

---

# DCYF 2025 Legislative Proposals

---

Melissa Cheesman

*Senior Policy Advisor – Early Care and Education*

*November 1, 2024*



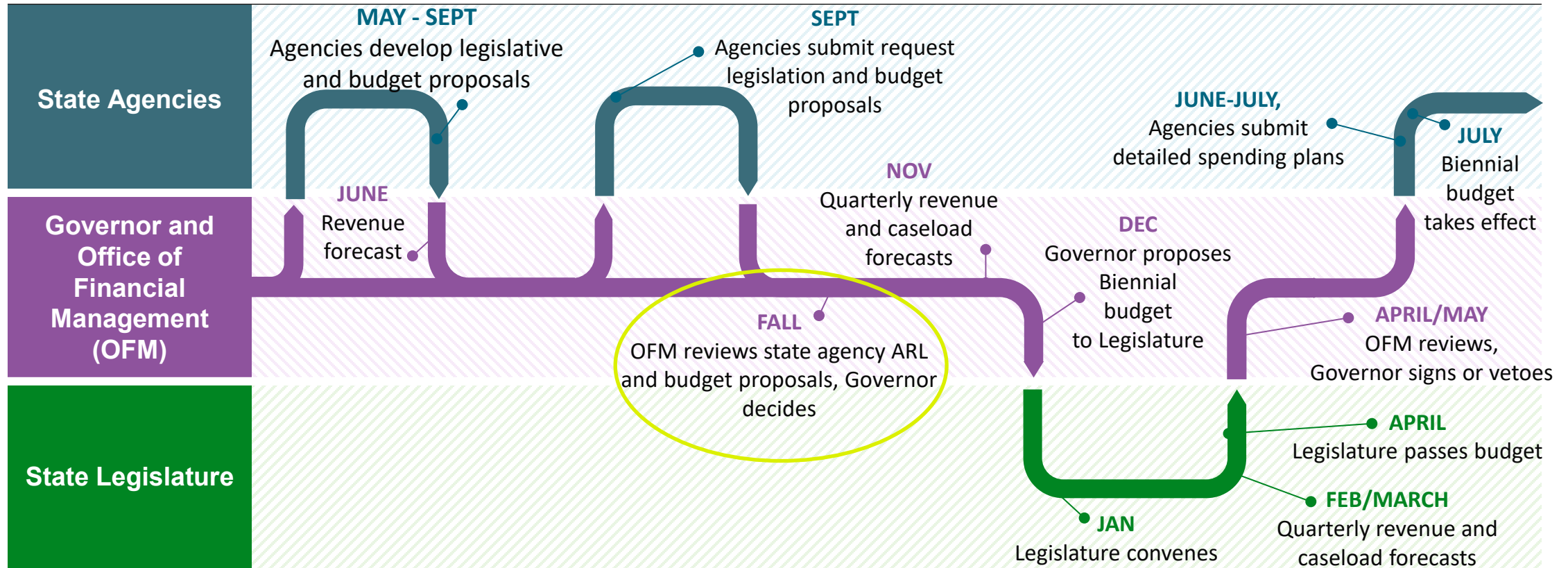
Washington State Department of  
**CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**



