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Potential Department of Health Requests to Office of Financial Management and Governor

During our May 15 Community Collaborative meeting, we discussed three ways for community members and organizations to engage in the legislative process. The Washington State Department of Health's Director of Policy and Legislative Relations provided [a summary of DOH's 2025 proposal process](#).

As the Department of Health increases involvement of community perspectives in this process, we are also considering which proposals make sense to bring for community input. For example, the Office of Resiliency and Health Security may bring proposals with secondary impact to community members related to responding to disasters or emergencies. These include sustaining programs such as a volunteer [Medical Reserve Corps](#) or a workforce development program to share more about emergency response and develop a curriculum.

We will bring some of the below topics for discussions in breakout rooms to the June 26 Community Collaborative meeting so program staff can hear directly from community members. Please email Community.Collaborative@doh.wa.gov with questions.

Community Engagement in Health

Funding Community-Based Organizations & Engagement

This funding request supports transparent community engagement opportunities to advance public health equity priorities and outcomes and improve the state public health system. This includes support for community-rooted organizations, including Urban Indian and tribal organizations, as well as the Community Collaborative.

Community-Led Health Equity Zones

The initiative features geographically-based health equity zones – places where people face social, environmental, and low-resource conditions that negatively impact their health. The zones are selected by a statewide community advisory council; after being selected, each zone will implement community-driven decision-making processes to identify pressing health concerns and develop projects that address the unique needs of the zone. *Note: Development of this community-led proposal is underway, and this initiative is not a choice on the survey.*



Health Education

Be Well Washington

Be Well Washington uses an intergenerational approach to influence behaviors across key dimensions of health for all Washingtonians. This request would support a community capacity-building and social marketing campaign focusing on the four pillars that science tells us will both improve the Healthspan and extend the Lifespan of Washingtonians:

- Emotional Wellbeing
- Social Connection
- Movement/Physical Activity
- Nourishment

Lead Free Kids

This request expands the agency's Lead Prevention Program, increasing public education and awareness around the risk of lead exposure and the importance of and requirements for lead testing. The funds will also address findings and recommendations from the Washington State Auditor's Office that Washington State is not adequately identifying and testing children for lead exposure. The request includes testing promotion, outreach, and case management funds for LHJs and Tribes; epidemiological support for identifying communities most at risk for lead exposure; Medicaid Match funding to add case management and home assessments the Medicaid state plan; and staffing for the Lead in School Drinking Water program.

Watch Me Grow Washington Expansion

Watch Me Grow Washington communicates key health and safety information, immunization information, and well-child visit reminders to families with children ages birth to six years. This funding will expand the digital platform and ensure that information is provided in the top five spoken languages in the state and expand services to include families with children up to age 19. *Note: similar proposals have been put forward to the legislature in the past, so this proposal would likely need to be further developed for the next biennium session (27-29).*

Workforce

Expand the Behavioral Health Workforce

HB 1724 required DOH to recommend policy changes to remove licensure barriers for Behavioral Health professions.

Community Health Worker Training

This supports community-led health equity initiatives including Community Health Worker training modernization efforts.

Continue Support to Birth Equity Project

The Washington State Department of Health Birth Equity Project seeks to address and reduce the racism faced by birth workers and families of Black/African American, African immigrant,



and American Indian/Alaska Native communities in our state. Continued funding would help DOH continue strategic investments in community-based birth worker organizations working to improve birth outcomes in BIPOC communities.

Health Access

Adult Vaccines

The department is seeking funding to support staffing and the purchase of additional adult vaccine for an enhanced, comprehensive state Adult Vaccine Program (AVP), that is aligned with the 2020 National Adult Immunization Program and 2021-2025 Vaccines National Strategic Plan recommendations. Aligning the department's Adult Vaccine Program with national recommendations and priorities ensures the greatest chance of success. The enhanced program focuses on three components: 1) Infrastructure, 2) Access and 3) Demand. This program would serve approximately 500,000 uninsured adults 19--64 (6% of the state's population) at no cost to the resident.

Response

Epidemiology Prevention and Response to Communicable Diseases in Schools and Correctional Facilities

WA State Administrative Code requires schools to report all communicable diseases and notifiable conditions to public health but there is no designated school epidemiologist at WADOH to ensure that schools are aware of reporting requirements and have access to the information and data systems needed to adhere to the WAC and prevent, respond to, and mitigate communicable disease in schools.

Similarly, there is no designated corrections epidemiologist at WADOH accountable for ensuring that correctional facilities are aware of communicable disease reporting requirements and have access to the information and data systems needed to prevent, respond to, and mitigate communicable disease alongside public health agencies. This proposal is to fund 2.0 FTEs to do this work.

Environmental Public Health Homelessness Response

This request will provide resources for contracted services and goods to address homelessness that serve people and communities directly. Examples: ADA shower trailers, portable toilets, handwashing, laundry, and clean up/waste disposal services. *Note: Development of this proposal is underway with local health leaders, and this initiative is not a choice on the survey.*

Other

Encouraging Food Entrepreneurship

Retail food sales are currently regulated by local health officials. This makes starting a permitted food business complex and confusing as inspection authority sits with Washington State Department of Agriculture staff without retail food inspection experience. This request will transfer the regulatory authority for Cottage Food from Department of Agriculture to the



Local Health Jurisdictions (LHJs); this will streamline the retail food industry regulatory structure for entrepreneurs. It will also allow for a contract with a consultant to review and address inequities in food grading programs in Seattle-King and Tacoma-Pierce that are significantly impacting operators who are not native English speaking or prepare culturally diverse foods; this review and report could lead to standardizing programs to reduce bias and better protect public health.