

Overview of Major Statewide Programs and Services

The Department of Social and Health Services' Economic Services Administration provides poverty-reduction services to nearly 1.9 million people. It helps 1 out of every 4 Washington state residents meet their basic needs and achieve economic independence through cash grants, food and medical assistance, employment-focused services, refugee and immigrant assistance, disability determinations, and child support collection.

Overview of Major Statewide Programs and Services

	Description/ Target Population	Financial Eligibility Criteria	Federal/State Statutory Authority	2023-25 Biennium	Avg. Monthly Caseload SFY 24 ¹
ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILIES					
<p>Temporary Assistance for Needy Families</p> <p>State Family Assistance</p>	<p>TANF provides cash grants to families with children and pregnant women who are below income and resource limits. People who are caring for a relative's child or caregivers who are acting in place of a parent are also able to apply for TANF on behalf of these children.</p> <p>SFA does the same for the following populations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families who are lawfully present in the U.S. who do not meet citizenship requirements of TANF. Dependent students ages 19 and 20. Pregnant individuals who are ineligible to receive TANF. Some two-parent households. 	<p>A family's countable income must fall below established limits. Eligibility is also based on a family's assets.</p> <p>The values of a family's home and one vehicle are exempt from asset considerations.</p>	<p>TANF Federal Authority PL 109-171 (DRA), Title VII – Human Resources, Subtitle A - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Subsection 7101; PL. 104-193 (PRWORA), Title I - Block Grants for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; PL 105-33 +(BBA), Title V - Welfare and Related Provisions; 42 USC 601 and 45 CFR Part 260.</p> <p>SFA Federal Authority 8 USC 1621 (d) – State authority to provide for eligibility of illegal aliens for state and local public benefits.</p> <p>TANF State Authority RCW 74.08A and 74.12.</p> <p>SFA State Authority RCW 74.08A.100, RCW 74.12.035.</p>	<p>\$496 million: in cash grants to clients (mix of federal and state funds).</p> <p>Includes funding for DCA and AREN.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 33,112 families per month (including 2,704 solely SFA cases). 17,902 (54.1%) single-parent families. 5,180 (15.6%) two-parent families. 10,031 (30.3%) child-only cases.
WorkFirst	<p>WorkFirst provides job search assistance, employment training, and other activities and support to TANF and SFA recipients who are mandatory participants in WorkFirst, so they can move toward economic stability.</p>	<p>Families receiving TANF or SFA in which the adult(s) in the household is also aided.</p>	<p>Federal Authority PL 104-193.</p> <p>State Authority RCW 74.08A.</p>	<p>\$166 million: In WorkFirst services (mix of federal and state funds). Includes funding for WFS and Tribal TANF share of state maintenance-of-effort funds.</p>	<p>28,254 mandatory WorkFirst participants.</p>

¹Unless otherwise noted, caseload data for most programs is sourced from the *ESA Briefing Book (SFY 2024)* prepared by the ESA Management Accountability and Performance Statistics unit. Data for the following programs were provided by program employees: U.S. Repatriate Program, Basic Food Employment and Training Services, Basic Food Education and Outreach, and SNAP (Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention).

