

# **Report to the Legislature**

## **Washington Connection Benefit Portal**

RCW 74.04.225

2010 Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 2782, Section 2

*Establishment of an Online Opportunity Portal to Provide More Effective Access to Available Services*

December 1, 2014

Economic Services Administration  
Office of the Assistant Secretary  
PO Box 45070  
Olympia, WA 98504-5070  
(360) 725-4676  
Fax: (360) 725-4588



## Contents

Executive Summary .....	2
2014 Full Report .....	5
Background.....	6
Update on Legislative Requirements .....	6
Using Feedback from Customers and Partners to Improve Usability and Access.....	11
Washington Connection Annual Staff Costs.....	12
Strategic Plan Performance Measures .....	13
Strategic Plan Initiatives with Status Updates.....	15
Appendices .....	17
Appendix A – Advisory Committee Membership 2014 .....	18
Appendix B – Benefit Programs through Washington Connection .....	19
Appendix C – Maps of Registered Community Partners .....	20
Assisting Agencies.....	21
Host Organizations .....	21
Appendix D – Map of Underserved Counties .....	22

*The Department of Social and Health Services does not discriminate and provides equal access to its programs and services for all persons without regard to race, color, gender, religion, creed, marital status, national origin, sexual orientation, age, veteran’s status, or the presence of any physical, sensory or mental disability.*

*TTY/VCO users may also call Washington Relay Service by dialing 711.*

# Executive Summary

This is the fourth annual report submitted by the Department of Social and Health Services (the Department or DSHS) in fulfillment of [RCW 74.04.225](#). The 2010 Washington State Legislature enacted legislation, Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 2782, to strengthen existing efforts of state agencies and partners to implement an online benefit portal. The goal of the legislation was to streamline online public access to a broad array of state, federal and local services and benefits.

Successfully implemented in December 2010 and enhanced quarterly thereafter, the [Washington Connection](#) benefit portal received national recognition through the 2012 Bright Ideas Award from the Ash Center at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. There are now nearly 1,000 registered partners throughout the state, improving access to services and benefits. Registered partners are community-based organizations, medical providers, libraries, government agencies, colleges, food outreach contractors and Tribes that choose to register as Washington Connection partners and to assist residents in accessing services and benefits.

## *Background*

As required by the Legislature, the Department of Social and Health Services deployed an integrated approach in providing online access to services and benefits as well as employment, training and education programs. Through strong partnerships among government agencies, community partners, community colleges and philanthropic organizations, Washington Connection continues to fulfill this requirement.

Washington Connection removes barriers for many residents seeking help to meet their basic needs by offering information about benefits and services as well as having a pre-screening eligibility function and the option to apply online. Washington Connection also provides online tools for community partners that can help their clients apply for and renew services and benefits.

The Secretary of the Department serves as the executive sponsor of the Washington Connection Advisory Committee, which is comprised of representatives from private and public organizations (*see Appendix A*). The Advisory Committee guides the direction of Washington Connection's long-term strategies while the Department administers the tasks associated with the daily operations of the portal, partnership development, public outreach and data analysis.

## *Performance Measures Indicators and Initiatives*

The Advisory Committee approved the Washington Connection Strategic Plan in January 2013 (*see Figure 3*), and will revisit the plan and priorities in January 2015. The Committee receives quarterly updates on performance measures and initiatives for these five key Strategic Plan goals: (1) increase community outreach; (2) improve portal functionality; (3) increase access points; (4) expand the online application to include more benefit programs; and (5) enhance the governance structure to support growth and sustainability.

## *Update on Legislative Requirements*

**PROVIDE ACCESS TO A BROAD ARRAY OF SERVICES:** In 2014, residents could apply electronically for state and federal benefit programs through Washington Connection with a single application (*See Appendix B*). There are five major categories of programs for assistance: (1) food; (2) cash; (3) child care; (4) long-term care; and (5) certain medical assistance programs, including Classic Medicaid.

In October 2013, the Health Benefit Exchange (HBE) implemented the [Washington Healthplanfinder](#), the Affordable Care Act (ACA)-compliant online marketplace for health care coverage, including Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) Medicaid. Prior to ACA implementation, the Department (DSHS) determined eligibility for 13 other medical assistance programs that moved to HCF. DSHS retains application intake and eligibility determination for Classic Medicaid, which is for aged, blind and disabled individuals. Residents can apply for Classic Medicaid, the Medicare Savings Program and Healthcare for Workers with Disabilities through [Washington Connection](#) as well as through the Department's Community Services Offices (CSOs), including its Mobile CSOs.

