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## HHS Coalition: Integrated Eligibility & Enrollment System

*As of November 15, 2021*

### **Requested Legislative Report**

During the 2021 session, the Legislature tasked the HHS Coalition with developing and submitting a detailed report that outlines the steps required to implement an integrated health and human services eligibility and enrollment solution. The HHS Coalition, with supports from the federal organization 18 F, will provide its full report by January 15, 2021.

This report will lay out a roadmap for the modernization process. Removing barriers individuals experience accessing client benefits is of primary importance, and the HHS Coalition sees a future where:

- Clients can apply “seamlessly” for multiple programs in less than 20 minutes and immediately know their eligibility status.
- State programs have a comprehensive view of clients and share information across agency boundaries to proactively offer other benefits the client may qualify to receive.
- Clients can report changes in their personal circumstances to a single place, rather than multiple times to different state agencies.

**Initial report findings support making immediate, incremental, changes to address program risks caused by reliance on the legacy ACES platform,** that will improve the customer experience, gain efficiencies, and position the state to move away from inflexible legacy technologies. The report will further describe how the state could benefit from moving more broadly toward an agile approach to system modernization.

Current processes depend on a legacy mainframe system known as the Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES). ACES is a state system that 2.9 million Washingtonians rely on to access programs administered by all Coalition partners – including Medicaid, Basic Food, child care, and cash assistance. As a legacy mainframe written in COBOL, ACES has between five and seven years of remaining, useful life.

### **2022 Session Priority**

The HHS Coalition, informed by cross-agency experience and initiatives implemented in other states, is seeking support from the Legislature to make an initial investment to begin the modernization of the state’s eligibility and enrollment system. This critical investment by the Legislature would improve the client and customer experience with visibility into their receipt of benefits, be more secure than the current system, and provide a flexible foundation on which future technology components could be built.

This request is unanimously supported by Coalition members as a necessary first step and was submitted by DSHS as a decision package ([PQ-Integrated Eligibility System](#)).

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## **HHS Coalition Background**

The HHS Coalition includes the Department of Health (DOH), the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), the Health Care Authority (HCA), the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), and the Washington Health Benefit Exchange (HBE). Washington Technology Solutions (WaTech) and the Office of Financial Management (OFM) participate as ex-officio members to provide guidance and input.

The HHS Coalition provides strategic direction, cross-organizational information technology (IT) project support and federal funding guidance across Washington's HHS organizations. IT project collaboration will result in better service coordination and public stewardship that improves the health and well-being of the people, families, and communities of Washington.

One primary project for the HHS Coalition is modernizing and integrating the eligibility and enrollment process for healthcare and social service programs provided by the member organizations.

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