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ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILIES					
Diversion Cash Assistance	<p>DCA provides short-term financial assistance for families with an emergent need who do not want to receive TANF assistance.</p> <p>DCA recipients are not likely to need continued assistance if their emergent needs are met.</p> <p>Assistance is limited to \$2,000 for a 30-day period once every 12 months¹.</p> <p>DCA allows applicants to accept or maintain employment and diverts them from long-term public assistance. If the family goes on TANF within 12 months of receiving DCA, a prorated amount of the DCA payment must be repaid to the state by monthly deductions equal to 5% of the TANF cash grant.</p>	Family must meet TANF eligibility criteria in the month of application.	<p><i>Federal Authority</i> PL 104-193 and 42 USC 604.</p> <p><i>State Authority</i> RCW 74.08A.210.</p>	\$4 million GF-S.	46 families.
Additional Requirements for Emergent Needs	This benefit provides short-term cash assistance to meet emergent housing or utility needs for pregnant individuals or families with an eligible minor child who receive TANF, SFA or Refugee Cash Assistance. Benefits can be authorized for up to a maximum of \$750 in a 12-month period.	Family must receive TANF, SFA or RCA.	<p><i>Federal Authority</i> 42 USC 604.</p>	AREN funds are included within TANF and SFA grants budget.	86 families.
Consolidated Emergency Assistance Program	CEAP provides cash grants to families in need who are ineligible for any other program, including families who have stopped receiving a TANF or SFA grant due to WorkFirst sanction, and have a specific emergent need such as shelter, food, clothing, minor medical, utilities, household maintenance or job-related transportation. A family is eligible for CEAP once in 12 months, as funding allows.	Families, pregnant individuals and families with a WorkFirst sanction who are ineligible for other cash programs with countable income and assets below established limits.	<p><i>Federal Authority</i> 42 USC 604.</p> <p><i>State Authority</i> RCW 74.04.660.</p>	\$327,500 GF-S.	26 families.

¹Effective Jan. 1, 2025, the maximum DCA payment increased from \$1,250 to \$2,000 (HB 2415: Chapter 154, Laws of 2024).

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CHILD SUPPORT					
Child Support Enforcement	Child Support Enforcement works with families to meet their unique needs through the collection and disbursement of child support, medical enforcement and parentage establishment.	<p>There is no income or resource criteria for receiving child support services.</p> <p>Families who receive TANF benefits automatically receive child support services.</p> <p>Families who transition off TANF benefits continue to receive child support services.</p>	<p>Federal Authority Title IV-D of Social Security Act (42 USC 608-669b and 45 CFR Volume 2, Chap. III, 300-399).</p> <p>State Authority RCW 26.09; RCW 26.18; RCW 26.21A; RCW 26.23; RCW 26.26A; RCW 26.26B; RCW 70.58; RCW 74.20; RCW 74.20A; RCW 26.19.</p>	<p>\$357.7 million:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$111.2 million GF-S. • \$246.5 million GF-F. <p>No local dollars.</p>	<p>245,881 cases.</p> <p>599,189 customers.</p> <p>1,009 average monthly parentage establishments.</p> <p>About two-thirds of the state's child support cases involve parents and children who are current (12.4%) or former (53.1%) TANF recipients.</p>
Paternity Establishment	Establish parentage by acknowledgment or by court order for all minor children not born during a marriage or registered domestic partnership.	<p>Families not receiving any financial assistance can also apply for and receive services.</p> <p>The Department of Children, Youth and Families can send referrals for child support services. Since August 2022, it is no longer automatic.</p>	<p>Federal Authority 42 USC 654; 42 USC 666; 45 CFR 303.5.</p> <p>State Authority RCW 26.21A; RCW 26.26; RCW 70.58; RCW 74.20; RCW 74.20A.</p>		
ASSISTANCE FOR INDIVIDUALS					
Aged, Blind or Disabled Cash Assistance	<p>ABD provides a cash grant to people who are age 65 or older, blind or determined likely to meet Social Security Administration disability criteria. Recipients also receive a referral to the Department of Commerce-administered Housing and Essential Needs program and assistance applying for federal Supplemental Security Income benefits.</p> <p>DSHS receives reimbursement for cash grants paid to ABD recipients who transition to SSI.</p> <p>ABD also provides information and referrals to include veteran assistance, vocational rehabilitation and supported employment through the Health Care Authority's Foundational Community Supports.</p>	Countable income and assets must fall below established limits.	RCW Chapter 74.62.	<p>\$313.3 million GF-S.</p> <p>-\$66.1 million recoveries.</p>	30,870 clients.

