

Maintenance Level

Agency:

107 Health Care Authority on Behalf of the Health Benefit Exchange

Decision Package Code/Title:

ML-MM Consumer Experience

Agency RecSum:

The Health Benefit Exchange (Exchange) will address the backlog of *Washington Healthplanfinder* (HPF) enhancement activities that were delayed between FY2020-FY2023 due to the focus placed on responding to the COVID pandemic as well as the complex infrastructure build for the launch of Cascade Care. This package reverts funding provided in the 2021-23 Biennium for the Delayed DDI Due to COVID decision package, and requests funds be re-appropriated in the 2023-25 biennium.

Fiscal detail:

Operating Expenditures	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
17T-1 HBEA	\$1,161,000	\$1,155,000	\$0	\$0
001-C GF-Federal	\$546,000	\$543,000	\$0	\$0
Total Expenditures	\$1,707,000	\$1,698,000	\$0	\$0
Biennial Totals	\$3,405,000		\$0	
Staffing	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
FTEs	0	0	0	0
Average Annual	0		0	
Object of Expenditure	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
Obj. C	\$1,707,000	\$1,698,000	\$0	\$0
Revenue	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
17T-1 HBEA	\$1,161,000	\$1,155,000	\$0	\$0
001-C GF-Federal	\$546,000	\$543,000	\$0	\$0
Total Revenue	\$1,707,000	\$1,698,000	\$0	\$0
Biennial Totals	\$3,405,000		\$0	

Package Description

What is the problem, opportunity or priority you are addressing with the request?

The Exchange delayed a number of critical system enhancements to create capacity to respond to emerging needs. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government issued a series of emergency rules and Congress passed legislative packages that required significant adjustments to HPF and associated systems to accurately capture income for Medicaid and Qualified health plan

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(QHP) applications. Additionally, the launch of Cascade Care in November 2020 required extensive resources. As a result, nearly a year of enhancement activities were postponed or reprioritized.

As we entered the 2021-23 biennium, the Exchange focused development capacity on launching Cascade Care Savings, the new state premium subsidy, for QHP customers up to 250% of the federal poverty level (FPL). In FY2023, the Exchange, at the direction of the Legislature, is focused on updating HPF to support immigrant health coverage expansions for 2024.

What is your proposal?

The Exchange is requesting an additional \$3,405,000 in the 2023-25 biennium for HPF enhancements responsive to consumer needs. This proposal will allow the Exchange to address the backlog of critical system enhancements that were delayed due to the increased responsiveness required by state and federal activities that have emerged in each of the past four years.

How is your proposal impacting equity in the state?

The recession is exacerbating underlying disparities in health coverage for low-income people and people of color. It is more important than ever that new and returning consumers have stable and responsive tools for enrolling in health insurance. The system improvements being considered for the 2023-25 biennium will continue to improve HPF and will result in a more accessible application for all Washingtonians regardless of when and how they apply for coverage.

Maintenance level packages are the foundation of equity efforts. The goal of the Exchange is for all Washingtonians to have full and equal access to health coverage. Funding this request will enable the Exchange to continue to support the residents of Washington at a time when they need it most.

What are you purchasing and how does it solve the problem?

By funding this request, the Exchange will address many critical system activities that were delayed due to the pandemic and the launch of Cascade Care rather than continue to delay these improvements year after year.

What alternatives did you explore and why was this option chosen?

Without this request, the Exchange will be limited in its ability to respond to system needs identified by customers, enrollment assisters, state-agency partners, stakeholders, and staff.

Assumptions and Calculations

Expansion or alteration of a current program or service

This request would temporarily increase the system enhancement capacity of the Exchange in the 2023-25 biennium and enable it to complete planned system changes that were delayed due to heightened emphasis on the COVID-19 pandemic response and the launch of Cascade Care.

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Detailed assumptions and calculations

The Exchange requests \$3,405,000 in the 2023-25 biennium for costs associated with developing, implementing, and testing *Washington Healthplanfinder* enhancements.

- No increase in Carrier Assessment is anticipated.
- No new General Fund-State dollars are requested.
- System enhancements that benefit both the QHP and Medicaid populations are eligible for 90% FFP.

Operating Expenditures	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
Salaries	\$205,000	\$205,000	\$0	\$0
Benefits	\$73,000	\$73,000	\$0	\$0
Contracts	\$1,375,000	\$1,375,000	\$0	\$0
Goods and Services	\$53,000	\$44,000	\$0	\$0
Travel	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$0	\$0
Total Expenditures	\$1,707,000	\$1,698,000	\$0	\$0

The Exchange assumes it will take a full-time system development team 18 months to address the backlog of critical enhancement activities. Given current federal and regulatory uncertainty, this request includes flexibility to address these issues over the course of the biennium.

Workforce assumptions

HPF development teams are composed of three Exchange staff:

0.8 FTE- Product Owner

- The Product Owner position is responsible for leading product improvements for both internal and external stakeholders, working closely with representatives across business to make informed decisions on solutions that will meet organizational objectives. Product Owners focus on improving the consumer experience, addressing regulatory and/or legislative requests, reducing technical debt, and supporting process improvement.

0.8 FTE- Business Systems Analyst

- This position serves as a cross-functional Functional Analyst on a development team, responsible for reviewing system issues and design changes. This includes the intake, triage, and analysis processes associated with system issue management.

0.8 FTE- Quality Assurance Analyst

- This position is responsible for developing test cases, ensuring traceability to User Story acceptance criteria, executing the Test plan, compiling test results, and providing support to other Exchange resources outside the Software Quality team that are assisting with testing. Other Testing activities could include End to End, Performance and Smoke testing.

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Strategic and Performance Outcomes

Strategic framework

This proposal directly relates to Results Washington’s Healthy and Safe Communities goal. HPF has an impact on each of the outcome measures within that goal—starting with ensuring access to quality healthcare. HPF is a critical tool for Washingtonians to choose and apply for healthcare coverage, obtain eligibility for subsidies or tax premiums that make healthcare coverage more affordable, and enroll in plans that allow them access to care. Access to healthcare is more critical now than ever. Better access to healthcare leads to a healthier population which with furthers additional Results Washington goals.

The funding sought in this package will allow us to continue developing our technology to meet core goals outlined in the Exchange’s Strategic Vision, including:

- Improving customer experience in enrolling for high quality health insurance and qualifying for free or reduced costs
- Leveraging the portal to support public programs and new individual market health insurance customers
- Generating new products to offer consumers and leveraging our technology and expertise to support state programs

Performance outcomes

Enhancements to the system will provide greater customer service and efficiencies that help us deliver on the goal for efficient, effective and accountable government.

Other supporting materials

Copies of the APD have been previously provided to HCA, OFM, the House and Senate.

Other Collateral Connections

Intergovernmental

None.

Legal or administrative mandates

None.

Changes from current law

None.

State workforce impacts

None.

State facilities impacts

None.

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Puget Sound recovery

None.

Other supporting materials

Copies of the APD have been provided to HCA, OFM, the House and Senate.

Information technology (IT)

ABS will pose the question below for *each* DP. If the answer is yes, you will be prompted to attach an IT addendum. (See Chapter 10 of the budget instructions for additional requirements.)

Information Technology

Does this DP include funding for any IT-related costs, including hardware, software (including cloud-based services), contracts or IT staff?

No

Yes

Please download the [IT-addendum](#) and follow the directions on the bottom of the addendum to meet requirements for OCIO review. After completing the IT addendum, please upload the document to continue.

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