

2024 Partner Agency Funding Requests

Workforce Board Legislative Endorsements

BACKGROUND:

RCW 28C.18.060(5) directs the Board to "... review and make recommendations to the Office of Financial Management (OFM) and the Legislature on operating and capital budget requests for operating agencies of the state training system for purposes of consistency with the state comprehensive plan for workforce training and education."

This statutory requirement provides the framework for the review of workforce system requests, and implementation of the state's strategic plan for workforce development, Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP), enabling a focus on system-specific legislative requests that can move the workforce system toward one or more of the goals and strategies outlined in the plan.

The Board's funding requests to the 2024 Legislature and Governor can be found at: <https://www.wtb.wa.gov/about-us/workforce-board-legislative-tracker/> under the Budget Requests tab.

The Board endorsed the following requests at their November and December meetings as important components to moving the state's workforce system forward and aligning with the goals articulated in the TAP plan. The Board recommends that policymakers consider them in their budget deliberations.

Department of Social & Health Services (DSHS)

1. Broaden Focus of Local Planning Areas (LPA)

This proposal will broaden LPA partnerships (currently only designed for collaboration with WorkFirst program participants) to better support poverty reduction efforts across the state and establish a customer voice council to advise the Community Services Division of DSHS in developing, implementing, and evaluating programs and practices.

- Expanding the focus of local partnerships will enhance community opportunity to collaborate in building a social safety net, developing real economic mobility for families, and increasing community capacity. Workforce system partners are key members of these local partnerships.
- Establishing a Customer Voice Council offers an organized and continuous way to engage customer voice and learn regularly from people who use DSHS services. Individuals and families experiencing poverty have invaluable knowledge as users of DSHS systems and programs.

2. Integrated Eligibility & Enrollment Roadmap Continuation

This decision package requests funds, in partnership with the Health and Human Services Enterprise Coalition, to continue implementation of the Integrated Eligibility and Enrollment (IE&E) Roadmap. This includes funding for the implementation of an accessible, mobile-first HHS Portal that will be aligned with the statewide portal to enable Washingtonians (clients, navigators, and community partners) to apply for and enroll in multiple HHS programs efficiently. It also supports the resource needs for the program office that leads and manages the IE&E program, supporting transparency, risk mitigation, and program success.

3. Recruit and Retain Qualified Staff (BHA – Behavioral Health Administration)

DSHS BHA is proposing multiple strategies to move forward in recruiting and retaining qualified staff. These proposed strategies include investments in increased staff to provide onsite training and support, reimbursement for continuing education, partnering with the University of Washington (UW) for a specific Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for psychosis (CBTp) training, nursing recruiters, physician leader pay increases, a critical incident stress management team (CISM), and postdoctoral and nurse residency programs.

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

1. Progress on Free Meals for All: Feeding All Students in Elementary School

This request is for state funding to supplement federal meal reimbursement dollars so all of Washington's elementary students have access to meals at school with no out-of-pocket costs. Under this proposal, school meals at elementary schools will be free for all students without disrupting school district food service programs or financing. Just as Washington has supplemented the copay for students eligible for reduced-price meals, state funding would supplement the cost of meals for students who pay for the meals, ensuring all students would have access at no charge, regardless of their meal eligibility status.

2. Recruiting and Retaining Special Education Teachers Through Effective Teacher Residencies (OSPI)

Washington students learn best from dedicated and prepared educators. Students receiving special education services, especially those in rural communities, are the most likely to be served by out-of-endorsement teachers and emergency substitutes. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) requests funding to support special education teacher residencies, and to offer professional development and career support and guidance to the 15,000 substitute teachers currently serving in Washington classrooms.

Employment Security Department (ESD)

1. WorkSource System Replacement

Replace the WorkSource Integrated Technology (WIT) platform, comprised of the statewide case management system (Efforts to Outcomes, or ETO), and WorkSourceWA.com — a job matching (labor exchange) platform that matches employers to job seekers. This is the

Employment Security Department's third Decision Package submittal, seeking additional funding to:

- Adequately support the WIT project.
- Cover additional contract costs of the new vendor.
- Extend existing project staff into February 2026.

Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB)

1. Endorsement Competency Review

The Professional Educator Standards Board is responsible for reviewing and continually updating 35 endorsement competencies. PESB operates a review cycle of 7-10 years for each endorsement competency. However, new research and innovative practices continue to emerge in the field of education, and the agency's review cycle is not able to match the fast-paced nature of education research, especially in the fields of reading, science, and mathematics. PESB identifies this project as critical to improving learning outcomes in the classroom and building a robust workforce.

2. Teacher Residency

The Professional Educator Standards Board is responsible for the training of a qualified, diverse, and prepared educator workforce in Washington. In service of this mission, PESB is tasked with supporting the implementation of a teacher residency program at Western Washington University (WWU) to begin in the fall of 2024. Starting this program will require substantive work to transform existing programs. This decision package considers how PESB can build capacity after fiscal year 2024 to successfully support current and future preparation programs in creating effective and successful residency programs and understanding their impact on the educator workforce.

3. Tribal Liaison Position

The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) is responsible for the training, certification, and continuing education of qualified and culturally competent educators. In this aim, PESB has sought to build ongoing relationships with Sovereign Tribal Nations throughout Washington. PESB has identified an opportunity to grow these efforts and establish more robust partnerships with Tribal representatives by creating a Tribal Liaison position within the agency. PESB has identified this as an opportunity to support Native students in the classroom, thus creating improved supports for students who have been historically marginalized in the education system.

State Board for Community & Technical Colleges (SBCTC)

1. BS Computer Science Expansion

This request would create at least 15 Bachelor of Science in computer science degree programs in fiscal year 2025 and another five in fiscal year 2026 and expand access to historically underserved populations with emphasis on rural communities. The information and communications technology (ICT) sector is a vibrant pillar of Washington's economy. In

2022, the ICT industry directly employed 360,900 people, making it the fastest growing industry in the state. Washington also has the highest concentration of tech workers in the nation relative to the state's overall employment base, with nearly one in 10 workers in the tech industry. Yet local employers looking for tech talent continue to encounter a skills shortage. Currently, colleges and universities do not have the capacity to educate enough students to keep up with employer demand. The college system proposes to create additional Bachelor of Science in Computer Science programs as authorized by the Legislature in 2021 (SB 5401). This authorization opens the door for a dramatic increase in the number of bachelor's computer science graduates in Washington state; however, the creation and expansion of these programs requires additional resources.