Policy Level

Agency:
107 Health Care Authority on Behalf of the Health Benefit Exchange

Decision Package Code/Title:
PL-MR Expanding Organizational Capacity

Agency RecSum:

The Health Benefit Exchange (Exchange) is requesting additional resources to invest in key operations to address constraints throughout the Exchange. These resources will enable the Exchange to adapt to significant growth in both the complexity of programs provided as well as the expansion of populations served.

Fiscal detail:

Operating Expenditures	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
17T-1 HBEA	$450,000	$441,000	$441,000	$441,000
001-C GF-Federal	$1,150,000	$1,129,000	$1,129,000	$1,129,000
Total Expenditures	**$1,600,000**	**$1,570,000**	**$1,570,000**	**$1,570,000**
Biennial Totals	**$3,170,000**		**$3,140,000**	
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	$1,600,000	$1,570,000	$1,570,000	$1,570,000
Revenue	**FY 2024**	**FY 2025**	**FY 2026**	**FY 2027**
17T-1 HBEA	$450,000	$441,000	$441,000	$441,000
001-C GF-Federal	$1,150,000	$1,129,000	$1,129,000	$1,129,000
Total Revenue	**$1,600,000**	**$1,570,000**	**$1,570,000**	**$1,570,000**
Biennial Totals	**$3,170,000**		**$3,140,000**	

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

The Exchange has grown in scope, size, and complexity. The number of plans offered on *Washington Healthplanfinder* (HPF) has grown significantly, as has the number of programs the Exchange administers, and we are providing premium assistance to more Washingtonians than ever before.

Additionally, the Exchange began its Agile Transformation in 2018 and was able to institute a strong foundation of Agile mindset within the Technical Operations teams and began to build foundational

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awareness of Agile across the organization. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, Exchange teams quickly moved to 100% remote work. The technical teams were used to working with hybrid remote team members stationed in other areas of the country and the world, but the full transition for all team members required adjustment to ensure continuity of Agile Development practice. Team members are serving multiple roles that need full-time focus. Ultimately this leads to team friction, less productivity, and lack of readiness to work the increasing backlog.

Looking ahead, Health and Human Services Coalition projects such as the Master Person Index (MPI) and Integrated Eligibility and Enrollment (IE&E) projects will require the engagement of our technical teams. Activity to modernize our back-end systems and processes will need to be undertaken, as well as new projects such as the Immigrant Health Coverage (both qualified health plans (QHP) and Washington Apple Health (WAH) components), and Birth to Six Month coverage expansion, among others.

This request would result in an increase in the Exchange's ability to more effectively deliver on our current work and mission, while ensuring capacity to adapt and respond to the opportunities presented by state and federal policymaking.

What is your proposal?

The Exchange has identified critical roles throughout the organization that are needed to support the myriad federal and state initiatives to expand health coverage access and affordability.

Agile Maturity:
The Exchange seeks an investment to continue on our path toward stronger Agile Transformation, to help our team build and/or hone their Agile skills, and provide effective and supportive performance development and supervision.

- **1 FTE- Lead Product Owner-** The Product Owner will manage the enterprise backlog and overall prioritization of work associated with the Exchange's product. This position will understand the product vision and future and then translate that into the enterprise product roadmap. The position will implement a Lean portfolio management system that creates clarity, transparency and accountability for the roadmap and backlog.

- **1 FTE- Lead Scrum Master-** The Scrum Master will provide coaching to help teams learn and apply Agile mindset, as well as corresponding processes and frameworks. This resource will strengthen Agile mindset within our development teams and also be able to work with teams across the organization to adopt an adaptive planning model for building solutions.

- **1 FTE- Test Automation QA Analyst-** The QA Automation Analyst will play an important role in the agile transformation and testing prioritization. The intent is that automation testing can occur in lieu of manual testing early on in the system lifecycle, as identifying issues early is significantly less costly than when they are discovered by

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customers using the system. As such, this resource will be focused on increasing the Exchange's automation footprint and extending the skills of manual testers on the team.

Carrier Support:

The number of plans available to customers increased from 69 in 2019 to a high of 130 in 2021, before more recently decreasing to 90.. During this same period, the Exchange also supported several changes carriers made and a series of Lean process improvement efforts. The Exchange also invested in a Full Carrier Audit model to identify and address enrollment discrepancies.

- **1 FTE- Senior Program Specialist - Carrier Operations-** The Senior Program Specialist will be responsible for conducting FitGap analysis. This position allows us to analyze any gaps between our electronic data interface (EDI) systems and Carrier Partner systems; assess process gaps and improvements; and identify other challenges that lead to enrollment delays or increased manual processing. The position will then drive recommended improvements, track adoption of changes and corresponding improved service delivery.

Content Focused Digital Assets:

To adapt to the needs of Healthplanfinder consumers, the Exchange will design with the public in mind to deliver the right information and service at any time, on any device – while streamlining the backend efforts required to do so. To accomplish this, the Exchange will focus on using testing and research data to drive front-end efforts of improving self-service channels for ease of use; improving customer information; personalizing messages and online forms; and implementing consumer-centered design. Adding additional roles to meet the business objectives will help us improve the customer experience by. allowing for specialization and a more thorough understanding of customer needs.

- **1 FTE- Product Owner-** The produce owner will be responsible for leading product improvements for both internal and external stakeholders at the Exchange. This position will work closely with representatives acrossthe organization to make informed decisions on solutions that will meet organizational objectives.

