

Policy Level

Agency:

107 Health Care Authority on Behalf of the Health Benefit Exchange

Decision Package Code/Title:

PL-MQ HHS Coalition Engagement

Agency RecSum:

The Exchange will continue engagement and support with state health and human services agencies on information technology coordination, modernization and simplification and streamlining of services to shared Washington clients.

Fiscal detail:

Operating Expenditures	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
001-1 GF-State	\$8,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000
17T-1 HBEA	\$315,000	\$312,000	\$312,000	\$312,000
001-C GF-Federal	\$100,000	\$98,000	\$98,000	\$98,000
Total Expenditures	\$423,000	\$417,000	\$417,000	\$417,000
Biennial Totals	\$840,000		\$834,000	
Staffing	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
FTEs	2.20	2.0	2.0	2.0
Average Annual	2.0		2.0	
Object of Expenditure	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Obj. C	\$423,000	\$417,000	\$417,000	\$417,000
Revenue	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
001-0393 GF-Federal	\$100,000	\$98,000	\$98,000	\$98,000
Total Revenue	\$100,000	\$98,000	\$98,000	\$98,000
Biennial Totals	\$198,000		\$196,000	

Package Description

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

The Washington Health and Human Services Enterprise Coalition (Coalition) operates over 75 health and human service programs serving over 2.9 million Washingtonians, and it has continued to grow in size and scope of collaboration since inception over five years ago. Additional agencies, programs, and projects have been added into the Coalition portfolio. The governance structures of a multi-entity Coalition and the breadth and complexity of the service programs and IT systems that are interdependent and that could be leveraged to improve technologies is large. It also holds great promise to improve the current user experiences of agency staff and clients.

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The Health Benefit Exchange (Exchange) has a stake in the Coalition's success as it will benefit our customers who sign up for health coverage through the *Washington Healthplanfinder* portal. Given the importance of this effort and the demands of meaningful, detailed and complex engagement with our Coalition partners on governance, program and technology dependencies, continued engagement and modernization opportunities will require additional resources to meet staffing demands as Coalition workload has increased.

For major Coalition projects like Integrated Eligibility and Enrollment to succeed, all individual business entities managing state and federal programs and systems need to be resourced effectively and on realistic timelines. Beyond successful progress in stabilizing and migrating the ACES complex, major efforts continue planning, roadmap development and refining, seeking clarity on the intersections between business needs and technical systems and processes. As the Coalition projects move further into implementation, there will be additional resource needs required of both the project office and the individual business entities.

What is your proposal?

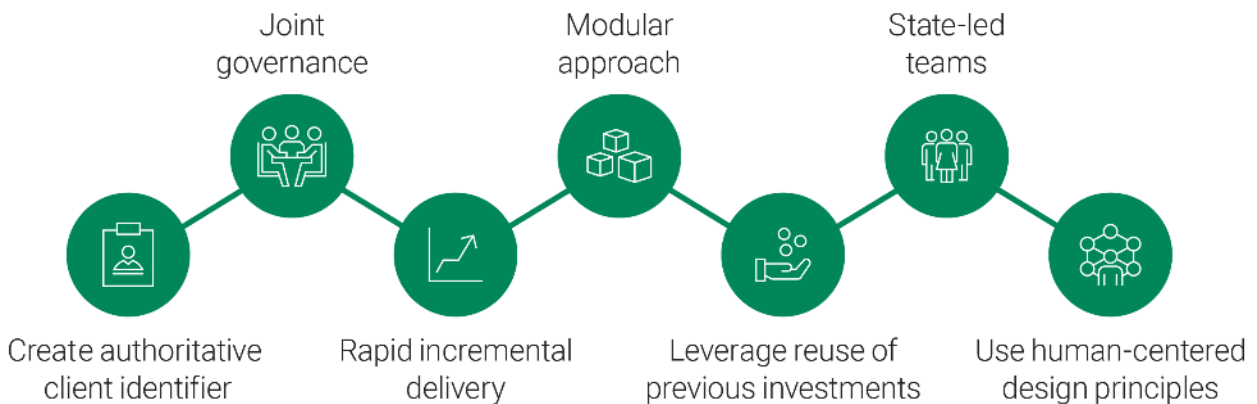
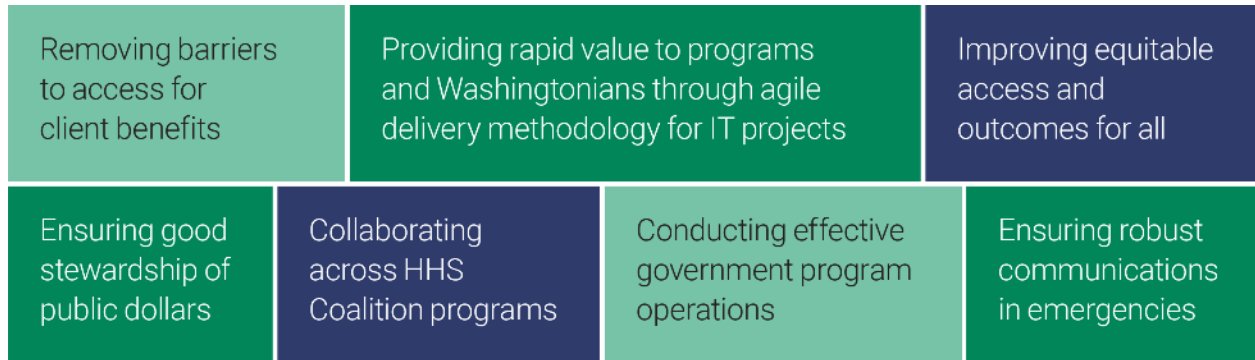
The Exchange proposes two new positions dedicated to engagement and partnership with the Coalition. These resources are necessary to backfill current efforts and add capacity that will help ensure governance, planning, coordination and change management implementation of Coalition projects.

