



November 2023

Premium Assistance Program for Employees of Licensed Child Care Facilities

In 2021, Washington Health Benefit Exchange (Exchange) was directed by the state Legislature to implement, in coordination with the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), a new premium assistance (sponsorship) program for employees of licensed child care facilities. This temporary state sponsorship program launched in fall 2021 and is ending Dec. 31, 2023.

With the program coming to its end, this report highlights key outcomes in 2023:

- Nearly half of the 40,000 employees in licensed child care facilities are receiving health insurance through *Washington Healthplanfinder*.
- In 2023, the sponsorship program paid monthly premiums for 847 employees of licensed child care facilities in 2023. The report provides additional demographic information about program participants, who are younger and more diverse than typical *Washington Healthplanfinder* customers.
- In 2024, after the sponsorship program ends, 90% of program participants (and their families) will qualify for federal and/or state subsidies to help pay their premiums. The report includes additional affordability considerations.
- The Exchange will continue working closely with DCYF and Exchange Lead Organization Yakima Neighborhood Health Services (YNHS), to perform outreach to eligible employees across the state.

For key outcomes for 2022, see the [Report on Premium Assistance Program for Employees of Licensed Child Care Facilities \(2022\)](#).





Washington Health Benefit Exchange

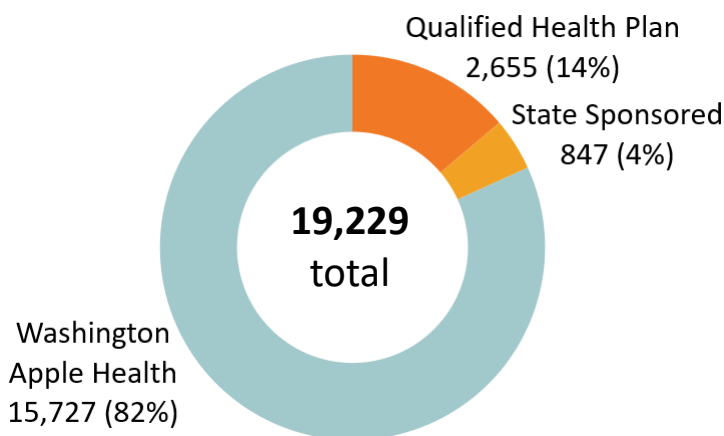
Connecting child care employees to health insurance

Over the past two years, this sponsorship program has enabled eligible employees to enroll in high-quality, Silver-level, Cascade Care plans for zero-dollar monthly premiums through *Washington Healthplanfinder*. To be eligible for this state sponsorship program employees must have an annual household income up to 300% of the federal poverty level (FPL) — an annual income of \$36,450 for a one-person household and \$62,150 for a three-person household — and not have Washington Apple Health (Medicaid) or Medicare. Only the employee, not their household members, is eligible for the program.



Washington Healthplanfinder is an integrated online portal, run by the Exchange, connecting more than one in four Washingtonians to health coverage through Apple Health and qualified health plans (QHPs). *Washington Healthplanfinder* is the only place where state residents can access federal and state subsidies to help lower QHP costs. Often, employees and family members found not eligible for the new sponsorship program receive help enrolling in other available free and low-cost options.

Employees by coverage type*



As of October 2023, nearly 50% (19,229) of the approximately 40,000 employees working in licensed child care facilities in Washington were connected to health coverage through *Washington Healthplanfinder* (the remainder may get coverage from another source [e.g., employer or spouse] or may be uninsured).

- 15,727 are covered by Apple Health.
- 3,502 are covered by qualified health plans (QHPs)
 - Including 847 employees in the state sponsorship program paying \$0 monthly premiums.

* Data source for report graphics is *Washington Healthplanfinder*, as of November 2023.