- **1 FTE- UI/UX Designer-** The designer will support digital interface and interaction research with Washington Healthplanfinder web and mobile users and synthesize findings to inform design and development.

- **1 FTE- Senior UX Designer-** The senior designer will balance business strategy with research insights to lead projects from a UX perspective by taking a user-centered approach in development of *Washington Healthplanfinder* user experiences.

Enterprise Resources:

When enterprise functions are constrained and understaffed, it hinders implementation and support of new programs and responsibilities assigned to the Exchange. Two additional resources have been identified to assist in the continued success of the organization.

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- **1 FTE- Contracts Specialist-** The position will support the contracting and procurement needs of the Exchange and will provide the capacity necessary to focus on developing procurement and contracting activities, plans, and strategies that best align with departmental initiatives**.** This position will work strategically with departments to understand both current and future needs; proactively planning, researching, and supporting long-term acquisition needs to achieve optimal results as well as seeking opportunities to favorably impact DEI through our contract spending.

- **1 FTE- Senior Project Manager-** This position will allow the Exchange to increase its internal project management capacity and associated outputs. With an additional project manager, the Exchange will be able to more efficiently implement change management and expand project management services.

Analytic Support:

Analytic support for new initiatives and unexpected events is essential to respond quickly and appropriately. Current staffing in data and analytics has been inadequate to support legislatively required reporting during the rapidly changing regulatory environment over the last several years. When new data sources or situations are encountered, staff are often redirected to high visibility emergent reporting. The upcoming state subsidy launch, public health emergency (PHE) end, and Section 1332 waiver reporting present additional workload challenges in addition to ongoing reporting needs.

> **1 FTE-Data Visualization Analyst-** This position will create visual representations of data that can be used to effectively communicate the results of programs and potential impacts of proposed policymaking and respond to legislative inquiries.

How is your proposal impacting equity in the state?

This request would result in an increase in the Exchange's ability to more effectively deliver on our current work and mission, which includes advancing health equity.

The critical roles supported by this request would result in overall improvements to our system and the products delivered, and further the Exchange's ability to understand the diverse needs of our users, more effectively tailor the system to meet those needs (including the needs of our mobile customers), further our ability to contract with community-based organizations to learn from individuals most directly impacted by new Exchange programs, and to more effectively use data to address health disparities.

A robust and user-friendly Healthplanfinder is critical to helping Washingtonians secure and maintain healthcare coverage at a time when disparities are being further exacerbated. Funding this request would also provide capacity for the Exchange to respond to market disruptions that can disproportionately impact vulnerable communities, and federal and state policymaking efforts to further addresses health disparities.

> **Commented [BC1]:** Do we want to be specific in this doc and talk towards Undocs?
>
> **Commented [CS2R1]:** @Butler, Chantelle yes, we can expand here. I wouldn't limit it though.

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

This resource investment would provide the Exchange with needed resources to support staff in process improvement, training and agile maturity development, as well as more effectively meet customer delivery goals state and federal policymakers set.

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

Absent these resources, the Exchange will not be able to effectively support the increased complexity and opportunities created by the external environment or provide staff with the support needed to ensure efficient delivery. To otherwise invest in these activities, the Exchange would likely have to reduce the number of initiatives and HPF system development efforts. The proposal already includes repurposing existing resources to support the overall approach.

Assumptions and Calculations

Expansion or alteration of a current program or service

No programs will be expanded, reduced, or eliminated in association with this request

Detailed assumptions and calculations

The Exchange requests $3,170,000 in the 2023-25 biennium and ongoing funding of $3,140,000 beginning in the 2025-27 biennium to support ongoing complexity at the federal and state level around expanding healthcare access and affordability.

Operating Expenditures	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
Salaries	$1,014,000	$1,014,000	$1,014,000	$1,014,000
Benefits	$341,000	$341,000	$341,000	$341,000
Contracts	$0	$0	$0	$0
Goods and Services	$241,000	$211,000	$211,000	$211,000
Travel	$4,000	$4,000	$4,000	$4,000
Total Expenditures	**$1,600,000**	**$1,570,000**	**$1,570,000**	**$1,570,000**

Workforce assumptions

The Exchange requests funding to add ten additional staff resources in select positions across the organization.

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Step 3. Select Position	SFY24	SFY25	SFY26	SFY27
Lead Product Owner	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Lead Scrum Master	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Contracts Specialist	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Product Owner	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Senior Program Specialist - Carrier Operations	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Test Automation QA Analyst	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
UI/UX Designer	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Senior Project Manager	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Data Visualization Analyst	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Senior UX Designer	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Total FTEs	**10.0**	**10.0**	**10.0**	**10.0**
Total Number of positions per fiscal year	**10.0**	**10.0**	**10.0**	**10.0**

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 enable the Exchange to meet the core goals outlined in the Exchange's Strategic Plan: improving health coverage and affordability; advancing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) to narrow health disparities, especially in communities of color; expanding innovative approaches to drive health system excellence, including improved customer experience and engagement; and leveraging *Washington Healthplanfinder* to expand offered services.

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

Performance outcomes
1. Increase staff survey scores on satisfaction and engagement
2. Improved predictability around capacity and throughput
3. Reduce waste, rework and defects
4. Increase ready backlog to not less than three sprints at any given time
5. Extend Agile beyond development teams to support reduced time to market

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

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Other Collateral Connections

Intergovernmental
None

Legal or administrative mandates
None

Changes from current law
None

State workforce impacts
None

State facilities impacts
None

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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