



## Agency Recommendation Summary

WSU requests funding to establish a bachelor's and a master's degree in social work at the Tri-Cities campus to address substantial mental and behavioral health workforce shortage needs across the state.

## Fiscal Summary

Fiscal Summary <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2024	2025	2023-25	2026	2027	2025-27
<b>Staffing</b>						
FTEs	7.3	13.5	10.4	17.0	21.6	19.3
<b>Operating Expenditures</b>						
Fund 001 - 1	\$589	\$1,007	\$1,596	\$1,007	\$1,007	\$2,014
Fund 149 - 6	\$225	\$450	\$675	\$810	\$1,260	\$2,070
Total Expenditures	\$814	\$1,457	\$2,271	\$1,817	\$2,267	\$4,084
<b>Revenue</b>						
149 - 0424	\$225	\$450	\$675	\$810	\$1,260	\$2,070
Total Revenue	\$225	\$450	\$675	\$810	\$1,260	\$2,070

## Decision Package Description

According to the American Psychological Association's [Stress in America 2020](#) report, the U.S. is facing a post-pandemic national mental health crisis that has the potential to result in significant longterm negative health consequences associated with persistent stress and trauma. Over time, unmet mental health issues increase the risk of poor educational outcomes, substance abuse, and even death. The pandemic only exacerbated an already serious situation in the state of Washington. Nearly a quarter of Washington residents will struggle with a mental health or addiction problem over the course of their lives and suicide is the second leading cause of death for Washington teens 15-19 years old, according to the state's [2021 Healthy Youth Survey](#). Those living in rural areas are disproportionately at risk due to a lack of access to care and greater stigmatization. The peril is compounded by a dangerous deficit of mental health providers. [Federal mental health service shortage areas](#) have been designated in 34 of 39 Washington counties.

In addition to serving the public in schools, hospitals and mental health facilities, social workers provide critical support services to a wide variety of vulnerable populations including but not limited to those who are experiencing homelessness, people suffering from chronic illness, disabilities or substance use disorders, the elderly, and veterans.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed these significant disparities among mental health care in our health systems, particularly in rural, remote and underserved communities. In the face of this crisis, WSU pivoted to organize expertise from researchers and faculty to try to address these gaps. This proposal is the result of community-directed engagement that identified strategies to improve health outcomes for all Washingtonians.

This request would establish an undergraduate and graduate social work degree program at WSU Tri-Cities using a four-plus-one model. Graduates of the four-year undergraduate degree would be qualified to fill high demand jobs as caseworkers, family service workers, rehabilitation specialists, mental health assistants and activity directors. Graduates of the follow-on one-year master's degree would be qualified to become licensed social workers.

This program will focus on rural and underserved communities, ultimately bolstering the mental health workforce in Eastern Washington. At full maturity, the undergraduate program will produce 50 graduates annually and the master's program 25.

Graduates will emerge with the knowledge and skills necessary to work effectively within a collaborative care team, navigate the intersections between mental and physical health, and efficiently utilize data and technology to improve productivity and ensure better health outcomes.

This request will bolster equity efforts in Washington by placing this program at a campus that naturally draws large numbers of students from traditionally underrepresented population. Almost half of the student body at WSU Tri-Cities is made up of students of color. This program will help produce a mental health workforce that looks like Washington.

If funded, this proposal will help the state's pursuit of its Social and Emotional Wellness priority found in the [Washington State Plan for Health Communities](#) and the integrated community-based continuum of care goals included in the and the integrated community-based continuum of care goals included in the [Washington State Plan on Aging, 2018-22](#).

## Assumptions and Calculations

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

This request will not expand, reduce, eliminate or otherwise alter an existing program or service.

### **Detailed Assumptions and Calculations:**

State funding will provide the necessary resources to hire core faculty and advising staff, including annual operating costs for supplies, equipment, and travel. Tuition funding driven by student enrollment will fund additional faculty and support staff as the program grows.

### **Workforce Assumptions:**

Benefits were calculated using estimated FY23 rates, including health and retirement benefits, OASI, Medicare, paid family and medical leave, and unemployment insurance.

The table below summarizes total FTE, salaries and benefits by employee type.

	FY2024			
	FTE	Salaries	Benefits	Total
Faculty	5.1	446,000	148,000	594,000
Exempt	0.8	55,000	20,000	75,000
Classified	1.4	75,000	35,000	110,000
	7.3	576,000	203,000	779,000
	FY2025			
	FTE	Salaries	Benefits	Total
Faculty	10.4	836,000	280,000	1,116,000
Exempt	1.4	103,000	38,000	141,000
Classified	1.7	94,000	44,000	138,000
	13.5	1,033,000	362,000	1,395,000
	FY2026			
	FTE	Salaries	Benefits	Total
Faculty	13.0	1,040,000	347,000	1,387,000
Exempt	2.2	157,000	57,000	214,000
Classified	1.8	105,000	49,000	154,000
	17.0	1,302,000	453,000	1,755,000
	FY2027			
	FTE	Salaries	Benefits	Total
Faculty	16.3	1,298,000	430,000	1,728,000
Exempt	3.3	224,000	80,000	304,000
Classified	2.0	118,000	55,000	173,000
	21.6	1,640,000	565,000	2,205,000

## Strategic and Performance Outcomes

### **Strategic Framework:**

If funded, this proposal will help the state's pursuit of its Social and Emotional Wellness priority found in the [Washington State Plan for Health Communities](#) and the integrated community-based continuum of care goals included in the [Washington State Plan on Aging, 2018-22](#).

### **Performance Outcomes:**

At full capacity, WSU expects the social work academic programs to graduate 50 students from the undergraduate program and 25 students from the master's program annually.

## Equity Impacts

### **Community outreach and engagement:**

This request will bolster equity efforts in Washington by placing this program at a campus that naturally draws large numbers of students from traditionally underrepresented population. Almost half of the student body at WSU Tri-Cities is made up of students of color. This program will help produce a mental health workforce that looks like Washington.

### **Disproportional Impact Considerations:**

Please see statement above regarding this request's impact on equity in Washington.

### **Target Populations or Communities:**

Please see statement above regarding this request's impact on equity in Washington.

## Other Collateral Connections

### **Puget Sound Recovery:**

Not applicable.

### **State Workforce Impacts:**

Not applicable.

### **Intergovernmental:**

Not applicable.

### **Stakeholder Response:**

Not applicable.

### **State Facilities Impacts:**

Not applicable.

### **Changes from Current Law:**

Not applicable.

### **Legal or Administrative Mandates:**

Not applicable.

## 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

<b>Objects of Expenditure</b> <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	<b>Fiscal Years</b>		<b>Biennial</b>	<b>Fiscal Years</b>		<b>Biennial</b>
	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2023-25</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2025-27</b>
Obj. A	\$576	\$1,033	<b>\$1,609</b>	\$1,302	\$1,640	<b>\$2,942</b>
Obj. B	\$203	\$362	<b>\$565</b>	\$453	\$565	<b>\$1,018</b>
Obj. E	\$35	\$62	<b>\$97</b>	\$62	\$62	<b>\$124</b>

## Agency Contact Information

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