

2026 Washington State Child Welfare Budget Comparison

The following are the investments that respond to the recent rise in critical incidents among children involved in the child welfare system. Critical incidents are defined as maltreatment-related child fatalities or near-fatalities involving children who have been in the child welfare system within the past 12 months.

Critical Incident response—Operating Budget items/ FY 27					
Budget item	Description	Governor	House	Senate	FINAL
Pre-filing representation model (Office of Public Defense)	Expands a model to provide legal counsel and a parent ally with the purpose of creating a safety plan and identifying services and supports that will maintain the safety of the child in the home for parents, guardians, or legal custodians with a newborn child that is: (1) at risk of child protective services removal; and (2) exposed to alcohol or controlled substances during the mother's pregnancy	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
Parent Child Assistance Program (PCAP)	Expands PCAP by 32 total slots in two high-need communities. PCAP provides home visitation and case-management for pregnant and parenting individuals with substance-use disorders	\$419,000 (Non-GFS)	\$419,000 (Non-GFS) (HCA)	\$419,000 (Non-GFS)	\$419,000 (Non-GFS) (HCA)
Plan of Safe Care/ Community-based referrals	Funding is provided for DCYF to refer high-needs families with children up to age 3 in five high-need communities to Plan of Safe Care	\$252,000	\$252,000	\$252,000	\$252,000

Public health nurses	Requires DCYF to contract with public health nurses to support parents of children under age three with an open child protective services investigation, family assessment response, or family voluntary services case in high need communities	\$0	\$876,000 (Special Appropriations to the Governor)	\$876,000	\$876,000
Family Resource Centers	Funding to refer families with children over age 3 exiting the child welfare system to services through FRCs in five high needs communities	\$0	\$0	\$188,000	\$188,000
Referral system	Funding is provided to contract with one or more community-based organizations to develop a services referral system to serve families exiting the child welfare system.	\$0	\$0	\$100,000	\$100,000
Critical Incidents workgroup focused on access to SUD treatment	Requires Governor's office to convene a workgroup of HCA, DCYF, DSHS, DOH to coordinate on available SUD treatment and a process to identify unmet needs	NA	Within available resources	NA	\$234,000 (non-GFS) Funded as part of HB 2429 to support the WA Thriving Strategic Plan
<i>Maintain</i> Family Impact Network	The network administrator contracts with 36 providers in Eastern Washington to coordinate and oversee family visits for children in out-of-home care and in-home therapy for families in child protective services.	Eliminated (\$2,400,000)	Maintained	Maintained	Maintained

Capital Budget: \$1.5 Million for Pregnant, Parenting, & Women's Program; Evergreen Recovery Centers | North Sound Region