proficiency (LEP) by expanding outreach and translated safety-related information, training and other materials. To accomplish this, this budget proposes to add LEP outreach staff to the department. They will provide direct services to workers in King and Yakima counties. They will also staff and contract services necessary to translate safety and health materials, and distribute funds to community-based organizations to help with outreach efforts.

(\$1.9 million Accident Account-State; \$797,000 Medical Aid Account-State)

Employment Security Department

Hire more business navigators

Increase the number of business navigators (by 10) across the state in workforce development areas. This will help the state support industry recovery and growth. Funds will increase local talent acquisition, strengthen 'upskill' and retention services, and build employment pathways for job seekers.

(\$2.9 million GF-S)

Expand poverty prevention program

Fund a two-year expansion of the Economic Security for All program so that it can include individuals over 200% of the federal poverty level. The current program provides local communities with resources to create customized services to help individuals below 200% of the federal poverty level access services that lead to self-sufficiency. This expansion will serve an additional 500 individuals per year with support services and training or education costs they may need to maintain or secure employment. The goal is to prevent these individuals from falling below the federal poverty threshold.

(\$5.3 million GF-S)

Increase Washington Service Corps stipend

Increase the Washington Service Corps stipends for members who are under 200% of the federal poverty level. This will better align their payment with Washington's minimum wage. Washington Service Corps is an AmeriCorps program that connects service members to local organizations that help community members in need. Members serve in a variety of fields including environmental stewardship, education, health, disaster preparedness and financial literacy. The stipend increase reduces the likelihood that members earn poverty wages for their service.

(\$7.9 million GF-S)

Department of Services for the Blind

Increase access to independent living services

Increase funding for the Independent Living program, which helps individuals with vision loss learn how to accomplish daily life tasks on their own so that they can continue living independently. The funding means the department can serve an additional 350 clients. It also fills a federal funding shortfall and increases the service provider rate to help address recruitment and retention challenges.

(\$551,000 GF-S)

Maintain services for youth under 14 years of age

Backfill the loss of federal funds to continue offering age-appropriate career exploration, peer interaction, self-advocacy services, workshops and other activities for youth under the age of 14 who are blind or low-visioned. The program serves roughly 125 youth each year. Funds cover the time that staff needs to provide these services, administrative support and workshop costs.

(\$402,000 GF-S)

Human Services/Capital

Behavioral Health

Department of Social and Health Services

Western State Hospital: new forensic hospital

Construct a 350-bed forensic hospital on the site of South Hall on the Western State Hospital campus. Includes funding to complete design work and construction. The civil patients in South Hall will be relocated to smaller, community-based facilities as part of the governor's plan to serve civil patients in the community. This will help Western State Hospital focus on providing forensic services.

(\$895 million bonds)

Department of Social and Health Services

Diversion and recovery community capacity

This provides planning and construction funding to develop a behavioral health diversion and treatment facility for individuals with serious mental illnesses involved in or at risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system. The predesign will help assess the needs and develop implementation options. Possible options include a receiving center, integrated crisis stabilization, various levels of residential treatment, transitional housing, and other supportive, health, vocational and social services. The governor is proposing a statewide voter referendum that would enable the state to raise \$4 billion over the next six years by issuing

bonds outside Washington's debt limit. \$55 million in funding for this project comes from this referendum.

(\$500,000 in bonds and \$55 million in WA Housing Crisis Response Account)

Department of Corrections and Department of Social and Health Services

Medical support

This budget invests in medical support projects in several facilities across that state, which includes constructing a mental health building, additional staffing space, nurses' station renovation, predesign for a psychiatric unit, and a unit relocation so that it's closer to medical providers. This will give the staff necessary space for medical services and provide patients access to better medical care.

(\$9.6 million bonds)

Other Human Services

Department of Health

Improvements at the public health lab in Shoreline

Funding will help construct an environmental laboratory science wing addition and a new conference room and media center at the Public Health Laboratories in Shoreline. Investments will also include LED lighting, solar panel installation and other improvements.

(\$76.4 million bonds)

**Department of Corrections and
Department of Social and Health
Services**

McNeil Island support

This budget invests in critical infrastructure and transportation to McNeil Island and the Special Commitment Center. This includes HVAC improvements, electrical upgrades, fire alarm systems, dock and dolphin replacements, transportation barge design and hybrid passenger ferry design.

(\$9.6 million bonds)

**Department of Children, Youth, and
Families**

Echo Glen minimum security transitional housing

Renovate and remodel two maximum security units to accommodate incarcerated youth and their families as they transition from institutional life back into the community. This also provides additional support and resources to help individuals up to 25 years old gain life skills as they re-enter society.

(\$9.2 million bonds)