**PROVIDE ACCESS AT A WIDE ARRAY OF LOCATIONS:** Residents in need can access Washington Connection wherever they can connect to the Internet. There are now nearly 1,000 registered community organizations that offer computers for Internet use or that can help individuals with the application process. Through four major initiatives, the Department was able to provide additional resources to registered community partners: (1) the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services approved the use of pass-through CHIPRA funding to make computer equipment purchases; (2) 24 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) kiosks were made available; (3) Washington Connection coordinated with the Health Care Authority on Medicaid Expansion in marketing, training and communication; and (4) DSHS assigned three regional Community Access Consultants to support partners by providing frequent trainings and site visits.

The Department also added more support for community partners who help people access benefits and services through Washington Connection. There are now three regional Community Access Consultants who conduct frequent trainings and site visits to support partners throughout the state. Beginning in July 2014, they held "dual-service" webinars that instructed partners on how to help individuals apply for services through Washington Connection and the Healthplanfinder. There is also an *Online Toolkit* posted on the Community Partnership Program website that gives updated, easily accessible information and tips for assisting clients.

**IMPLEMENT PAPERLESS APPLICATION PROCESSES:** For services offered through Washington Connection, the overall number of online submissions – including applications, client reports of a change in circumstances, and eligibility renewals – have increased 8 percent since it was implemented in December 2010. Washington Connection continues to explore partnership opportunities to add benefit programs to the online portal. DSHS complies with federal statutes and regulations, and must allow applicants to submit applications by alternate means to ensure that access to benefits will not be restricted.

## *Using Feedback from Customers and Partners for Improving the System*

DSHS uses a variety of methods to collect feedback from customers, staff and partners to improve portal usability. These methods include online and emailed surveys, meetings, webinars and the *Contact us* and *Feedback* links that customers use to submit comments through emails. These customer responses guide improvements in usability, such as messaging about new features, adding new resource links, improving printing functions, clarifying account information, providing community partners with online registration tools, and publishing an online county-level public access directory.

# 2014 Full Report

## WASHINGTON CONNECTION BENEFIT PORTAL



The Department of Social and Health Services (the Department or DSHS) submits its fourth annual report on the Washington Connection Benefit Portal in fulfillment of [RCW 74.04.225](#). Through enacted legislation, Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 2782 (E2SHB 2782), the Washington State Legislature mandated an online opportunity portal “be established to provide the public with more effective access to available state, federal, and local services.” The portal is intended to “strengthen existing efforts by providing enhanced structure and direction to ensure that a strong partnership among colleges, state agencies, community partners, and philanthropy be established.”

## Background

The Legislature charged the Department with sponsoring the portal planning process. The Department, working in collaboration with community partners, government agencies, Tribes and local jurisdictions, and with the support of philanthropic organizations, formed a private-public partnership to implement the Washington State Benefit Portal Partnership Project. Together, these partners formed the Steering Committee, and obtained the public and private funding needed to develop the benefit portal. In July 2010, they named the portal [Washington Connection](#) with a tagline, *Your Link to Services*.

Washington Connection provided online applications for state benefits starting in December 2010. There is growing interest in the portal’s eligibility pre-screening function. The City of Seattle has used the portal’s eligibility pre-screening for its seven programs since August 2011. In 2015, Washington Connection’s eligibility pre-screening will add the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction’s Free and Reduced Price School Meals and the Community Colleges and Technical Colleges’ [Start Next Quarter](#) that links students to free workshops and other educational resources.

The Steering Committee moved to an advisory role in 2012. The Secretary of the Department serves as the executive sponsor of the Washington Connection Advisory Committee, which is comprised of representatives from private and public organizations (*see Appendix A*). Together they guide the direction of Washington Connection’s strategies while the Department supports portal operations, partnership and community outreach, and data analysis. The Advisory Committee finalized the 2013-2015 Strategic Plan in January 2013 (*see Figure 3*), and will revisit the Strategic Plan and priorities in January 2015.

The Advisory Committee, Partnership Subcommittee and the Department are committed to the vision that “Everyone in Washington State is able to meet basic needs and has the opportunity to prosper.” Because of this commitment and support, Washington Connection has made headway toward that vision over the last four years.