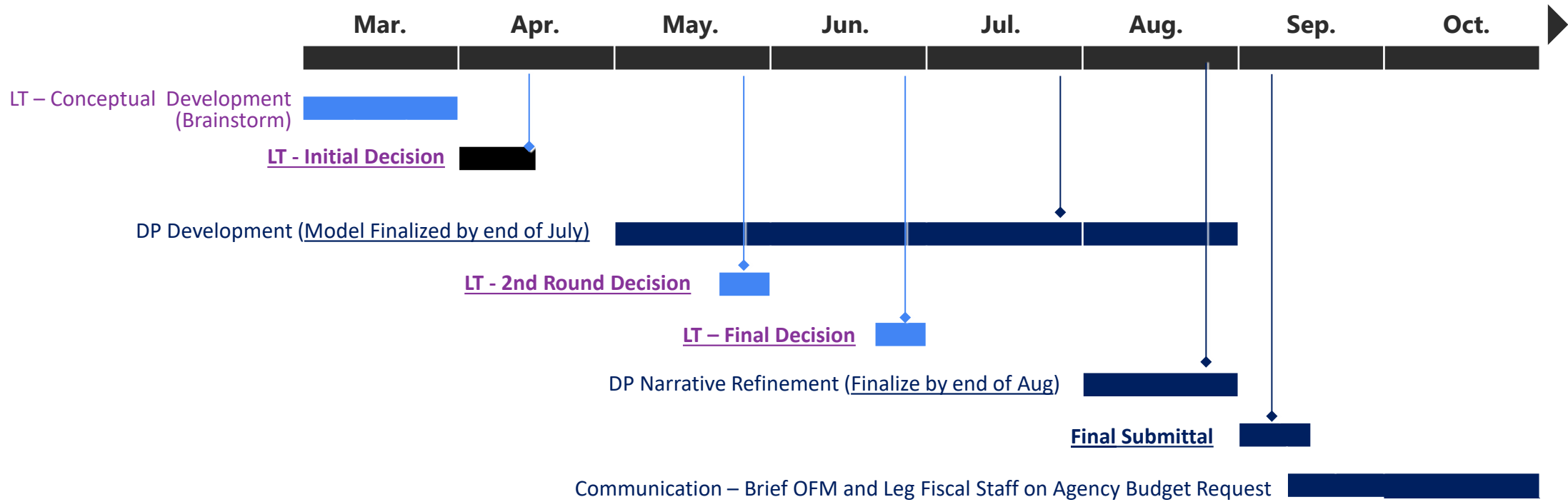
# Guiding Principles for Development

- Prioritize resources that focus on core responsibilities outlined in DCYF's vision and [strategic plan](#).
- Prioritize programs and services that reduce racial and ethnic disparities in outcomes and access to services across all DCYF systems of care.
- DCYF's top priority is to stabilize the Juvenile Rehabilitation program due to the growing population with high and increasing acuity of the young adults in our care.
- Ensuring children remaining in their home are safe requires adequate prevention resources.
- Adolescent service enhancements are needed to support adolescents throughout the continuum of care.
- Required implementation based on state and federal laws.
- Continue existing programs, addressing caseload increases, with limited critical expansion.

# Preparing for Legislative Session



# Decision Package and Agency Request Legislation Timeline for 2025–27 Biennial Session





# Realities for 2025

- Year one of biennial session, budget setting session, long session
- New administration; significant lawmaker changes
- Declining revenues and slowing economic outlook; uncertainty over ballot initiatives and future revenues



# DCYF Priorities for 2025



**Stabilize  
Juvenile  
Rehabilitation**



**Prevention  
Services**



**Adolescent  
Service  
Enhancement**



**Legally  
Required  
Early  
Learning  
Expansions**



**Effective &  
Efficient  
Government**



Washington State Department of  
**CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**

# Early Care and Education Decision Packages



# Child Care Subsidy Base Rates

*Decision Package*  
*\$275.095M*

## DCYF Strategic Priority Alignment

- 80 percent of Washington children ready for kindergarten
- High-quality early learning available and affordable to all in Washington
- Support the early learning workforce
- Prevention goals connected to early learning

## What?

DCYF requests funding to maintain child care subsidy base rates at the 85th percentile of the most current market for child care centers as required by RCW 43.216.828, resulting in a rate increase based on the 2024 Market Rate Survey (MRS).

## Why?

- Requested funding will support family access and child care providers in meeting the needs of children served based on the 2024 MRS.
- Requested funding needed to comply with the Fair Start for Kids Act (2021) and RCW 43.216.828.
- The increase in subsidy base rates was also included in the bargained subsidy rates for licensed family homes in the Collective Bargaining Agreement with SEIU 925. Parity will be maintained if the bargained subsidy rates and this request are funded.

## Components Include:

- Increase subsidy base rates beginning July 1, 2025
- *Note: DP includes center-based care rate increase. FCC rate increase is in the collective bargaining agreement between DCYF and family child care providers.*



# WCCC Eligibility 75% SMI & Dual Language

*Decision Package*  
*\$230.753M*

## DCYF Strategic Priority Alignment

- 80 percent of Washington children ready for kindergarten
- Eliminate racial disproportionalities and advance racial equity
- High-quality early learning available and affordable to all in Washington

## What?

DCYF requests funding to increase Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) eligibility to 75 percent of the State Median Income (SMI) effective July 1, 2025, as required under RCW 43.216.802(3), and to increase dual language rates to adjust for inflation under RCW 43.216.775.

## Why?

- Expanding income eligibility provides families with increased and equitable access to high quality child care, which is essential to family self-sufficiency and positive child outcomes.
- High quality child care supports child development and kindergarten readiness.

## Components Include:

- Increase Working Connections Child Care eligibility to 75 percent SMI
- Increase Dual Language Rates using the U.S. Implicit Price Deflator
- Increased funding for outreach, resource and referral to inform families who are eligible and who have not been eligible historically

# ECEAP Entitlement

*Decision Package*  
*\$451.416M*

## DCYF Strategic Priority Alignment

- 80 percent of Washington children ready for kindergarten
- Eliminate racial disproportionalities and advance racial equity
- High-quality early learning available and affordable to all in Washington
- Prevention goals connected to early learning

## What?

DCYF requests funding to prepare for the Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (ECEAP) to meet entitlement per RCW 43.216.556.

