

Human Services/Operating

Health Care Authority – Community Behavioral Health

Increase rates for community behavioral health providers

To create robust community behavioral health services, the governor’s budget increases rates for 90-day and 180-day bed providers. This will increase the number of available beds located in communities. When individuals receive behavioral health services closer to home and closer to their support network, their outcomes improve. In addition, space constraints at our state hospitals create a need for behavioral health services in the community. The budget increases rates for teams that support individuals preparing to transition from institutional to community settings, and for community teams that support individuals with severe behavioral health disorders.

This item also appears in the Behavioral Health Policy Brief.

(\$44.9 million General Fund-State, \$67.7 million General Fund-Federal)

Support behavioral health services facilities

The governor’s operating and capital budgets invest in community facilities that provide critical access to behavioral health services. The Department of Commerce grants help behavioral health providers open facilities. Because of high operating costs, maintaining services is difficult, so funding will assist these facilities with operating costs and allow community behavioral health clinics to serve

individuals regardless of their ability to pay.

This item also appears in the Behavioral Health Policy Brief.

(\$7.2 million GF-S)

Strengthen behavioral health services for youth

Early intervention is key to preventing or delaying the onset of behavioral health disorders, and the governor’s proposed budget addresses this in three ways. One, funding will expand support for youth and young adults at their initial psychotic episode. Two, funding will help community residential services for young adults exiting inpatient behavioral health facilities and who are at high risk for homelessness. And three, stabilization teams will surround youth in crisis with a support system composed of behavioral health professionals, family, and community members.

This item also appears in the Behavioral Health Policy Brief.

(\$11.1 million GF-S; \$8.6 million GF-F)

Expand behavioral health programs

Funding will expand programs and increase rates for teams supporting individuals preparing to transition from institutional to community settings, and for community teams supporting individuals with severe behavioral health disorders. Both groups provide vital behavioral health services. The governor’s budget also extends the diversion programs launched in 2018 as result of the Trueblood contempt

finer. This program provides assessments, mental health services, treatment for substance use disorder, case management, employment, and social services to reduce recidivism and improve the lives of class members. This item also appears in the Behavioral Health Policy Brief.

(\$18.9 million GF-S, \$9.4 million GF-F)

Health Care Authority – Other

Support Health Care Cost Transparency Board

Funding for the Health Care Cost Transparency Board will expand its capacity. It will also improve the Health Care Authority's (HCA) ability to analyze health care data and support the board's work. These investments will provide the board with data so it can more effectively complete its work to inform policymakers about innovative policies to control health care costs.

(\$545,000 GF-S, \$636,000 GF-F)

Restore program integrity savings

The department will restore the savings the state assumed the HCA would have in the 2023–25 budget. HCA implemented a way to save money by benchmarking rates for hospitals and clinics, reducing preventable inpatient admissions, and eliminating pharmacy price gouging within the Medicaid program. These cost-saving measures are included in managed care rates that would otherwise be higher, which is why this budget savings figure is not needed.

(\$107 million GF-S, \$238 million GF-F)

Offer Tribal administrative support

Tribal administrative support at the Health Care Authority will help Tribes with Medicaid service billing, data collection and contract support. This unique investment also includes a state program so that Urban Indian Health Organizations can bill the state for administrative costs. This will increase equity with Indian Health Service clinics.

(\$638,000 GF-S, \$324,000 GF-F)

Implement Medicaid compensation for doulas

Recent statewide reports and research highlight significant demographic inequities and poor preventable outcomes in maternal mortality. To address these demographic inequities and provide adequate perinatal health care, doula services that provide personalized support before, during and after pregnancy are needed. Funding will offer broader access to doula care by implementing a doula benefit to Medicaid clients. The doula benefit will provide a Medicaid reimbursement for doula services that aim to reduce maternal mortality and poor pregnancy outcomes, particularly for pregnant persons of color.