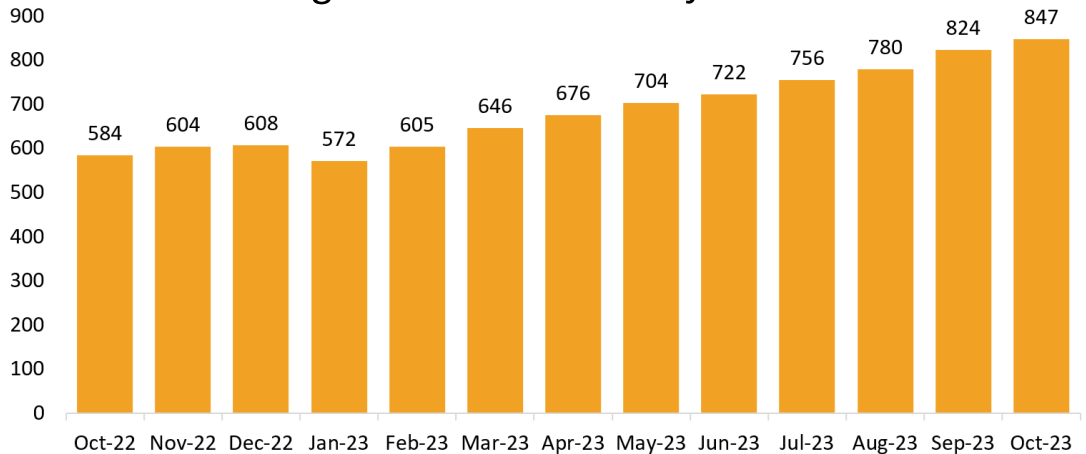
Outreach to employees of licensed care facilities

The Exchange works with DCYF and outreach partners across the state — including small businesses; child care associations; navigators; brokers; and other community-based partners — to help spread the word, resulting in steady sponsorship program growth. Outreach efforts for this state sponsorship program have been broad based, multi-faceted and multi-lingual. Beyond the sponsorship program, these efforts helped thousands of employees and their family members access health insurance coverage, even when they were not eligible for the sponsorship program.

Legislatively-funded outreach and enrollment activities have included:

- DCYF identifying child care employees in licensed facilities and leveraging their credentialing and onboarding processes to directly reach them (information provided in English, Spanish and Somali). DCYF, with support from the Exchange, has also routinely shared program information through newsletters, social media and other communication channels.
- Exchange-trained navigators at YNHS providing free, multi-lingual, statewide, enrollment assistance for child care workers.
 - ◊ YNHS is a long-time Exchange Lead Navigator organization that receives additional funding from the Legislature via the Exchange to support bilingual staff who help employees, and their families, enroll in coverage. Language assistance is provided in more than 200 languages. YNHS receives referrals from DCYF and answers questions from child care employers and employees (averages over 300 calls and 160 emails per month).
- YNHS, with support from the Exchange, conducting bilingual, statewide outreach campaigns.
 - ◊ More information available at ynhs.org/news/health-coverage-for-childcare-workers.

Program enrollment by month





Washington Health Benefit Exchange

Sponsorship program implementation roles

Washington Health Benefit Exchange



- Establishes procedural requirements for eligibility and continued participation.
- Works with DCYF, YNHS, carriers and affected customers to assist with program implementation.
- Opens special enrollment periods for affected customers.
- On behalf of the state, makes premium payments to insurance carriers on behalf of the licensed child care workers.

Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF)



- Identifies employees working in licensed child care facilities and does initial outreach to them.
- Emails communicate initial program information and instructions about how to sign up.
- Shares data with Exchange and YNHS in accordance with authorizing statute for purposes of outreach, enrollment, verification and other program implementation activities.

Yakima Neighborhood Health Services (YNHS)

Exchange Lead Navigator Organization



- Provides outreach and enrollment assistance to individuals identified by DCYF as licensed childcare facility employees.
- Communicates sponsorship program requirements and responds to employee and employer inquiries.
- Works with Exchange as needed to facilitate enrollment.