## Why?

- High quality early learning/prekindergarten supports school readiness and success and increases high school graduation rates.
- ECEAP's family self-reliance model helps families set and achieve goals related to health, wellbeing, and family self-sufficiency.

## Components Include:

- Sustainable ECEAP slot rates, representing a 29 percent slot rate increase
- Slot expansion for an additional 6,515 slots to meet entitlement
- Slot conversion of Part Day slots to School day slots (7,592) and Working day slots (18)
- Quality supports for curriculum and ongoing assessments for classrooms and children and increased funding for scholarships and ratings

# Comply with New CCDF Requirements

*Decision Package*  
*\$94.914M*

## DCYF Strategic Priority Alignment

- Eliminate racial disproportionalities and advance racial equity
- 80 percent of Washington children ready for kindergarten
- High-quality early learning available and affordable to all in Washington
- Prevention goals connected to early learning

## What?

DCYF requests funding to comply with the 2024 Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Final Rule change that became effective April 2024.

## Why?

- Requested funding needed to comply with federal requirements.
- Funding will increase access and affordability to high quality child care.

## Components Include:

- Supports eligible children and families with a full 12 months of WCCC benefit authorization beginning July 1, 2025.
- Align child care subsidy payment practices with the private market by July 2026:
  - Pay providers prospectively (instead of retrospectively), and
  - Pay based on enrollment (instead of by attendance)
- Only require overpayment collection for families approved under presumptive eligibility when federally required
- One-time costs for an outreach and communication contract and training support for providers who participate in child care subsidy programs

# Licensing Complaint Unit

*Decision Package*  
*\$5.605M*

## DCYF Strategic Priority Alignment

- Eliminate racial disproportionalities and advance racial equity
- Support the early learning workforce
- Prevention goals connected to early learning

## What?

DCYF requests funding to create a child care complaint investigations unit within the Licensing Division to address the licensing complexities for all child care licensed providers and support provider compliance.

## Why?

- Child care licensors administer all aspects of licensing oversight, both compliance and complaint investigations. This unit would create separation of duties, which would reduce risk of bias and conflict of interest.
- A child care complaint investigation unit will improve the quality and intention of licensing practice, improve quality and availability of provider services statewide equitably.
- Enable staff to meet timelines and support licensed providers holistically.

## Components Include:

- Requests 20.0 full-time equivalents to create the Complaint Investigations Unit.



# Prevention and Services Decision Packages



# Community Based FRS

*Decision Package  
and Agency Request  
Legislation  
\$15.012M*

## DCYF Strategic Priority Alignment

- Eliminate racial disproportionalities and advance racial equity
- Safely reduce the number/rate of children in out of home care

## What?

DCYF requests funding and statutory authority to implement the community-based Family Reconciliation Services (FRS) model in three early implementing regions. FRS serves families and youth ages 12 – 17 who are in conflict.

## Why?

- FRS is currently underutilized with many families hesitant to engage in FRS services in part due to the association that the current DCYF-delivered model has with CPS investigations and fear of further child welfare system involvement.
- Community-based organizations are well positioned to serve youth and families, connecting them to culturally relevant and appropriate local services.
- The FRS community-based model was co-designed with community members and people with lived experience.

## Components Include:

- Funding for implementation in three early implementing regions; Regions 1, 3, 5

# Prevention – Community Pathways

*Decision Package*  
*\$9.622M*

## DCYF Strategic Priority Alignment

- Safely reduce the number/rate of children in out of home care
- Improve quality and availability of provider services

## What?

DCYF requests funding to implement community-based prevention through Family Resource Centers and the Plan of Safe Care.

## Why?

- The Keeping Families Together Act (HB 1227) has had the intended impact of reducing removals, however, increased front end child welfare services are needed to support moderate to high-risk families.
- With federal policy changes in the Plan of Safe Care, not all substance exposed infants are referred to CPS. This coupled with the fentanyl epidemic, mean more supports and connection is needed to keep vulnerable infants safe, and parents supported.

## Components Include:

- Direct funding to 5 Family Resource Centers to provide enhanced capacity for resource navigation, evidence-based practices, and concrete supports
- Funding for the Plan of Safe Care community pathway that serves infants with prenatal substance exposure and pregnant persons with substance use

# CSEC and Victim Advocacy

*Decision Package*  
*\$10.432M*

## DCYF Strategic Priority Alignment

- Improve quality and intention of our practice
- Improve quality and availability of provider services

## What?

DCYF requests funding to improve the Department's ability to identify and respond to human trafficking in all forms.

## Why?

- DCYF experienced a 145% increase in identified child victims of sex trafficking in 2023, demonstrating the need to identify and respond to human trafficking.
- DCYF needs enhanced infrastructure to make needed improvements in screening, identification, and connection to services for youth involved in trafficking.