(\$332,000 GF-S, \$491,000 GF-F)

Invest in health care waivers

The HCA recently renewed the Medicaid Transformation Waiver for an additional five years so that Washingtonians can access new services to keep them healthy. The waiver provides safety, food, nutrition, and housing to qualified individuals who would otherwise

not have access to these life-saving services. In addition to these investments, the federal government has approved continuous health care coverage for children aged 0-6 whose families have an income level up to 312% of the federal poverty limit.

Department of Children, Youth and Families – Child Welfare

Increase foster care and supervised independent living rates

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) will provide funding to increase the foster care maintenance payment basic rate, and payments for youth in Extended Foster Care who are in Supervised Independent Living. The current basic rate does not cover the cost of living that foster parents incur while providing care for children in foster care or by young adults working to successfully transition to adulthood through Supervised Independent Living.

(\$4.9 million GF-S, \$3.3 million GF-F)

Continue with system improvements

Parties recently reached a settlement agreement in *D.S. v. Department of Children, Youth, and Families*. The agreement requires DCYF to make system changes and offer services and supports to class members. Funding will support the reforms in the settlement agreement, complete stakeholder facilitation and pay plaintiffs' legal fees. DCYF is also required to review and revise shared planning meetings and family team decision making policies and practices, and has completed an implementation plan that incorporates

stakeholder feedback. Funding will help DCYF make changes to the Family Team decision making process, revise policies and practices, and provide quality assurance as it conducts shared planning meetings – all with the goal of improving the system.

(\$5.7 million GF-S, \$718,000 GF-F)

Help hard-to-place dependent children and youth

The department will increase the emergent placement services (EPS) rate to ensure beds are available for the children and youth who may need them. EPS is a contracted, short-term placement option for children and youth in foster care when there is no other placement available. That means they might be placed in an EPS placement for up to 15 days while the caseworker develops a transition plan and identifies a more permanent placement for them. A DCYF-contracted analysis by Western Washington University identified a need to increase rates to reflect the salaries and wages we need to better recruit and retain EPS staff.

(\$2.7 million GF-S)

Fill a funding gap for a program combining family-centered drug treatment with housing

The department will offer one-time funding to support the Rising Strong nonprofit in Spokane while DCYF works to develop a sustainable operating model and seeks to expand the program model to other regions of the state. This organization provides family-centered drug treatment and housing programs for families experiencing substance use disorder.

The operating model is not due until July 1, 2024, which presents a funding gap for fiscal year 2025 since decision makers will not be able to fund the operating model until the legislative session begins in January 2025.

(\$1.4 million GF-S)

Respond to fentanyl use around children with a public health approach

The agency will support child welfare caseworkers as they respond to the fentanyl crisis by contracting with public health nurses who can serve as credible messengers to at-risk families. The fentanyl epidemic is a public health crisis and the number of fentanyl-related fatalities and near fatalities among children, particularly ages 0 to 3, is increasing. Public health nurses can help reduce the risk of harm to children due to accidental exposure to these drugs. They can also support caseworkers engaging with families on safe sleep practices, child health and other matters of concern in Child Protective Services (CPS) investigations. Finally, these nurses can support families as they navigate toward community-based services. Funding will establish a pilot that contracts public health nurses across the child welfare regions.

This budget item is also referenced in the Opioids and Fentanyl brief.

(\$1.3 million GF-S)

Increase safety and supports for families impacted by the fentanyl crisis

Parental substance use is a factor in a high number of out-of-home placements, particularly for infants and toddlers. However, some cases indicate a safety concern that does

not signal an immediate danger prompting removal of the child. Funding provides additional resources to enhance safety planning that will help keep families together safely:

- Contract funding for third-party safety plan participants. This will help CPS workers develop safety plans with families that allow children to remain in the home. Safety plans are most effective when families have natural support such as extended family and friends that help mitigate safety threats and make sure families are following the safety plan. This pilot will provide a new resource for families who don't have natural supports.
- Provide staff and funding for DCYF to pilot contracted child care slots for child protective services-involved infants. Child care can be a core component of a safety plan and this pilot can also serve as a dedicated resource to families at-risk of opioid and other safety threats.
- Target voluntary home visiting services toward families where parental substance use is a risk factor. Piloting contracted home visiting slots can help provide a dedicated, valuable support for families who may be at high risk, but do not meet the legal threshold of risk of imminent physical harm for out-of-home placement.