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ASSISTANCE FOR INDIVIDUALS					
Housing and Essential Needs Referral	<p>This program provides a referral for potential housing assistance through the Commerce-administered HEN program to individuals unable to work at least 90 days due to physical or mental incapacity. Recipients of HEN are also eligible to receive essential-needs items such as bus passes and personal care items.</p> <p>The program also provides information and referrals to include veteran assistance, vocational rehabilitation and supported employment through HCA's Foundational Community Supports.</p>	Countable income and assets must fall below established limits.	RCW 43.185C.220, RCW Chapter 74.62 - RCW 74.04.805.	Department of Commerce.	2,710 clients.
Pregnant Women Assistance	This program provides a cash grant and referral for the Commerce-administered HEN program to individuals who are pregnant but ineligible for TANF and SFA benefits for a reason other than failure to cooperate with program requirements.	Must be pregnant and ineligible for TANF or SFA, with countable income and assets below established limits.	RCW Chapter 74.62.	\$234,000 GF-S.	52 clients.
State Supplemental Payment	<p>SSP provides state-funded supplemental monthly payments to SSI recipients who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are grandfathered in. • Have an SSI-ineligible spouse. • Are age 65 or older. • Are blind or receiving certain services from the Developmental Disabilities Administration. • Are a foster child receiving specific behavioral services through the Department of Children, Youth and Families who are not eligible for foster care reimbursement under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act.² 	<p>Social Security Administration determines SSI eligibility.</p> <p>Resource limit of \$2,000 for individuals and \$3,000 for a couple (not all resources are counted).</p>	<p>Federal Authority PL 92-603.</p> <p>20 CFR 416 Subpart T</p> <p>State Authority RCW 74.04.630.</p>	\$378 million GF-S.	42,369 cases.

²This type of SS payment is provided by the Department of Children, Youth and Families.

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ASSISTANCE FOR INDIVIDUALS					
Ongoing Additional Requirements	<p>OAR provides a state-funded payment to a person in need of assistance (beyond food, clothing and shelter) as necessary to help them continue to live independently. This benefit is available to clients who are active on the following programs: TANF, SFA, PWA, RCA, ABD, HEN Referral or SSI. Payments can assist with restaurant or home-delivered meals, telephone (landline) services, internet, transportation, laundry services, care for service animals (food, vet, boarding), hearing aid and eyeglass replacements, and optometrist visits for eyeglass replacement. Other essential needs can be requested through the exception-to-rule process.</p>	<p>Must meet eligibility rules for the appropriate program (for example, ABD, HEN Referral, TANF or SFA, PWA, RCA, or SSI).</p>	RCW 74.04.283.	\$1.2 million GF-S.	490 cases.
ASSISTANCE FOR IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES					
Refugee Cash Assistance	<p>RCA provides cash grants to individuals or couples without dependents who recently resettled in Washington communities as refugees, asylees, special immigrants from Iraq or Afghanistan, or other humanitarian immigrants.</p> <p>Typically, recipients can receive cash assistance for a maximum of 12 months after they become eligible, based on their immigration status and date of arrival. As of June 1, 2022, the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement extended service durations from eight to 12 months of cash assistance.</p>	<p>Same income and resource limits as TANF.</p>	<p>Federal Authority Immigration and Nationality Act, Title IV 8 USC 1522, Refugee Act of 1980, PL 96-212.</p>	\$26 million GF-F.	2,577 cases.

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ASSISTANCE FOR IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES					
Refugee and Immigrant Services	ESA's Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance administers programs and services to people who resettle in our communities as refugees and immigrants. ORIA contracts with more than 80 providers that specialize in offering culturally and linguistically appropriate services, including nonprofit organizations, resettlement agencies, ethnic community-based organizations, public health and federally qualified health centers, and local government agencies. Programs and services focus on refugee health and wellness, employment and training, immigration assistance, naturalization services, and whole-family programs. Whole-family programs include services focused on school-age children, refugee youth and older adults. ORIA's programs and services aim to build strong communities by providing refugees and immigrants the resources they need to thrive.	No income or resource limits for these services.	Federal Authority Refugee Act of 1980, PL 96-212; 45 CFR Part 400.	\$174.8 million: • \$32.2 million GF-S. • \$142.6 million GF-F.	21,378 clients served in the following ORIA programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited English Proficiency. ORIA Basic Food Employment and Training. Promoting Refugee Integration, Mobility and Empowerment. Naturalization programs.
Naturalization Program	ESA's ORIA assists eligible refugees and immigrants in applying for U.S. citizenship. ORIA contracts with providers who are recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice to provide services that include help with completing citizenship applications, English language and civics classes, help with fee waiver requests for applications fees, and help applying for test exemptions for disabled clients.	Recipients must be receiving one form of public assistance, such as cash, food or medical assistance.	State Authority RCW 74.08A.130.	\$7 million GF-S.	4,308 unique clients (an average of 652 clients per month).