In 2018, to promote service coordination, the leaders of Washington's state health and human services organizations decided that increased collaboration on IT investments is needed to improve the health and well-being of the people, families, and communities of Washington. The decision established the Coalition to govern IT project investments across Washington's state HHS organizations, and the Washington Legislature formally recognized the Coalition in the 2019 legislative session.

The Coalition is a multi-organization collaborative that provides strategic direction and federal funding guidance for information technology projects that have cross-organizational or enterprise impact. The members are the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Health Benefit Exchange (HBE), Health Care Authority (HCA), Department of Corrections (DOC), Consolidated Technology Solutions (WaTech) and the Office of Financial Management (OFM) serving as an ex-officio member.

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In summer 2021, the HHS Coalition leaders finalized an [IT strategy for 2021 to 2024](#). This strategy provides a common vision for IT project alignment and direction. The IT strategy includes seven vision goals and seven enabling strategies that guide how the Coalition will frame IT projects.

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

The Exchange requests the addition of two staff positions to continue the current level of engagement efforts.

More staff capacity will restore and maintain key management and staffing of ongoing Exchange work, including priority initiatives, while continuing active engagement with the Coalition:

- Maintain and modernizing a secure IT platform for *Washington Healthplanfinder* and associated systems to serve current and future customers and clients
- Improving current customer experiences with health insurance eligibility and enrollment support
- Advancing health equity through access and affordability initiatives
- Stabilizing and positioning Exchange staff, partners and systems for the future opportunities and state and federal changes impacting our work

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

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There are two main alternatives:

- Reduce the level of engagement and support for the Coalition work. This would create less responsiveness and support of the Coalition from the Exchange in the exploration of potential system partnership, technology sharing and re-use. There are tangible benefits to Washingtonians in advancing the business and technologies of Coalition entities, however the work needs to be effectively resourced.
- Continue Coalition engagement and support and reduce core Exchange product, service and policy work to sustain Coalition work within current resources. This would have an adverse impact on Washington Apple Health (WAH) customers, QHP customers in the individual insurance market, and reduced support and responsiveness to our community and agency partners on core Exchange work and goals beyond information technology.

The request is for two additional positions to support the Coalition's work to benefit high-need residents of the state and ultimately streamline and speed up service delivery, if effectively resourced. The Exchange remains committed, however, to serving its current 1.8 million clients and customers at the same or higher levels as we continue to engage in Coalition goals.

What resources does the agency already have that are dedicated to this purpose?

As the Coalition has grown, the Exchange has leveraged existing staff to support the various activities related to governance, planning, coordination and change management.

How is your proposal impacting equity in the state?

Please describe in detail how this proposal is likely to benefit communities and populations who have historically been excluded by governmental decisions. Include both demographic and geographic information about communities.

Underlying disparities continue in health coverage for low-income people and people of color. Customer and enrollment assistance feedback continues to reinforce the importance of stable and responsive tools for new and returning customers enrolling in health insurance. The mission and goals of the Coalition in the current biennium and beyond will result in more accessible health Coverage for all Washingtonians regardless of when and how they apply for coverage.

Effective and responsive access to health insurance is critical to advancing equity in health outcomes in Washington. Funding this request provides capacity for the Exchange to engage with the Coalition and further addresses health disparities.

Describe how your agency engaged with communities and populations, particularly those who have been historically excluded and marginalized by governmental decisions?

The Exchange engages in meaningful dialog with multiple committees and workgroups, comprised of individuals from diverse backgrounds, devoted to making *Washington Healthplanfinder* an efficient website that serves the people of Washington state.

