

# 2026 Budget and policy priorities

Washington Health Benefit Exchange seeks to redefine people's experience with health care. To advance our mission and in response to unprecedented federal changes to health care, the Exchange is advancing these priorities in the 2026 legislative session:

## Continue Cascade Care Savings

The state premium assistance program will help Washingtonians afford coverage, especially with rising premiums, changes to federal premium tax credit eligibility and expiration of enhanced premium tax credits.

Appropriate \$65 million general fund-state to continue Cascade Care Savings through plan year 2027.

## Safeguard consumer interests in the Exchange market

Federal changes to health care coverage are driving market trends that are adversely affecting Washingtonians' ability to access and afford coverage on the Exchange.

Support legislation allowing the Exchange board to curate the market and safeguard consumer interests.

## Support Exchange operations

Implementing new federal requirements, supporting our customer support services and navigators and ongoing work to integrate Classic Medicaid enrollment are essential to meet Washingtonians' health coverage needs.

Fund the Exchange's operations as outlined in its decision packages.

## Protect health equity for all Washingtonians

New federal policies are targeting health coverage for many lawfully present non-citizens and others. It is essential we continue to support their access to affordable coverage.

Protect coverage infrastructure and tools that have helped advance health equity for non-citizen residents.

## Address health care affordability and transparency

There is a continued need to contain the growth of health care costs and ensure cost transparency. This is more important than ever with reduced federal investments in health care.

Support recommendations from the Health Care Cost Transparency Board.