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BASIC FOOD PROGRAM					
Basic Food Program <i>(Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP)</i>	<p>The Basic Food program provides food assistance to low-income families and individuals. Benefits are issued through the Electronic Benefit Transfer system and used at participating grocery stores. Benefits are 100% federally funded, and administrative costs are federally matched at 50%. Household size and net income determine the benefit level.</p>	<p>Gross income at or below 200% federal poverty level for most households.</p> <p>Households that include someone disqualified for an intentional program violation must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet gross income test at 130% FPL. • Meet net income test of 100% FPL. • Have assets below established limits. 	<p>Federal Authority Title 7, CFR Food and Nutrition Act of 2008.</p> <p>State Authority RCW 74.04.500.</p>	<p><i>Non-budgeted, non-allotted.</i></p> <p>Administrative costs are included in overall ESA program support budget and matched at 50%.</p>	<p>524,044 households <i>(households with at least one member receiving federal program benefits, including mixed cases).</i></p>
Basic Food for Legal Immigrants <i>(Food Assistance for Legal Immigrants, or FAP)</i>	<p>FAP provides food assistance to legal immigrants who are ineligible for the federal Basic Food program.</p> <p>For mixed households of persons eligible for state benefits and others eligible for federal benefits, the program helps fill the gap between the federal benefits the household is eligible to receive and the benefits the household would receive if all members were eligible for the federal program.</p>	<p>Same as Basic Food.</p>	<p>Federal Authority Title 7, CFR Food and Nutrition Act of 2008.</p> <p>State Authority RCW 74.04.500 RCW 74.08A.120.</p>	<p>\$213 million GF-S.</p>	<p>24,642 households <i>(households with at least one member receiving state program benefits, including mixed cases).</i></p>

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BASIC FOOD PROGRAM					
Transitional Food Assistance	TFA provides stable food benefits for up to five months to families leaving TANF, State Family Assistance or Tribal TANF cash assistance programs. The benefit amount is based on the Basic Food benefit issued to the family for the last month the household received TANF or SFA. The last TANF grant payment is not counted when the TFA benefit amount is calculated.	Households were receiving Basic Food assistance at the time their TANF or SFA closed and were not in sanction status at the time of closure	Federal Authority Title 7, CFR. Food and Nutrition Act of 2008. State Authority RCW 74.08A.010 RCW 74.04.500 RCW 74.04.510.	<i>Non-budgeted, non-allotted.</i> Administrative costs are included in overall ESA program support budget and matched at 50%.	7,025 households
Basic Food and Employment Training Services	BFET provides education, employment and training services, and employability assessments to Basic Food recipients. Services can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic skills and training (for example, literacy, math, vocational English as second language, high school equivalency preparation, life skills). • Job readiness and vocational training. • Job search assistance. • Job placement. • Case management. • Retention services. • Participant reimbursement. 	All federally funded Basic Food Program recipients ⁵ who are not receiving TANF or RCA.	Federal Authority Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, [Public Law 88-525; Enacted Aug. 31, 1964; 78 Stat. 703] [As Amended Through P.L. 116-94, Enacted December 20, 2019] CFR 273.7, Work Provisions.	Program budget for FFY 2025: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E&T 50% Federal. • \$25.5 million GF-F. • E&T 100% Federal. • \$2.7 million GF-F. 	4,580 clients, including BFET clients served by ORIA. Washington operates a statewide BFET program and continues to strategize on how to expand education and training program services in rural and underserved areas. All 34 Washington state community and technical colleges; 37 regular, community-based organizations; and 11 ORIA community-based organizations provide BFET-contracted services.

⁵ Food Assistance for Legal Immigrants (FAP) recipients are not eligible for the BFET program.