## Update on Legislative Requirements

This section provides status updates on the major requirements set forth in [RCW 74.04.225](#).

## Provide Access to a Broad Array of State, Federal and Local Services

**Requirement:** *Ensure that the portal provides access to a broad array of services, including but not limited to: health care services, higher education financial aid, tax credits, civic engagement, nutrition assistance, energy assistance, family support, and other programs.*

**Result Achieved:** The Washington Connection Advisory Committee (comprised of representatives from community-based organizations, Health Care Authority (HCA), Health Benefit Exchange (HBE) and DSHS) focused on proposed and planned changes in the state's health care systems in preparation for the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The Department, HBE and HCA continue to work together by coordinating programming, marketing, training and communication efforts.

Effective October 1, 2013, HBE implemented [Washington Healthplanfinder](#), the Affordable Care Act (ACA)-compliant online marketplace for health care coverage, including Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) Medicaid. As a result of the ACA implementation, 13 medical programs moved from [Washington Connection](#) to HBF. Residents seeking medical assistance for children, pregnant women or adults 18 to 64 now apply through HPF. Washington Connection's homepage directs these residents to apply through a link to [Washington Healthplanfinder](#).

DSHS retains application intake and eligibility determination for Classic Medicaid for clients who are age 65 and older, blind or disabled as well as the Medicare Savings Program, Healthcare for Workers with Disabilities and mental health services for formerly incarcerated. Residents can apply for these DSHS medical programs through Washington Connection as well as through the Department's Community Services Offices (CSOs), including the Mobile CSOs.

In addition to DSHS medical assistance programs, Washington Connection provides many programs for which residents can apply electronically by submitting one application (*see Appendix B*). The majority (67 percent) of online applications request one service, 23 percent request two services, and 7 percent request three services, making up 97 percent of all requests. The remaining 3 percent request four or more services. Individuals who apply for only one service but are categorically eligible for other services are referred to all services for which they are eligible.

In June 2013, before the 13 DSHS medical services moved to HPF, the top two services requested through Washington Connection were equally split between medical and food assistance at about 40 percent each. By June 2014, after the 13 DSHS medical services moved to HPF, 58 percent of the 53,099 services requested through Washington Connection were for food assistance. The remaining requests for services were: (1) 18 percent cash assistance; (2) 14 percent DSHS medical assistance; (3) 6 percent child care; and (4) 4 percent long-term care.

The City of Seattle continues to use the portal's eligibility pre-screening for its seven programs. In 2015, two programs will be added to the eligibility pre-screening process: (1) the Office of the Superintendent of Public



Instruction's Free and Reduced Price School Meals and (2) the Community Colleges' [Start Next Quarter](#) that links students to free workshops and other educational resources.

## Provide Access at a Wide Array of Locations

**Requirement:** *Provide access to the portal at a wide array of locations including but not limited to: community or technical colleges, community college campuses where community service offices are collocated, community-based organizations, libraries, churches, food banks, state agencies, early education sites, and labor unions.*

**Result Achieved:** Goal 3 in the Strategic Plan is to increase the number of places where clients can get help or use a computer. Four major initiatives added resources to registered community partners: (1) the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services approved pass-through Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) grant funding to CHIP community partners to purchase computer equipment; (2) 24 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program kiosks were made available for community partners to use (seven per DSHS region plus three contact centers); (3) coordination with HCA on Medicaid Expansion and marketing, training and communication; and (4) DSHS assigned three regional Community Access Consultants to support partners through frequent trainings and site visits.

Results were threefold:

- 1) A major increase in registered community partners (community-based organizations, medical providers, libraries, government agencies, colleges, food outreach contractors and Tribes that choose to register as Washington Connection partners) from 600 in October 2011 to 983 by June 2014 (*See Appendix C for maps of Registered Community Partners, Host Organizations and Assisting Agencies*)
- 2) An organizational shift from predominantly Host Organizations (partners providing access to computers and informational brochures, such as libraries) to predominantly Assisting Agencies (partners providing in-person assistance)
  - a. **Host Organizations** – 45 percent (446) in June 2014 compared to 86 percent (516) in October 2011
  - b. **Assisting Agencies** – 55 percent (537) in June 2014 compared to 14 percent (84) in October 2011
- 3) An improvement in many of the performance measures (*See Figure 3 for performance measures related to the Strategic Plan*).