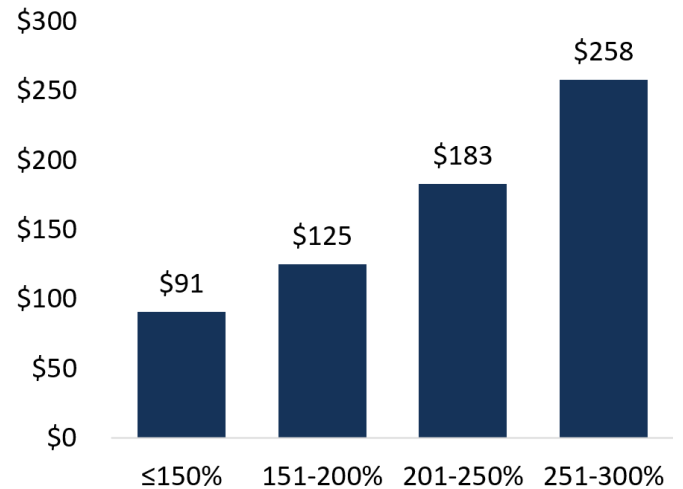


Customer savings & program financing

The Exchange was appropriated the following funding to support Premium Assistance Program for Employees of Licensed Child Care Facilities operations:

- The Exchange has received a total of \$750k (\$250k from the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act [CRRSA], \$150K from the American Rescue Plan Act [ARPA] for the 2021-2023 biennium, and \$350K from the Education Legacy Trust for the 23-25 biennium) in pass-through funding to support statewide outreach and enrollment assistance for employees working in a child care facility. Currently appropriated funds support these activities through June 2025.
- The Exchange has received a total of \$6.3M (\$1.2M CRRSA and \$5.1M ARPA) for program implementation. This funding has been used by the Exchange to make monthly premium payments on behalf of sponsored employees to their respective carriers.
- To date, the Exchange has made \$3.9M in premium payments on behalf of sponsored enrollees.

Average premium amount paid by sponsorship program by FPL, 2023



- On average, sponsored employees are saving nearly \$200 per month by participating in this program in 2023.
- The chart above shows the average monthly premium payment the Exchange has been making on behalf of sponsored employees (after federal advance premium tax credits [APTC], which decrease as income increases, have been applied) in 2023.
- Exchange operational funds that support broader sponsorship programming are leveraged to cover the administrative costs for this program.