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BASIC FOOD PROGRAM					
Basic Food Outreach	The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service provides federal funding to interested states to finance activities aimed at improving Basic Food participation by eligible households through outreach and education efforts. In Washington state, ESA contracts with public and private nonprofit community organizations to improve awareness of Basic Food for low-income households and to assist people who have difficulty with the application process.	None for prospective clients.	<i>Federal Authority</i> Section 11(e) (1) (A) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008.	Program Budget for FFY 2025: \$5.6 million GF-F and \$62,500 GF-S.	SNAP – Outreach (Basic Food): Basic Food Outreach (BFO) contracts with two master contractors — Within Reach and People for People — to provide outreach activities across Washington to help individuals enroll in SNAP. In 2024, BFO reported 3,184,947 outreach activities and 16,951 Washington Connection changes.
SNAP – Ed (Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention)	USDA's FNS provides federal funding to interested states to finance activities aimed at improving the likelihood that SNAP recipients and other low-income Washington state residents will make healthy choices within a limited budget and choose active lifestyles consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPlate. In Washington, the SNAP-Ed program is administered through DSHS to two implementing agencies — the Department of Health and Washington State University Extension — that in turn support about 60 local SNAP-Ed providers in communities across the state.	SNAP participants. Low-income individuals eligible to receive SNAP benefits or other means-tested, federal assistance programs. Individuals residing in communities with a significant low-income population.	<i>Federal Authority</i> 7 USC 2020 Sec. 11(f) Nutrition Education; 7 CFR Ch. II, Part 277 Nutrition Education and Training Program.	Nutrition Education Program Budget for FFY 2025: \$11,889,791 (100% federal).	In federal fiscal year 2024 (Oct. 1, 2023, through Sept. 20, 2024), SNAP-Ed services reached: • Over 4,700 Washington residents through nutrition education. • 1.39 million individuals through healthy-communities work. • 1.15 million through policy, systems and environmental strategies.
Washington Combined Application Project	WASHCAP provides Basic Food Program benefits to SSI recipients who are single and unemployed. Clients can apply through the Social Security Administration or by sending a simplified application to the centralized WASHCAP unit. One centralized call center handles all WASHCAP clients.	Same as Basic Food.	<i>Federal demonstration project under agreement with Social Security Administration and FNS.</i>	WASHCAP budget within overall ESA program support budget (Budget Unit M01).	73,611 cases.

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OTHER PROGRAMS					
Working Family Support	This program provides an additional monthly food benefit of up to \$10 to low-income families that are receiving Basic Food, FAP or Transitional Food Assistance and are working at least 35 hours per week and have a qualifying child within their Basic Food household. Benefits are covered by state funds.	Must be recipients of Basic Food, FAP or Transitional Food Assistance but not receiving TANF.	<i>Federal Authority</i> PL 104-193 & 42 USC 604. <i>State Authority</i> RCW 74.04.050.	\$2.4 million GF-S.	5,623 cases.
SUN Bucks (Summer EBT)	SUN Bucks provides food benefits to children during summer months when free and reduced-price meals are no longer available at schools.	Children ages 8-18 in a household that receives SNAP or TANF or are automatically enrolled. Children enrolled in a school that participates in the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program and who qualify to receive free or reduced-price meals are automatically enrolled unless in a Community Eligibility Provision school. Children who are not automatically enrolled can apply for SUN Bucks. They must be enrolled in a school that participates in NSLP or SBP and have income under 185% of the federal poverty level to match Child Nutrition program income requirements.	Federal Authority Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023; 7 CFR 292.	Administrative Funds: • \$12.9 million GF-S. • \$12.9 million GF-F. FFY 2025 Benefits 100% Federal \$77.4 million.	692,810 eligible children.

