



Agency Recommendation Summary

The Department of Health requests funding to sustain core functions of Watch Me Grow Washington (WMGW) and expand the program's in-language offerings and expand beyond age six. Watch Me Grow Washington (WMGW) functions as the state's centralized communication outlet for pertinent information on children's health and safety. This grant has remained relatively unchanged since 2010. The combination of stagnant grant revenue and increasing core expenditures such as costs made the Core Grant unsustainable funding source to support WMGW. This funding will expand mailings to families with children above age six that generally do not receive health and safety information.

Fiscal Summary

Fiscal Summary <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2024	2025	2023-25	2026	2027	2025-27
Staffing						
FTEs	3.6	3.5	3.55	3.5	3.5	3.5
Operating Expenditures						
Fund 001 - 1	\$1,390	\$1,378	\$2,768	\$1,378	\$1,378	\$2,756
Total Expenditures	\$1,390	\$1,378	\$2,768	\$1,378	\$1,378	\$2,756

Decision Package Description

Problem:

Watch Me Grow Washington is our state's centralized system to communicate critical health and safety information, immunization information, and well-child visit reminders to families with children ages birth to six years old. This comprehensive system is designed to influence health behaviors on multiple levels. It provides parents/guardians information relevant to their child's health and developmental stage, intending to educate parents on the critical decisions they make about their child's health. This information is mailed to families in English or Spanish. During times of pandemic or other public health crises, the Watch Me Grow Washington program can be used to disseminate relevant and accurate information regarding health risks and prevention strategies for children. As the only program of its kind, other state health departments often reference WMGW resources and materials in developing their maternal and child health education materials.

Historically, the federal Core Immunization Grant was able to sustain the WMGW program. However, the grant has remained relatively unchanged since 2010. The combination of stagnant grant revenue and increasing core expenditures made it impossible to continue using the Core Grant to exclusively support WMGW. A combination of state general funds (25 percent) and the Title XIX Medicaid grant (25 percent) covers the Watch Me Grow Washington system's costs. In fiscal years 2021, 2022 and 2023, the remaining funding (50 percent) was provided through state general funds to maintain the program."

In 2020 and 2021, the Department of Health requested funding to sustain WMGW, but was only provided one-time funding.

Proposal:

This proposal seeks ongoing funding for the WMGW program so that over 300,000 families continue receiving critical health messages regarding well-child visits, immunization information and reminders, and other important public health information. Each year more than 1.5 million mailings are sent, reaching 98% of intended families. This request aligns with the recommendation from the 2021 legislative report which recommends funding to WMGW, which provide lifelong benefits to the children in Washington state.

Alternative:

Option 1: Discontinuation of the WMGW program. With this option, parents will no longer receive health and safety messages, immunization, and well-child visit reminders. This option will create a cost to shutting down the system, discontinue the mailings, end established contracts and partnerships, and reduce staffing costs.

Option 2: Distribute the communications primarily by email and reduce physical mailings to once per year to maintain accurate address data. The hard copy mailing system is opt-out, and the email distribution system is opt-in. DOH does not currently have sufficient email address data to email every family with a child aged birth to six years. The department will need considerable additional resources (both funding and time) to move to such a system.

Assumptions and Calculations

Expansion, Reduction, Elimination or Alteration of a current program or service:

These assumptions are based on a continuation of the current (FY23) funding level for FY24.

Detailed Assumptions and Calculations:

Annual cost for salaries, benefits, goods and services, travel, and intra-agency reimbursement within this program amounts to \$1.87 million each year with an additional \$27K in the first year for equipment expenses. These funds will support 16 roles within the program equal to 7.4 FTE.

