



Department of Health
 2023-25 Regular Budget Session
 Policy Level - CD - Restore TRUST to Public Health Info

Agency Recommendation Summary

The Department of Health requests funding to launch a 5-year multifaceted campaign focused on rebuilding trust in Washington public health, and its information to ensure people in Washington are less skeptical and more likely to follow through on the desired behaviors central to risk mitigation. Over the past two years, public health has become controversial. Without this campaign, the public's perception and relationship with public health agencies may continue to decline, and the Department will have less resources to repair and rebuild its trusted brand.

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	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Operating Expenditures						
Fund 001 - 1	\$7,522	\$7,508	\$15,030	\$7,508	\$7,508	\$15,016
Total Expenditures	\$7,522	\$7,508	\$15,030	\$7,508	\$7,508	\$15,016

Decision Package Description

Problem:

After more than two years spent in the public eye during the COVID-19 pandemic response, the belief and trust in public health has deteriorated. This level of public and media interest lends itself to harsh criticisms and as a result, some Washingtonians have lost trust and belief in the value of public health and everything it does to make the lives of Washingtonians better. Public health has been wrapped in a very complex political, regional, and value-based response fraught with immense mis/dis-information which has caused the work of public health to be more difficult.

Over the past 6 years misinformation/disinformation has spread rampant throughout the nation. Over the last two years in Washington, DOH saw firsthand the impact of these disinformation campaigns through audience research, ongoing polls, and community feedback. As a result, some people have become more likely to believe something false from a friend or family member than something true from the government, which in some cases, leads to decisions to not access life-saving public health services.

This multifaceted campaign would work to rebuild the trust, value, and integral nature of public health by showing how public health positively benefits people every day, offering ways to improve access to services, and reducing the burden of disease and disparities for Washingtonians. The campaign would aim not to merely tell people to trust public health, but instead show people that public health is worthy of their trust.

Proposal:

The Department of Health proposes a five-year campaign focused on rebuilding Washingtonian's trust in public health and display the value that public health provides the people we serve. The Department of Health is proposing an approximate \$35 million dollar campaign (\$7 million per year) and 3 FTEs to implement and run the campaign over the 5-year period. Our goal is to create, disseminate, educate, and connect with communities. Our goal is for the campaign to reach 90% of adults statewide annually. The campaign would emphasize outreach to communities with greater health disparities including those identifying as BIPOC, rural, low-income, LGBTQ, people living with limited physical abilities. The campaign will highlight the ways that public health positively impacts their lives each day and promote access to public health services, reduce barriers, and improve health behaviors. It will reach a diverse audience through various channels and in multiple languages. The campaign builds upon the work performed during the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to foster positive working relationships with the community.

The effectiveness of any public health intervention depends on the ability to influence the specific audience's behavior. The basis of a person's decision to practice a positive health affirming habit is rooted in their ability to trust the source of information, messenger, and research. Since the early 2000's, public health has seen a reduction in childhood immunizations due to the spread of dis/misinformation which argues that vaccines contribute to autism. We witnessed the negative impact which COVID-19 dis/misinformation has on people practicing risk reduction behaviors, such as masking, social distancing, and receiving vaccinations.

Since the onset of the pandemic Washington state has experienced a decline in well-child visit and child immunizations rates. Immunizations, especially childhood immunizations, are one of the safest and easiest ways to decrease vaccine preventable deaths. There are many other public health related interventions and campaigns which save millions of lives. As one of the leaders in public health safety and community resilience, improving public sentiment allows the Department of Health the opportunity to quickly mobilize in the event of a public health event/disaster.

This proposal will have a positive impact for all Washingtonians, especially those receiving direct services from DOH. Also, there is an indirect impact to other state agencies, local health jurisdictions, and community-based organizations partnered with DOH on various programs and services, as well as rely on the agency's leadership during public health emergencies and events. The campaign will highlight and engage adults to understand the work of public health agencies and shift towards public health 3.0. It will show the work we do as an agency and how we are implementing agency priorities to evolve public health practice. The campaign will build trust by reducing barriers to accessing services, and support behavior changes that can improve overall wellness.

Should this proposal not be funded, public health may not have the opportunity to counteract the negative perception of public health's ability to protect and promote health, which in turn could risk that when the next big public health event occurs, DOH will have even less trust from the public and it will be even more difficult to promote certain life-saving behaviors.

Alternative:

The Department is continuously monitoring federal grant opportunities. This is the first time we are requesting funding from the legislature.

Assumptions and Calculations

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

These assumptions are based on a continuation and expansion of the current Fiscal Year (FY) 23 funding level for FY24.

Beginning in FY24 The Department of Health will require 3.0 FTE and \$7,522,000. Beginning FY25-FY28 the department requires. 3.0 FTE and \$7,508,000.