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS					
Domestic Violence Victim Services	This program provides comprehensive services for survivors of domestic violence in every county of the state. Services are provided through contracts with community-based nonprofits, Tribes and local government agencies. Services include trauma-informed and survivor-centered advocacy, safety planning, crisis intervention, emergency shelter, housing assistance, legal advocacy, support groups, transportation and other emergency financial assistance, and age-appropriate supportive services and resources for children and youth. Culturally and linguistically specific services are provided, along with community education, outreach and prevention activities.	None. Services are confidential and provided free of charge to survivors of domestic violence.	Federal Authority Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) 42 U.S.C. 10404, Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) 42 U.S.C. 10603. State Authority RCW 70.123.	\$21.3 million GF-S. \$2.4 million Domestic Violence Prevention Account (DVPA). \$6 million FFY23 and FFY24 FVPSA grant award. \$31.6 million American Rescue Plan Act supplemental FVPSA funding (ended Sept. 30, 2025).	39 Domestic Violence and Emergency Shelter and Supportive Services programs and 11 Community-Based Domestic Violence programs provide services statewide. In this SFY, these programs served a monthly average of 1,422 clients.
Domestic Violence Intervention Treatment	This program certifies local community organizations and treatment professionals who provide domestic violence perpetrator treatment. Under state law, programs providing such treatment must meet DSHS certification standards. The DVIT program conducts monitoring and investigates complaints of certified domestic violence perpetrator treatment programs to determine compliance with program standards outlined in WAC 388-60B.	None.	RCW 43.20A.735.	\$65,000 local certification fees from DVIT programs.	71 certified DVIT programs conducted domestic violence perpetrator treatment.

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MEDICAL PROGRAMS					
Medical Care Services	This program provides state-funded health care coverage to victims of human trafficking, as defined in RCW 74.04.005, or ABD and HEN Referral recipients who legally reside in Washington state but are ineligible for Medicaid due to their immigration status.	Determined by DSHS to be eligible for benefits under the ABD Cash program, HEN referral program or SFA or is a survivor of certain crimes.	RCW 41.05.021. RCW 74.09.035.	Health Care Authority.	1,539 clients.
Alien Emergency Medical	This program provides partial Medicaid coverage for immigrants who would qualify for full-scope Medicaid if not for their alien status. Coverage is limited to emergency medical conditions. ESA determines AEM eligibility for individuals ages 65 and older. Eligibility for all other AEM cases is determined by the state's Health Care Authority.	Income eligibility is based on rules for related, full-scope Medicaid programs (that is, coverage for families, infants, children, pregnant individuals and aged, blind or disabled people).	Federal Authority 42 U.S.C. Subchapter XIX. State Authority Chapter 74.09 & 74.09A RCW.	Health Care Authority.	207 clients.
SSI Medicaid	This program provides Categorically Needy Medicaid coverage for people who are aged, blind or disabled and receive SSI.	The Social Security Administration determines eligibility for SSI using income rules based on Title XVI of the Social Security Act.	Federal Authority Title XIX of the Social Security Act 42 CFR Chapter 430. State Authority RCW 74.04 and 74.09.	Health Care Authority.	110,739 clients.
SSI-Related Medicaid	This program provides Medicaid coverage for low-income aged, blind or disabled people who do not receive SSI.	People with countable income that would qualify them for SSI (\$943/month for a single person) and are on Categorically Needy Medicaid. Those with higher incomes are designated "Medically Needy" and might be responsible for medical costs in certain situations.	Federal Authority Section 1902 of the Social Security Act 42 U.S.C. 1396a. State Authority RCW 74.04 and 74.09.	Health Care Authority.	25,446 clients.

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NON-GRANT MEDICAL PROGRAMS					
Medicare Savings Program	This program pays Medicare premiums, copayments, coinsurance charges and deductibles for low-income Medicare beneficiaries.	Income limits vary by program, from 110% federal poverty level to 200% FPL.	<i>Federal Authority</i> Section 1905 of the Social Security Act 42 U.S.C. 1396d. <i>State Authority</i> RCW 74.04 and 74.09.	Health Care Authority.	211,643 clients.
Refugee Medical Assistance	This program provides medical coverage for refugees who are ineligible for Modified Adjusted Gross Income Medicaid due to being over income. Eligibility ends after the first 12 months of residency in the United States.	Categorically needy coverage is available to people with income up to 200% FPL.	Immigration & Nationality Act, Title IV 8 USC 1522, Refugee Act of 1980, PL 96-212.	Health Care Authority.	9 clients.