This budget item is also referenced in the Opioids and Fentanyl brief.

(\$4.7 million GF-S, \$3,000 GF-F)

Department of Children, Youth and Families – Juvenile Rehabilitation

Update body scanners

The proposed budget will provide funding for DCYF to replace the body scanners at juvenile rehabilitation (JR) facilities with body scanners that comply with new Department of Health rules. As a trauma-informed practice, DCYF uses body scanners instead of strip searches to prevent contraband coming into JR facilities. The Department of Health will implement these rules in January 2024, which will prohibit the use of body scanners that emit radiation on minors but allow low radiation body scanners on adult incarcerated individuals. The purchase of zero-radiation body scanners for minors and a low radiation body scanner for adult incarcerated individuals will reduce people's exposure to radiation and lower contraband in these facilities.

(\$967,000 GF-S)

Enhance security at Echo Glen Children's Center

The department will provide funding to backfill the base funding DCYF has used to contract private security guards at Echo Glen Children's Center since July 1. Funding will also continue the contract until the center can complete the perimeter fence. Incarcerated youth have recently escaped from this facility and that presents an immediate need to enhance the safety of the community, staff, and incarcerated youth. The Echo Glen campus is not currently fenced and only part of it is bordered by natural wetlands and forests. The enacted

capital budget includes funding for a perimeter fence that will be complete in May 2025. There is a need to enhance additional security until fence construction is complete.

(\$9 million GF-S)

Department of Children, Youth and Families – Early Learning

Clarify how we count children receiving Early Support for Infants and Toddlers services

The department will clarify and codify how to count a child who is receiving Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) services. Currently, the DCYF and local ESIT providers are limited from counting eligible children for the full number of months they receive services. That's because child counts are based on whether the child was served within a month prior to the count day. The count day has historically been the first school day of the month, but that is not in state law. Legislation and funding will help these groups count a child receiving ESIT services within the same month as the monthly count day, which is set as the last business day of the month.

(\$4.4 million GF-S)

Improve pre-kindergarten program connections

DCYF will use funding to provide consultation to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Chapter 420, Laws of 2023 (2SHB 1550) requires this consultation so it can better support connections among Transition to Kindergarten programs and local early learning

providers. This will help DCYF meet the bill requirements by hiring staff, contracting with community organizations, and supporting statewide and regional partnerships.

(\$1.3 million GF-S)

Increase Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program rates

The department will increase the rate that providers get paid for offering school and working day slots in the Early Childhood Education and Assistance (ECEAP) program. ECEAP will become an entitlement program in the 2026-27 school year, which means all eligible early learners will be entitled to a slot in the program. Since the pandemic, these providers have rebuilt staff and their operating capacity, and a sustainable slot rate is critical to ensure there are enough slots available for the entitlement. This budget targets a 6% rate increase on school day slots and a 10% rate increase on working day slots.

(\$10 million GF-S)

Department of Children, Youth and Families – Program Support

Transition to a better child welfare information system

DCYF will provide funding and staff resources to procure and implement the initial stages of a Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS). The department currently uses a child welfare case management system called FamLink. Its complexity limits the department's ability to make system changes when new rules come out, or when it needs

to change the system's functions to support day-to-day case management work. The current system also struggles to communicate with other state IT systems. The agency can access additional federal funds that support prevention programs once CCWIS is complete.