Detailed Assumptions and Calculations:

Beginning in FY24 The Department of Health will require 3.0 FTE and \$7,522,000. Beginning FY25-FY28 the department requires. 3.0 FTE and \$7,508,000.

\$35 Million dollars over a 5-year period awarded to a competitive bid consultant to do a multifaceted public information/education campaign to rebuild the trust, value, and integral nature of public health by showing how public health positively benefits people every day, offering ways to improve access to services, and reducing the burden of disease and disparities for Washingtonians.

Staffing resource needs:

1.0 FTE Washington Management Service 2 Social Marketing and Health Promotion Manager – Provide leadership, direction, management, strategic planning and vision for DOH social marketing efforts and agency-wide public health campaigns. Manages the campaign and social marketing team. This position does not exist, and we are requesting permanent funding to establish a permanent position to manage this campaign and other critical public health campaigns.

1.0 FTE Health Services Consultant 3: This position will do a variety of work all rooted in evidence-based health promotion, health behavior change science, and social marketing. Some tasks include constructing and developing messaging for public messaging campaigns, coordinating the health hub market research and community collaboration, and coordinating the overall project utilizing health education and health promotion best practices.

1.0 FTE Financial Analyst 3 – this position will support executing the contract process and paperwork, track budget, ensure invoices are paid timely, coordinate travel and scheduling between DOH and the awarded consultant staff.

Workforce Assumptions:

Workforce Assumptions FY24 Projections Only

FTE	Job Classification	Salary	Benefits	Startup Costs	FTE Related Costs
1.0	WMS02	\$114,000.00	\$39,000.00	\$4,000.00	\$8,000.00
1.0	HEALTH SERVICES CONSULTANT 3	\$75,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$4,000.00	\$8,000.00
1.0	FISCAL ANALYST 3	\$65,000.00	\$28,000.00	\$4,000.00	\$8,000.00
3.0		\$254,000.00	\$97,000.00	\$12,000.00	\$24,000.00

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. This package ensures that all communities especially underrepresented communities have equitable access to services, opportunities, and information. It builds upon the work we have achieved with communities and the public over the past two and a half years.

As well, this proposal supports the Governor’s Results Washington goal four of creating healthy and safe communities. Building trust in the community for the work the Department of Health does is foundational to supplying actionable information to Washingtonians who need it most.

If funded, this campaign would offer the first opportunity for the Department of Health to prioritize health promotion messaging and audiences to reach communities across the state in a way that offers strategic, intentional and sustainable impacts.

Performance Outcomes:

Increase positive public sentiment for governmental public health agencies

Education and awareness on DOH services and how to access those services. Studies show that when people understand and can easily obtain services they have a positive view of governmental services.

Equity Impacts**Community outreach and engagement:**

Community outreach and engagement - When funding became available DOH contracted with several community-based organizations to provide education and outreach to their respective communities. We strive to meet communities where they are, emphasize capacity building and relational partnerships [Pro-Equity Anti-Racism \(PEAR\) Plan & Playbook](#). We conducted community outreach through surveys, community information sessions and conversations, participated in ethnic media interviews/radio segments to disseminate accurate health information. When this funding is approved, we will continue to work with these communities on building trust in governmental public health services. As of May 2022, DOH partnered with 205 community organizations investing ~\$13 million to reach people identifying as BIPOC to create, disseminate, educate, and connect with their communities.

Disproportional Impact Considerations:

Disproportional Impact Considerations – Based on conversation with various partners, there is real concern they will continue to be left behind and forgotten once COVID ends. DOH received direct feedback on public health campaigns, the effects of public health guidance, changes/updates in guidance and its potential to impact communities of color.

Target Populations or Communities:

Target populations/ Communities – Over the past two years, communities of color, rural populations, people living with disabilities, and the LGBTQ community have been hit hardest by dis/mis-information campaigns. These communities are further scoped by the DOH [SoVI WA State Department of Health Social Vulnerability Index](#) to be at higher risk for health disparities resulting from mis/dis information.

Other Collateral Connections**Puget Sound Recovery:**

NA

State Workforce Impacts:

NA

Intergovernmental:

NA

Stakeholder Response:

NA

State Facilities Impacts:

NA

Changes from Current Law:

NA

Legal or Administrative Mandates:

NA

Reference Documents

[FNCal _ Rebuilding Trust in Public Health Campaign v.2.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	\$254	\$254	\$508	\$254	\$254	\$508
Obj. B	\$97	\$97	\$194	\$97	\$97	\$194
Obj. C	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$14,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$14,000
Obj. E	\$136	\$134	\$270	\$134	\$134	\$268
Obj. J	\$12	\$0	\$12	\$0	\$0	\$0
Obj. T	\$23	\$23	\$46	\$23	\$23	\$46

Agency Contact Information

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