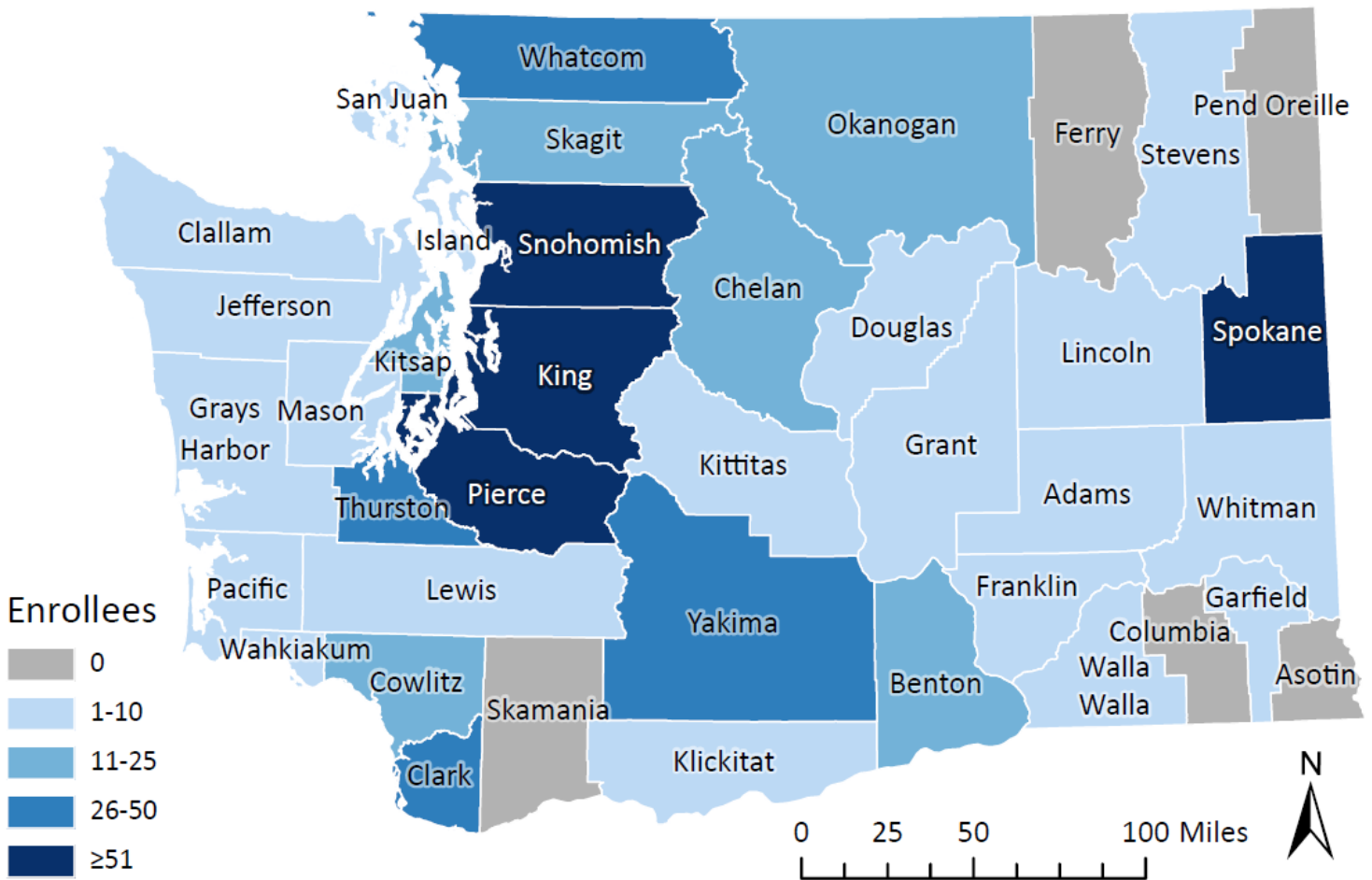


Washington Health Benefit Exchange

County-level information for employees of licensed child care facilities who are sponsored

- The program pays child care employees' monthly premiums in 34 of Washington's 39 counties.
- 60% of sponsored employees are located in four counties — King; Pierce; Snohomish; and Spokane.

Sponsorship program enrollment by county, 2023

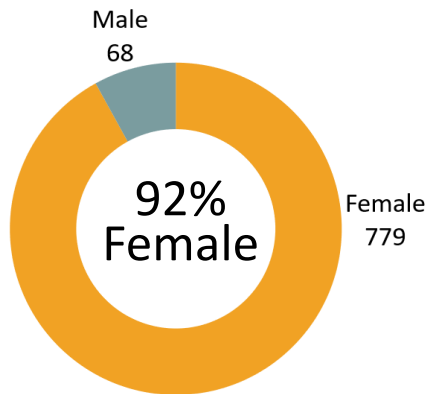




Demographic information for state sponsored employees of licensed child care facilities

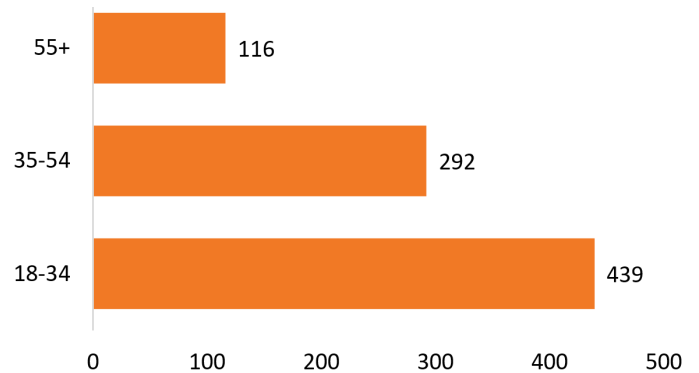
Sex assigned at birth

- **92%** of state sponsored employees reported their sex assigned as birth as **female**, compared to 55% of the overall QHP population



Age

- **52%** of state sponsored employees are between **18-34 years old**, compared to 27% of the overall QHP population.