(\$12.7 million GF-S, \$12.7 million GF-F)

Comply with a class-action settlement

The agency will provide funding to conduct hearings for incarcerated youth under age 25 who are serving their sentence at a DCYF facility before getting transferred between certain facilities. Parties reached a settlement agreement in *Ta'afulisia et al. v Washington State Department of Children, Youth and Families et al.* that requires DCYF to provide youth hearings before they get transferred to a DOC-operated adult corrections facility. Funding is also provided to the department to conduct hearings for youth before they transfer from a DCYF-community partial confinement facility to a DCYF-total confinement facility.

(\$3.4 million GF-S, \$176,000 GF-F)

Support workers experiencing duty-related trauma

It's crucial to provide staff with resources that support their safety and offer peer support. DCYF has limited resources to respond to staff safety incidents and support workers experiencing duty-related trauma. Front line child welfare and juvenile rehabilitation staff experience emotionally and physically demanding work in their regular duties, which includes being exposed to critical and traumatic incidents. These pose a potential risk to

employee health and well-being. This funding will build staff safety and resilience through prevention training, crisis response, and mental health support.

(§2.1 million GF-S, \$24,000 GF-F)

Support a program for current and former foster youth

The department will backfill a declining federal grant to maintain the Independent Living program. This will also make permanent the adolescent transition case staff who support transition planning for adolescents exiting DCYF systems of care. Independent Living (IL) is DCYF's primary program that assists youth involved in the child welfare system to transition successfully into adulthood. It is exclusively funded by a federal grant that is allocated to states based on their relative share of children and youth in foster care. The number of children and youth in foster care is declining, while the number of youth in IL is increasing, resulting in a shortfall of federal funds needed to maintain the program. The 2021-23 biennial budget funded the statewide adolescent transition case staff one-time only.

(§3.1 million GF-S)

Expand program that teaches adulthood skills

The agency will maintain and expand the LifeSet program so that it includes additional counties. This program 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. This demographic often finds itself without the necessary skills and resources to make a successful transition to

adulthood. Funding will support these young people by adding two teams in fiscal year 2024, one team in fiscal year 2025, and one team in fiscal year 2026. Together, that will create six LifeSet teams in the state. A contract is in place with community organizations in King and Yakima counties to deliver LifeSet.

(§169,000 GF-S, \$203,000 GF-F)

Department of Social and Health Services – Economic Services Administration

Reduce in-person and call center wait times

This funding will increase staffing and enhance IT systems to reduce the amount of time customers wait when they call or come into a Community Services Office for public assistance benefits. Currently, customers may experience wait times of almost two hours, which can be a barrier for some households to accessing or maintaining critical benefits. Funding additional staff will increase the number of customers helped, while IT enhancements will make the phone systems easier to navigate.

(§10.1 million GF-S, \$5.5 million GF-F)

Replace stolen cash and food benefits

The department will replace cash and food benefits when they have been stolen electronically through card skimming or cloning, which happens when someone illegally installs a device on ATMs or point-of-sale terminals that captures private data or records someone's PIN. This nationwide problem can devastate households that depend on these program benefits to feed their family, especially

if the theft impacts whether they can meet their basic needs that month. To ensure households maintain access to the funds they rely on for food and rent, this funding will cover the costs to replace these stolen benefits. This action will benefit approximately 1,900 households each year and help Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) hire the right number of staff to process these issues.

(\$893,000 GF-S, \$21,000 GF-F)

Expand community collaboration on poverty reduction efforts and elevate customer voices

DSHS will use funding to create the statewide Customer Voice Council so that it can learn from the voices of those who receive or have received public assistance benefits. These voices will advise local community partnerships (referred to as Local Planning Areas or LPAs) and the Community Services Division as the agency develops and evaluates services. In addition to creating the council, the LPAs will expand their strategic planning to focus on poverty reduction efforts that help community members reach and maintain stability. Funding will bring in additional staff to establish the council and help broaden the LPA's focus, so we can ensure that programs and services better meet the needs of users.

