- State funding for Washington's TANF program and early childhood home visiting programs rely on legislative priorities and annual state appropriations by the State Legislature.

- Washington's Home Visiting Services Account is designed to leverage public dollars (state and federal) for home visiting by providing matching private dollars. State funds currently comprise a relatively small portion of the account.

- States have a great deal of flexibility in how they spend federal and state TANF dollars for activities that meet any of TANF's four purposes, which are:

  - ✓ Provide assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes.
  - ✓ Reduce the dependency of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work and marriage.
  - ✓ Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies.
  - ✓ Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

- A number of states use TANF funds to partially finance home visiting services for income-eligible families by linking home visiting to one of the four core purposes of TANF.
- As a condition of receiving the TANF block grant, states are required by Congress to spend an amount equal to 80% of the state's spending in 1994 on benefits and services for needy families each year. We call this obligation Maintenance of Effort, or MOE for short.
- A variety of benefits and services for low-income families can count toward satisfying a state's MOE obligation.
- The Washington State Legislature directs a portion of its state MOE dollars to support home visiting services for TANF families.
- Beginning in the early years of the TANF program when the economy was strong, shrinking TANF caseloads freed up federal and state funds that had gone to low-income families in the form of benefits.
- Over time, states —including Washington —directed a substantial portion of their state and federal TANF funds to other purposes.
- When need and TANF caseloads increased during the Great Recession, states were often unable to direct the funds back to core TANF services and instead made cuts to cash grants, child care, and work programs.
- In our state, for example, TANF grants were cut by 15 percent effective February 1, 2011 — reducing benefits for a family of three that has no other income by $84 a month, from $562 to $478.
- For the 2015-17 biennium that began July 1 of this year, the Legislature appropriated $30.6 million in state MOE funds to finance a 9 percent TANF grant increase — restoring some of the benefits lost earlier. With the 9 percent increase, the maximum monthly TANF grant for a family of three is now $521.
- The Legislature also continued $4.2 million in state MOE funds for the Frontiers of Innovation and Homeless family home visiting programs.
- The Legislature also provided the Department of Social and Health Services' Behavioral Health and Integration Services Administration with $3.4 million in funding from the state's Dedicated Marijuana Account or Fund[1] — to be deposited in the Department of Early Learning's Home Visiting Services Account.

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[1] Washington State's Dedicated Marijuana Account consists of all marijuana excise taxes, license fees, penalties and other income and revenue generated by legal marijuana-related sales and activities.