Workforce Assumptions:

Workforce Assumptions FY24 Projections Only					
FTE	Job Classification	Salary	Benefits	Startup Costs	FTE Related Costs
0.5	WMS01	\$48,000.00	\$17,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$4,000.00
1.5	HEALTH SERVICES CONSULTANT 3	\$113,000.00	\$46,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$11,000.00
0.5	HEALTH SERVICES CONSULTANT 2	\$33,000.00	\$14,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$4,000.00
1.1	FISCAL ANALYST 2	\$56,000.00	\$27,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
3.6		\$250,000.00	\$104,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$19,000.00

Estimated expenditures include salary, benefit, and related costs to assist with administrative workload activities. These activities include policy and legislative relations; information technology; budget and accounting services; human resources; contracts; procurement; risk management, and facilities management.

Strategic and Performance Outcomes

Strategic Framework:

This proposal supports the Dept. of Health's **Transformational Plan Priority II. Health Systems and Workforce Transformation**, in that all Washingtonians are well served by a health ecosystem that is robust and responsive, while promoting transparency, equity, and trust.

The package aligns with goal 4, health and safe communities of the Governors Results. WMGW ensures the youngest Washingtonians have a healthy and safe start. WMGW also works across state agencies, providing an outlet to disseminate their child health, safety and welfare information.

Performance Outcomes:

This program supports the Governors forth key performance measure - Health and safe communities: by encouraging healthy behavior in Washingtonians starting at birth through age six and beyond. The communication modality ensures DOH effectively communicates with Washingtonians, while the informative material provided outlines best practices which lead to better health outcomes. Coupled, the modality and material create an effective conduit for the state and the citizen to partner for a healthier Washington. Some of the top layer outcomes are:

- A singular source of information for parents
- Increase in child well visits and childhood immunizations
- Decrease in disparity of immunizations rates in household with limited English proficiency
- Increase knowledge of how to create safe and healthy environments

Equity Impacts

Community outreach and engagement:

In 2022, Watch Me Grow Washington began delivering messaging by email, using innovative methods to engage caregivers who prefer to access information online.

Disproportional Impact Considerations:

Since this information is sent by paper mail, there are minimal barriers to having equitable access to this information.

Target Populations or Communities:

This proposal supports equity within Washington State by offering essential health and safety information to all families with children ages 0-6.

Other Collateral Connections

Puget Sound Recovery:

Not applicable

State Workforce Impacts:

Not applicable

Intergovernmental:

Other State agencies (DCYF, HCA, DSHS) would no longer be able to pay the program a dissemination fee to have their health and safety information shared in the Watch Me Grow Washington mailings.

Stakeholder Response:

Partner	Anticipated Position (Support, Neutral, Oppose)
Families of children ages 0-6	Support
Local Health Jurisdictions	Support
Other State Agencies (partners HCA, DSHS, DCYF)	Support
DOH internal partners	Support
Seattle Children's Hospital (partner)	Support
Washington Dental Services/Arcora Foundation (partner)	Support
Washington State Dairy Products Commission (partner)	Support
Guaranteed Education Tuition (GET) Program (partner)	Support
Washington Poison Center (partner)	Support
Lacy & Par (vendor)	Support
Capital City Press (vendor)	Support
Master's Touch (vendor)	Support
Desautel Hege (vendor)	Support
WithinReach	Support
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State Facilities Impacts:

Not applicable

Changes from Current Law:

Not applicable

Legal or Administrative Mandates:

Not applicable

Reference Documents

[FNCal _ Sustain Watch Me Grow v.4.xlsm](#)

IT Addendum

Does this Decision Package include funding for any IT-related costs, including hardware, software, (including cloud-based services), contracts or IT staff?

No

Objects of Expenditure

Objects of Expenditure <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2024	2025	2023-25	2026	2027	2025-27
Obj. A	\$250	\$249	\$499	\$249	\$249	\$498
Obj. B	\$104	\$103	\$207	\$103	\$103	\$206
Obj. E	\$1,006	\$1,006	\$2,012	\$1,006	\$1,006	\$2,012
Obj. G	\$1	\$1	\$2	\$1	\$1	\$2
Obj. J	\$10	\$0	\$10	\$0	\$0	\$0
Obj. T	\$19	\$19	\$38	\$19	\$19	\$38

Agency Contact Information

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