

# Healthcare/Behavioral Health Workforce Research and Policy



The Workforce Board requests maintenance funding to bolster staff support for the Health Workforce Council and Washington's Health Workforce Sentinel Network, which coordinate healthcare and behavioral health workforce research, planning, and policy reform.

## Invest in critical health workforce infrastructure



### We're working to affect an ecosystem

Coordinated action is needed by government, employers, labor, insurance, and the education system.

- Improve the current system
- Train for our future needs
- Adopt new approaches

The healthcare/behavioral health workforce is a vital component of Washington's infrastructure, essential to maintaining healthy communities. In recent years, this workforce has faced unprecedented challenges, prompting a statewide response and significantly expanding policy efforts.

To support the increased work, the Workforce Board seeks ongoing funding to add 1.65 FTE (bringing the total to 2.5 FTE) and increase support for Washington's Health Workforce Sentinel Network. These additional resources will strengthen workforce research and policy development. Current funding for the Health Workforce Council, behavioral health projects, and the Sentinel Network is insufficient to sustain the required data collection, analysis, and policy activities outlined by statute.

## Impact Highlights

- Funding would maintain Washington's investment in the Health Workforce Council and support additional progress on crucial workforce goals as a behavioral health-related proviso is ending.
- With only 0.85 FTE currently allocated, there is insufficient capacity to adequately support policy analysis and research for the state's healthcare workforce. This proposal would enhance expertise and coordination of health workforce issues across the state.
- A robust and diverse healthcare and behavioral health workforce is essential to serve the state's eight million residents, many of whom lack timely access to care.

## Project Costs

- New funding of \$345,000 in FY2026 and \$327,000 ongoing funding after that (while maintaining the existing \$240,000 annual appropriation), will support an additional 1.65 FTE for behavioral health workforce coordination and health employer engagement, and small enhancements to the Health Workforce Sentinel Network.



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