Ethnicity & race

Among enrollees who reported their race and/or ethnicity:

- **28%** of state sponsored employees reported being **Hispanic**, compared to 13% of the overall QHP population
- **7%** of state sponsored employees reported being **Black/African American**, compared to 3% of the overall QHP population.
- **16%** of state sponsored employees reported being **“Other,”** compared to 4% of the overall QHP population.

Language preferences

- **18%** of state sponsored employees indicate a **language preference other than English**, compared to 6% of the overall QHP population.
- **The most commonly requested languages:**
 - ◇ Arabic
 - ◇ Chinese
 - ◇ Dari
 - ◇ Russian
 - ◇ Spanish
 - ◇ Ukrainian
 - ◇ Vietnamese





Program wind down activities

Funding for the premium assistance program providing employees of licensed child care facilities \$0 health insurance premiums is ending Dec. 31, 2023. Insurance coverage options will continue to be available through *Washington Healthplanfinder* and employees of child care facilities will have free, ongoing, statewide outreach and enrollment assistance provided to them by trained navigators at YNHS — currently funded through June 30, 2025.

The Exchange began communicating with employees about the premium assistance wind down earlier this fall. All sponsorship program participants received a letter in September from the Exchange, alerting them about the upcoming changes. In October, participants received a reminder from DCYF, and another notification from the Exchange, with more detailed information about their 2024 plan and price. The monthly premium amount employees will be newly responsible for paying to maintain their coverage in 2024 will vary based on their annual income, what other federal and state subsidies they qualify for, and the health plan they select.

During open-enrollment, Nov. 1, 2023–Jan 15, 2024, trained navigators at YNHS will conduct outreach to all affected child care employees, to help them review plan options, maximize the available federal and state subsidies, and ensure they are enrolled in a plan that meets their needs.



How Child Care Workers Can Get Help Enrolling

All child care workers in the state who need health insurance can continue to call or email YNHS to get free help from trained navigators. YNHS can answer questions, help with completion of an online application, and describe available subsidies and insurance coverage options.

Call: 509-574-0826

Email: ccnavi@ynhs.org





Program wind down activities, continued:

Affordability considerations

Even though the temporary state sponsorship program for employees of licensed child care facilities is ending, most participants (90%) will qualify for available federal and/or state premium subsidies through *Washington Healthplanfinder* in 2024.

- Federal premium subsidies are called advance premium tax credits (APTC).
- State premium subsidies are called Cascade Care Savings (CCS). This state program provides premium savings for individuals and families making up to 250% FPL.

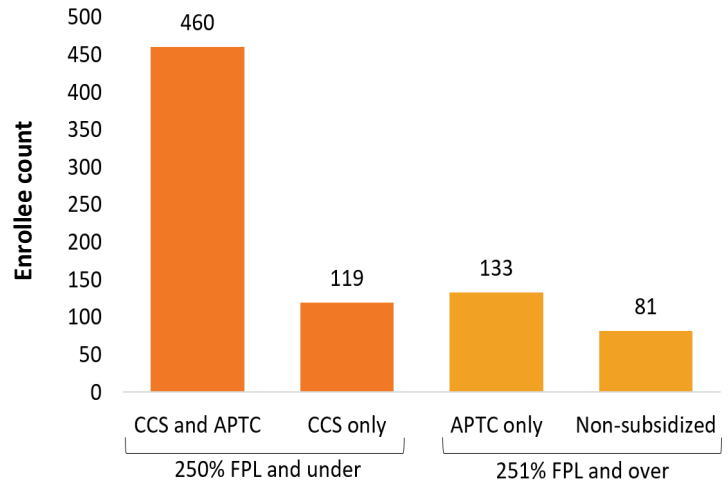
The graphics to the right illustrate that, among current program participants:

- 58% will continue to have \$0 monthly premiums, if they enroll in their county’s lowest cost Silver plan.
- 32% will have around a \$150 monthly premium.
- 10% will not qualify for any federal or state subsidies, and have around a \$400 monthly premium.