## Components Include:

- Funding to increase the rate for CSEC receiving centers (one on east side and one on west side), which is necessary to secure providers and cover cost
- Expand access to victim advocacy services to support victims through a healing process
- Funding for a position to assist with locating missing tribal youth
- Adapting and implementing a new validated screening tool for both labor and sex trafficking and implementing enhanced screening practices



# Adolescent Services

*Decision Package*  
*\$3.501M*

## DCYF Strategic Priority Alignment

- Create successful transitions to adulthood for youth and young adults in our care
- Improve quality and availability of provider services

## What?

DCYF requests funding to maintain the current level of service provision for Independent Living (IL) and to expand the LifeSet program to two additional counties.

## Why?

- IL and LifeSet, are two integral programs serving youth and young adults as they exit systems of care for a successful transition to independence and adulthood.
- Additional investments are needed to ensure IL services continue to support the current number of clients and to provide LifeSet services to an estimated additional 600 young adults.

## Components Include:

- Requests one-time rate increase of \$750K provided in the 2023-25 biennium to be made on-going for the Independent Living program
- Funding to expand LifeSet to two additional counties – Clark (FY26) and Pierce (FY27)

# Home Visiting Rates

## *Decision Package Placeholder*

### DCYF Strategic Priority Alignment

- Improve quality and availability of provider services
- Create a high-quality integrated B-8 system

## What?

DCYF requests funding to implement rates for Home Visiting models, Nurse-Family Partnerships and Parents as Teachers. DCYF also requests to maintain additional slots established through SB 6109 (2024).

## Why?

- DCYF has conducted a rate setting process for HV models to support provider wage and cost increases and create more equity in contracting for HV services. Funding is needed to implement rates for the final two models.
- SB 6109 established a pilot program for contracted home visiting slots in high-risk locales with disproportionate out of home placements for Black and Native children, which DCYF requests to continue.

## Components Include:

- Placeholder request to implement home visiting rates for Nurse Family Partnership and Parents as Teachers models
- Funding to sustain the additional contracted slots established through SB 6109

# DCYF Organizational Administrative Decision Packages



# DCYF Enterprise Payment Solution

*Decision Package  
Placeholder*

## DCYF Strategic Priority Alignment

- Improve the quality and intention of our practice
- Improve the quality and availability of provider services

## What?

DCYF requests funding to begin implementing a modern DCYF Enterprise Payment Solution (DEPS). The implementation phase would begin without a gap after Procurement is completed to maintain project momentum, resource continuity, and mitigate risk in accordance with OneWA timelines.

## Why?

- Implementation would be the next phase in the DEPS project to replace Social Service Payment System (SSPS) and associated payment authorization systems.
- Projected to improve payment efficiency, accuracy, and transparency, ensuring that payment recipients receive timely support.
- Aligns with broader agency objectives to enhance system and process efficiency to comply with legislative and regulatory mandates and make best use of technology where the risk-adjusted benefit is appropriate and substantial.

## Components Include:

- Modern DEPS will compliment and interoperate with the state implementation of Workday
- Three-year maximum implementation period to begin approximately August 2025
- Five years of maintenance and operations





# CCWIS Implementation

*Decision Package  
Placeholder*

## DCYF Strategic Priority Alignment

- Improve the quality and intention of our practice
- Improve the quality and availability of provider services

## What?

DCYF requests funding to continue implementing the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS). The solution involves the adoption of a robust case management software designed to enhance agency capabilities in managing and improving Child Welfare Services.

## Why?

- The current system, FamLink does not adequately meet the needs of DCYF or its clients.
- FamLink does not comply with federal final rule (45 CFR Chapter XIII and Parts 1355 and 1356) on Comprehensive Child Welfare Information Systems.
- FamLink is complex with linked, dependent components that propose significant hurdles when attempting to introduce modifications or updates.

## Components Include:

- A complete FamLink replacement application
- Projected hybrid team of State FTEs and contracted staff from vendor partners
- Software solution and implementation bid from vendor anticipated October 2024

# One Pager Overviews 2025-27 Biennial Budget Decision Packages & Agency Request Legislation

- Decision Packages are currently posted on DCYF's [Government Affairs webpage](#).
- One-page summaries of DCYF's budget requests and agency request legislation for the 2025 Legislative Session will be linked on the DCYF Government Affairs webpage.
- These will be added as they are completed – please check back or reach out if you would like more details on any proposal.



Washington State Department of  
**CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**

---

# THANK YOU

---

**Melissa Cheesman**

[Melissa.cheesman@dcyf.wa.gov](mailto:Melissa.cheesman@dcyf.wa.gov)



Washington State Department of  
**CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**

*Thank you*