(\$99,000 GF-S, \$63,000 GF-F)

Improve the Medicaid determination process

This funding will fully automate how to verify assets for Medicaid eligibility determinations by updating the system the agency uses (Asset Verification IT system) to do this. In 2021, DSHS established a partially automated process

to verify assets, meeting federal requirements. However, new guidance requires states to fully automate this process. Funding will help DSHS fully integrate this system into the Automated Client Eligibility System. This will create staff workflow efficiencies, a better applicant experience and a more accessible renewal process, while lowering the number of people who lose access to their benefits.

(\$1.6 million GF-S, \$1.6 million GF-F)

Increase food security for children during summer

DSHS will increase food security for children by funding administrative support for the federal Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (Summer EBT) program by summer 2024. This program increases food benefits by \$40 per child during the summer for families that fall under 185% of the federal poverty level. As an example, that would be a household income of approximately \$46,000 per year for a family of three in 2023. This would also apply to families with school- aged children who would typically receive free or reduced priced meals during the school year. This funding increases the family's ability to ensure their children can access nutritious meals while they are on summer break. The program is intended to increase food security for roughly 800,000 children in Washington each summer, bringing roughly \$96 million in federal benefits to our communities.

(\$9.6 million GF-S, \$9.6 million GF-F)

Expand access to program benefits

The agency will increase access to cash assistance by allowing households the chance to remain on the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program longer. This would

let families stay in the program beyond 60 months if they are not required to participate in employment and training activities, are addressing a temporary situation that prevents them from working, or are satisfactorily participating in employment and training activities. This extension begins July 1, 2024, and will serve over 400 households per month, and is expected to reach more than 700 households in future years.

(\$4.6 million GF-S)

Department of Social and Health Services – Behavioral Health Administration

Create additional state-run bed capacity

The department purchased the Cascade Behavioral Health hospital facilities in Tukwila and renamed it Olympic Heritage Behavioral Health in 2023. As patients move to this facility from Western State Hospital, DSHS will add at least 72 beds of new capacity for behavioral health patients by the end of fiscal year 2024. The governor’s budget also provides funding to re-open wards at Western State Hospital and Eastern State Hospital, bringing an additional 38 forensic beds online in January 2024.

This item also appears in the Behavioral Health Policy Brief.

(\$186.3 million GF-S, \$1.2 million GF-F)

Invest in state hospital staffing

Recruiting and retaining highly qualified staff at the state hospitals has been challenging. Staffing vacancies have been as high as 40% at our state hospitals, and the department requires

funding to hire contracted staff to keep state hospital wards open and operating. To remedy this, the governor’s budget invests in programs designed to attract and retain staff at our state hospitals. Funding will reimburse staff for the continuing education training they need to maintain their licenses, provide clinical training to competency restoration staff, and hire nurse recruiters. The department will also create a postdoctoral program in psychology at Western State Hospital and a nursing residency program at Western State Hospital and Eastern State Hospital.

This item also appears in the Behavioral Health Policy Brief.

(\$38.4 million GF-S)

Department of Social and Health Services – Developmental Disabilities Administration

Improve access to case management services

DSHS will increase case management staffing to better serve people with developmental disabilities and their families. Currently, case managers work with an average of 75 clients. This high workload means it’s challenging to meet clients’ diverse and complex needs. Funding for 48 more case management staff members will deepen the partnership case managers have with clients and help identify services and resources the client needs to meet their goals.

(\$2.9 million GF-S, \$2.2 million GF-F)

Support parents of children with special needs and/or disabilities

It's crucial to increase funding for parent support programs, including the parent-to-parent coalition and the Informing Parents program. These programs provide emotional support services and information to families of children with special needs or disabilities. Services include information and referrals to community resources, trained 'helping parents' who are matched with other parents, overall training, and public awareness and outreach for people with special needs or disabilities.

(\$400,000 GF-S)

Department of Social and Health Services – Aging and Long -Term Support Administration

Transition to a new rate methodology

DSHS will transition to a new rate methodology called the Patient Driven Payment model, which the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services requires for nursing facilities. Funding will minimize the effects of rate changes on nursing facility payments during the transition to the new methodology.