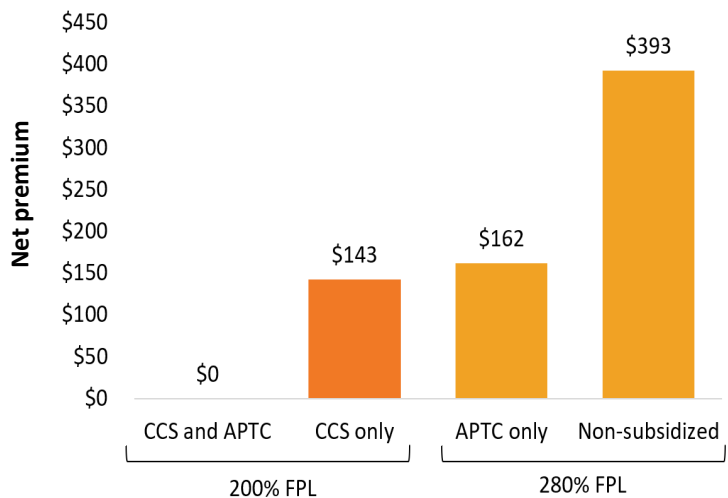
Note: Premium prices in the graphic reflect average rates for a 37-year-old non-smoker making 200% FPL (left) or 280% FPL (right), enrolled in the lowest cost Cascade Care Silver plan (LCCSP) available in their county. Actual prices will vary based on age, location, and plan selection.

Moving forward, the Exchange will continue to partner with legislators, agency partners, and interested stakeholders, to help make more affordable Cascade Care plans available through *Washington Healthplanfinder*.

FPL and subsidy eligibility*, 2024



Illustrative net premiums for LCCSP*, 2024



*Excludes 54 currently sponsored employees with unconfirmed eligibility for 2024.



Appendix A — County level details

2024 FPL and subsidy eligibility by county*					
County	Total count	250% and under		251% and over	
		CCS and APTC	CCS only	APTC only	Non-subsidized
Adams	5	5			
Benton	20	11	7	2	
Chelan	13	8	3	1	1
Clallam	6	5		1	
Clark	37	21	4	8	4
Cowlitz	17	8	4	4	1
Douglas	6	2	1	1	2
Franklin	9	5	2	2	
Garfield	2	2			
Grant	6	2			4
Grays Harbor	8	5	2	1	
Island	3			1	2
Jefferson	2	1		1	
King	240	123	40	40	37
Kitsap	26	18	1	4	3
Kittitas	7	3		3	1
Klickitat	1			1	
Lewis	7	5		2	
Lincoln	1	1			
Mason	5	5			
Okanogan	12	7	1	4	
Pacific	3	2	1		
Pierce	66	41	12	9	4
San Juan	2			2	
Skagit	14	11	1	1	1
Snohomish	98	62	12	19	5
Spokane	67	46	8	10	3
Stevens	1	1			
Thurston	35	22	6	4	3
Wahkiakum	3	1	1		1
Walla Walla	6	3	1	1	1
Whatcom	37	14	9	9	5
Whitman	1	1			
Yakima	27	19	3	2	3
Total	793	460	119	133	81

*Excludes 54 currently sponsored employees with unconfirmed eligibility for 2024.

Appendix B — Sponsor program eligibility requirements

An individual is eligible for the child care premium assistance program for the remainder of the plan year if the individual:

- (i) Is an employee working in a licensed child care facility;
- (ii) Enrolls in a standard (Cascade or Cascade Select) Silver health plan under RCW 43.71.095;
- (iii) Prior to Jan. 1, 2024, has income that is less than 300 percent of the federal poverty level;
- (iv) Applies for and accepts all federal advance premium tax credits for which they may be eligible before receiving any state premium assistance;
- (v) Is ineligible for minimum essential coverage through Medicare, a federal or state medical assistance program administered by the health care authority under chapter 74.09 RCW, or for premium assistance under RCW 43.71A.020; and
- (vi) Meets other eligibility criteria as established by the Exchange.

For additional bill information, see [Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5693](#) (Sec. 214 (6)(b)).