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Health insurance coverage is complex, and many Washington residents prefer to seek help reviewing their coverage options and enrolling through Washington Healthplanfinder.

What input did your agency receive and how was it incorporated into your proposal?

The Exchange relies on continued engagement of our community partners through the navigators and assisters' network, advisory committees, and customer surveys.

Explain why and how these equity impacts will be addressed, i.e., consider communities or populations excluded or disproportionately impacted by the proposal

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 all residents of Washington including 1.6 million Washington Apple Health enrollees.

More than 75 health and human services programs in Washington deliver vital services supporting almost three million Washingtonians in reaching their full human potential through cash assistance, childcare subsidy, food assistance, health insurance programs, immigrant and refugee assistance, and medical assistance. Washington state agencies, public-private partnerships, and community, vendor, and contractor partners deliver the programs, which expend approximately \$17 billion annually. In addition, public health programs and services improve population health for all Washingtonians.

Of those almost three million Washingtonians, over one million are served by programs in at least two of the Coalition organizations and more than 200,000 are served by at least three of the organizations. Clients, particularly those served by multiple organizations, are faced with providing the same information to multiple organizations through lengthy applications that are not all currently available online or in mobile-responsive formats.

The experience of poverty is not shared equally by all people. The challenges faced by our clients, disproportionately impact Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities as well as other groups, including women, children, seniors, individuals with disabilities, single parents, rural communities, the LGBTQ+ community, and immigrants and refugees. The overarching HHS Coalition vision highlight our deep commitment to equitable access to services.

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 \$423,000 in fiscal year 2026 and ongoing funding of \$417,000 beginning in fiscal year 2027 to add two new positions centered on the engagement with the Coalition. Multiple Coalition initiative plans and roadmaps foresee active multi-entity collaboration over at least the ensuing five years.

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Objects		FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
A	Salaries & Wages	275,000	275,000	275,000	275,000	275,000	275,000
B	Employee Benefits	85,000	85,000	85,000	85,000	85,000	85,000
C	Personal Serv Contr	-	-	-	-	-	-
E	Goods and Services	62,000	56,000	56,000	56,000	56,000	56,000
G	Travel	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Total		423,000	417,000	417,000	417,000	417,000	417,000

Historical Funding

The Exchange has never received additional funding to support engagement and partnership with the Coalition governance, planning, coordination and change management implementation of technologies and integrations result in improved services to Washington residents and agency business partners providing health and human services.

FY2024

- FTE = none
- Total Funds = \$0
- Near General Fund = \$0
- Other Funds = \$0

FY2025

- FTE = none
- Total Funds = \$0
- Near General Fund = \$0
- Other Funds = \$0

Workforce assumptions

To support the increased workload and coordination in participating in the Coalition, we are requesting two new positions:

- (1) Business Program Manager focused on Coalition work including:
 - a. Internal Exchange coordination on Integrated Eligibility and Enrollment (IE&E)
 - b. Liaison work with the Coalition and Exchange on IE&E related activities and assignments
 - c. Exchange biennial workplan integration with IE&E and other Coalition activities
 - d. Business Subject Matter Expert on Washington Apple Health and QHP eligibility direction, input and coordination with the Coalition
 - e. External representation of the Exchange on IE&E efforts and close coordination with partner agencies
 - f. Close internal coordination with Information Technology on Coalition business and program implications of technology opportunities and changes
- (2) Information Technology Program Manager to oversee and provides technical consultation and guidance on Coalition plans and projects, including close coordination with business objectives

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at the Exchange and the Coalition. At this point in the Coalition work, demands for information technology expertise and coordination in the partner organizations are expanding. This includes cloud applications, architecture, design, and development work necessary to meet the mission and business objectives of the Exchange and the Coalition.

Strategic and Performance Outcomes

Strategic framework

This request also supports Goal 4 (Healthy and safe communities) of the Governor’s Results Washington initiative as it strives to “foster the health of Washingtonians from a healthy start to safe and supported future.”

This request supports both the Governor’s Results Washington’s Core values of People Matter and Ideas Matter.

Performance outcomes

An adequately resourced internal coordination and support of the Coalition and its HHS Enterprise Portfolio Management Office will allow the Exchange to continue active engagement to help achieve the goals of improving delivery of health and human services to the residents of the state.

Other supporting materials

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

Other Collateral Connections

Intergovernmental

Not applicable to this request.

Legal or administrative mandates

Not applicable to this request.

Changes from current law

Not applicable to this request.

State workforce impacts

Not applicable to this request.

State facilities impacts

Not applicable to this request.

Puget Sound recovery

Not applicable to this request.

Other supporting materials

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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.