

Maintenance Level

Agency:

107 Health Care Authority on Behalf of the Health Benefit Exchange

Decision Package Code/Title:

ML-HA HBE Healthplanfinder Enhancements Delayed Due to COVID-19 and Cascade Care

Agency Recommended Summary:

The Health Benefit Exchange (Exchange) will address the backlog of Healthplanfinder enhancement activities that were delayed in FY2020 and FY2021 due to the Exchange focusing significant effort on responding to the COVID pandemic and continuing to build-out the infrastructure for the launch of Cascade Care.

Fiscal detail:

Operating Expenditures	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
17T-1 HBEA	\$817,000	\$817,000	\$0	\$0
001-C GF-Federal	\$296,000	\$296,000	\$0	\$0
Total Expenditures	\$1,113,000	\$1,113,000	\$0	\$0
Biennial Totals	\$2,226,000		\$0	
Staffing	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
FTEs	0	0	0	0
Average Annual	0		0	
Object of Expenditure	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
Obj. C	\$1,113,000	\$1,113,000	\$0	\$0
Revenue	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
17T-1 HBEA	\$817,000	\$817,000	\$0	\$0
001-C GF-Federal	\$296,000	\$296,000	\$0	\$0
Total Revenue	\$1,113,000	\$1,113,000	\$0	\$0
Biennial Totals	\$2,226,000		\$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 two emerging needs. In response to COVID, the federal government issued a series of emergency rules and legislative packages that required significant adjustments to Healthplanfinder and associated HBE systems to accurately capture income for Medicaid and QHP applications. Second, the launch of Cascade Care in November 2020 required extensive resources. As a result, nearly a year of enhancement activities were postponed or reprioritized.

Improvements to Washington Healthplanfinder positively impact over 1.8 million Washington residents who use it to obtain coverage and access tax credits. In the middle of a global pandemic, a robust and user-friendly system like Healthplanfinder is critical to ensuring Washingtonians can obtain and maintain healthcare coverage.

For additional information contact:

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What is your proposal?

The Exchange is requesting an additional \$2,412,000 in the 2021-23 biennium for Healthplanfinder enhancements responsive to consumer needs. This proposal will also allow the Exchange to address the backlog of other critical system enhancements that were delayed due to the increased efforts around COVID and Cascade Care. This increased expenditure authority will fund key system changes that will avoid cost increases and promote sustainability by improving the customer experience.

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 plans. The system improvements being considered for the 2021-2023 biennium will continue to reduce current limitations of Healthplanfinder and will result in a more accessible platform 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 opportunities, power, and resources to achieve their full potential. 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, HBE, will address the system activities that were delayed due to the pandemic and launch of Cascade Care rather than continue to delay these changes year after year.

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

Without this request, the Exchange will be limited to respond to consumer needs, system vulnerabilities, new regulatory requirements, on-going compliance changes, and expected additional federal activities in an ever-changing environment.

Assumptions and Calculations

Expansion or alteration of a current program or service

This request would increase the system enhancement capacity of the Exchange in the 2021-23 biennium and enable it to complete planned system changes that were delayed due to heightened emphasis on the COVID-19 pandemic and the launch of Cascade Care.

Detailed assumptions and calculations

The estimate provided reflects the costs associated with developing, implementing, and testing Healthplanfinder enhancements.

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

The Exchange assumes it will take a full-time system development team one year 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. This would also leave capacity for new or emergent system changes expected during the upcoming state legislative session.

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To support the system enhancements in this request, the Exchange requests \$1,934,976 in the 2021-23 biennium for design and development of the system enhancements to Healthplanfinder.

The Exchange requests \$290,246 in the 2021-23 biennium for User Acceptance Testing and Independent Verification and Validation. These contracted resources will work closely with internal teams, vendors and state agency partners to analyze and resolve issues and test new solutions and policies.

Summary By Object	SFY22	SFY23	SFY24	SFY25
Salaries	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Benefits	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Contracts (Manually enter Contracts)	\$ 1,112,611	\$ 1,112,611	\$ -	\$ -
Deloitte	\$ 967,488	\$ 967,488		
Quality Assurance/IV&V	\$ 145,123	\$ 145,123		
Goods and Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Travel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Grand Total	\$ 1,112,611	\$ 1,112,611	\$ -	\$ -

Workforce assumptions

No additional FTEs are included with this request

Strategic and Performance Outcomes

Strategic framework

This proposal directly relates to Results Washington’s Healthy and Safe Communities goal. Healthplanfinder has an impact on each of the outcome measures within that goal—starting with ensuring access to quality healthcare. Healthplanfinder 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 will help them plans that allow them access 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.

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

Healthy people are better equipped to gain world class education, contribute to a prosperous economy, and obtain care when needed to help end the opioid crisis. Enhancements to the system will provide greater customer service and efficiencies that help us deliver on the goal for efficient, effective and accountable government.

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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.

Puget Sound recovery

None.

Other supporting materials

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

Stakeholder response

N/A

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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