(\$3.3 million Nursing Facility Quality Enhancement Account, \$3.3 million GF-F)

Stabilize access to specialty dementia care

The agency will adjust the rate add-on for specialty dementia care from \$43.48 per client per day to \$55.00 per client per day. Currently, the rate add-on is less than other comparable

rates, which creates a disincentive for facilities to accept dementia care patients. This rate adjustment will ensure that Medicaid dementia care patients are prioritized and accepted at long-term care facilities.

(\$2.3 million GF-S, \$2.6 million GF-F)

Expand supportive housing program

DSHS will expand the Governor's Opportunity for Supportive Housing program by 175 slots. This program serves Medicaid clients who are ready to discharge from the state's behavioral health hospitals or community behavioral health facilities and prefer to live independently. Clients can live in their own apartment rather than in a residential setting such as an adult family home, nursing home or assisted living facility. The program provides rental subsidies, supportive social work and personal care for clients who need help with day-to-day activities.

(\$6.5 million GF-S, \$2.1 million GF-F)

Address shortfall in senior nutrition and food programs

Washingtonians will benefit from efforts to maintain access to senior nutrition and food programs provided through community sites, senior food pantries, mobile food pantries, Meals on Wheels, and other nutrition services. Federal funding expanded senior nutrition and food programs during COVID-19, but the federal expansion has ended. This funding replaces the loss of federal funding so we can provide over a million meals to approximately 18,000 senior citizens.

(\$7 million GF-S)

Department of Health

Expand access to birth centers

The Department of Health (DOH) will support new birth centers in areas that lack access to these services with a new grant. Over the last several years, multiple hospitals in Washington have closed their labor and delivery units. This has left some pregnant individuals, mostly in rural communities, with no or very limited options to give birth. These closures lead to increased negative birth outcomes in the counties that already have the highest maternal health risk. Birthing centers staffed by certified midwives or certified nurse midwives provide safe alternatives for low-risk labor and delivery. Grant funding will support new birth centers in these areas, offering a more equitable and accessible solution to this health disparity.

(\$2.4 million GF-S)

Address credential backlogs

The agency must address credential backlogs by reducing the time it takes someone to complete a health care licensing process. Funding will also help the department continue the Health Care Licensing Management System information technology project. This new IT system will replace the existing licensing management system and help streamline the licensing process. Health care providers often must wait too long to get their credential approval, which further exacerbates the health care workforce shortage.

(\$3.2 million GF-S, \$19.6 million Information Technology Investment Revolving Account)

Maintain public health cloud technology

The department will maintain public health information technology infrastructure in a cloud-based environment. The department moved critical public health data systems to cloud-based servers with federal funding during the pandemic. Funding will sustain these investments in fiscal year 2025. The department will continue to explore new funding strategies to maintain information technology investments within the department's existing state, local and federal funding.

(\$15.9 million GF-S, \$13 million GF-F)

Bolster 988 Crisis Lifeline

The 988 Lifeline is a national network of local crisis centers that provide free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day and seven days a week. In September, crisis call centers in Washington received over 10,000 calls, texts and chat messages. The governor's budget provides funding to cover increased call center costs due to the contact volumes. Initial funding is provided to create the technology platform all 988 crisis call centers in Washington use to receive, triage, and provide service referrals for callers in crisis.

This item also appears in the Behavioral Health Policy Brief.

(\$21.2 million Statewide 988 Behavioral Health and Suicide Prevention Line Account)

Support safe drinking water

Residents in the Lower Yakima Valley relying on private wells have been exposed to harmful elevated nitrates in their groundwater. The Department of Health will work with other state and local entities to provide education, outreach, well testing and alternative water sources to affected residents.

(\$2 million Model Toxics Control Act – State)

Department of Veterans Affairs

Expand training for certified nursing assistants

The agency will expand the certified nursing assistant training program to all four veterans homes. This program combines classroom instruction and hands-on training at the veterans homes to recruit, hire and train certified nursing assistants. By training its own direct care workforce, the department can address its staffing shortages and admit new residents. Funding will also allow five certified nursing assistants to participate in a new apprenticeship program so they can become licensed practical nurses.

(\$108,000 GF-S, \$260,000 GF-F, and \$30,000 General Fund-Local)

Employment Security Department

Staff the Paid Family and Medical Leave program

The state needs additional staff at the Employment Security Department (ESD) to increase the Paid Family and Medical Leave program's capacity to process claims and respond timely to customer inquiries. The program provides a vital benefit to Washington

workers when they need to take time off work to care for a family member, themselves or a new child. When someone's claim is delayed, workers must take time off without knowing if or when they will receive compensation. Funding additional staff should help the program process claims more quickly and reduce call center wait times.

(\$5.7 million Family and Medical Leave Insurance Account-State)

Complete the Paid Family and Medical Leave system

The department will add IT staff to complete all remaining required components of the Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) program by April 2026. ESD has not completed all PFML program system requirements due to a tight turnaround to meet its initial implementation dates. Some of the outstanding items to implement have come up in audit findings. Funding provides a dedicated team of IT staff to complete the remaining components, establish and collect overpayments, crossmatch with other programs to reduce duplicating benefits, and allow Tribes the choice to participate in the PFML program.

(\$7.3 million Family and Medical Leave Insurance Account-State)

Unemployment Insurance program overpayment interest waiver

It's crucial to make system changes to waive the interest on Unemployment Insurance overpayments from COVID-19 (between Feb. 2, 2020, and Sept. 4, 2021). The Unemployment Insurance program experienced a dramatic increase in claims during the pandemic and sent out roughly 137,000 overpayments.

ESD is currently working to waive as many of the non-fraudulent overpayments as possible but cannot waive or delay the interest. This funding helps ESD make the system changes, providing additional financial relief to Washingtonians who experienced impacts to their employment during the pandemic.

*(\$961,000 Unemployment Compensation
Administrative Account-Federal)*

Department of Labor and Industries

Support electrician apprenticeships

The enacted 2023-25 biennial operating budget included \$6 million in one-time funding to partially fund programs that provide general journey electricians with apprenticeship education and job training. State law changed July 1, 2023, and now requires someone seeking an electrical license to complete an apprenticeship. To help electrical programs with the cost of classroom instruction, funding will increase the total investment to \$12 million, increasing the capacity for electrical apprentices.

*(\$6.0 million Workforce Education Investment
Account-State)*

Relieve electrical inspection workload

The department will increase the number of electrical inspectors to address the growing workload and backlog of the Electrical Inspection program. State law requires the Department of Labor and Industries to inspect all electrical installations within 48 hours of the request to ensure the project is up to code. The number of requested inspections is increasing, which has strained the inspection program's ability to meet the timelines. This

can jeopardize the public's safety and delay construction projects. Funding for 10 electrical inspectors will reduce the backlog and increase the number of inspections electricians can complete in a timely manner.

(\$1.9 million Electrical License Account-State)

Department of Corrections

Reduce solitary confinement

DOC recently committed to reducing solitary confinement in state prisons by 90% over the next five years. To reach this goal, the department developed a road map to reduce the number of individuals going into solitary confinement, shorten their lengths of stay, and support them in successfully reentering the general population. Funding supports prevention and diversion efforts for individuals at risk for behaviors that may put them into restrictive housing. It will also help develop alternatives to solitary confinement, more opportunities for treatment and pro-social activities for quality out-of-cell time, and establish a five-year phase-in of staff to escort individuals when they get out-of-cell-time.

(\$18.5 million GF-S)

Change correctional culture

This budget will help the department continue to expand its new approach to corrections called the Washington Way. In collaboration with the Amend program at the University of California in San Francisco, the department is implementing reforms to address the unique mental and physical health concerns of individuals and staff in correctional facilities.

Reforms include efforts to:

- Bring conditions within the facility as close to conditions in the community as possible and increase the participation of incarcerated people in the decision-making process for their environment.
- Increase the interaction and engagement between staff and incarcerated people to promote positive relationships and better understand individual needs and risks.

(\$3.1 million GF-S)

Invest in successful reentry

Successfully reentering the community from prison can be challenging and it's important that the individual gets support from the department when leaving incarceration. Funding will help the department invest in these areas:

- Coordinating reentry for incarcerated people who are impacted by court decisions or sentencing rule changes due to legislation that led to the person unexpectedly and rapidly reentering their community.
- Expanding health care discharge planning resources for the highest-need individuals in state prisons. This will help them connect to the proper care in their community.
- Joining Reentry 2030, a national initiative to transform reentry services by the end of the decade.

(\$5.2 million GF-S)

Expand health services for transgender individuals

The department has committed to modifying policies, practices, and procedures so it can better provide gender-affirming medical and mental health care services to transgender incarcerated individuals. This expands on an existing program that oversees housing safety and other needs of transgender, intersex, non-binary, and gender non-conforming individuals. This is the result of an October 2023 settlement agreement with Disability Rights Washington.

(\$13 million GF-S)

Reduce overtime and caseloads

Increased staffing to reduce overtime in facilities and community caseloads improves safety for incarcerated individuals, staff, and the public. Reducing mandatory overtime will positively impact staff fatigue, morale, and retention rates, leading to increased safety of incarcerated people. Investing in supervision staff will increase how much support the department can offer supervised individuals in the community and reduce recidivism rates.

(\$13.1 million GF-S)

Human Services/Capital

Behavioral health

Department of Social and Health Services

Establish Olympic Heritage Behavioral Health

This budget invests in behavioral health by purchasing the Cascade Hospital facilities, now called the Olympic Heritage Behavioral Health facility in Tukwila. This will reduce the number of individuals on the forensic bed waitlist by creating at least 72 beds of new capacity. In addition to the purchase of the facility, there will be capital improvements made to the facility that will strengthen safety and security measures on and outside the wards for staff and patients, improve nursing stations, upgrade heating, ventilation, and air conditioning units, and expand the existing activity areas to promote larger motor activities.

(\$45 million bonds)

Department of Social and Health Services

Design Child Study and Treatment Center to house youth

Additional funding will help the state design an addition to the facility supporting approximately 20 youth at the Child Study and Treatment Center. This project will develop a facility-based holistic residential habilitation program. Tailored for youth with complex needs who present challenging support issues, this project will provide options when less

restrictive out-of-home treatment options are inappropriate, unavailable or have failed to bring positive outcomes. Specialized ‘pod style’ housing with shared communal space will mimic a home-like feel. This setup will create a campus to support the unique needs of this demographic, while access to educational, occupational, and therapeutic needs will improve their mental and physical well-being.

(\$5 million bonds)

Safety and Security

Department of Corrections

Fund statewide assessments

This budget supports the Department of Corrections’ ability to address an incarcerated individual’s physical, mental, and emotional security and well-being. This happens by funding statewide assessments of security electronic systems, fire alarm stabilization, and perimeter fence detection systems. Consultants will assess these systems statewide and create a list of priority items in each facility that need to be fixed or replaced. The list includes an assessment of the system’s operations, the system’s condition, how long each system should remain in service, technology updates it needs, and any compliance issues with the system. The assessment will also include cost estimates to better inform the state of how the systems should be replaced.

(\$2.5 million bonds)

Department of Children, Youth, and Families

Upgrade Echo Glen security

Funding will continue increasing security measures at Echo Glen Children's Center and ensure the safety and security of incarcerated youth, the community, and staff. The current budget includes funding to add fencing to the three sides that do not border the natural wetlands, and adds security video surveillance. This additional capital investment will further address safety and security through secure fencing on the last remaining side of campus, a secure control room, a single point of entry in the administrative building, and improvements to the staff and visitor parking lot.

(\$5.6 million bonds)