Registering community organizations to become Washington Connection partners is critical to the outreach effort, which is the first goal in the Strategic Plan. Partners can help reach residents, especially in areas where they do not get enough support or services. Eight counties (Douglas, Ferry, Klickitat, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Stevens, Whatcom and Yakima) emerged as the most underserved with concentrations of Hispanic, elderly, medically underserved, poor and rural populations. Also, these counties had federally recognized Tribes as well as low ratios of online applications to those in poverty. All but Whatcom County are in eastern Washington (*see Appendix D*). The information on underserved counties is used to target marketing and partnership outreach.

## Implement Paperless Application Processes

**Requirement:** *The department shall develop a plan for implementing paperless application processes for the services included in the opportunity portal for which the electronic exchange of application information is possible. The plan should include a goal of achieving, to the extent possible, the transition of these services to the paperless application processes by July 1, 2012. The plan must comply with federal statutes and regulations and must allow applicants to submit applications by alternative means to ensure that access to benefits will not be restricted.*

**Result Achieved:** Total online (paperless) submissions through Washington Connection have grown 8 percent since December 2010 (see Figure 1). Online reports of changes in circumstances account for almost two-thirds of all change reports. Online applications have increased to 54 percent after remaining at 52 percent since the beginning. The cumulative volume of online submissions sums to more than 5.2 million. The Department continues to explore opportunities for increasing paperless submissions.

Figure 1 – Percent of Online Applications, Changes and Eligibility Renewals

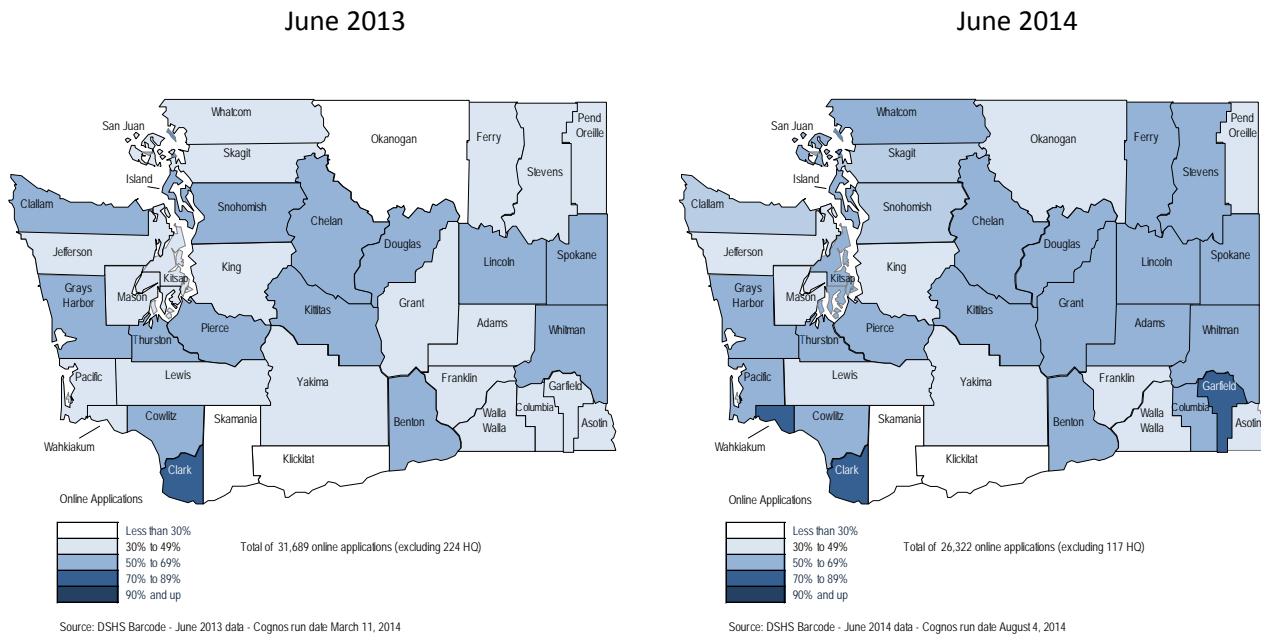
Type of Online Submission	December 2010	CY 2013	January - June 2014
Applications	52%	52%	54%
Reports of Changes	45%	64%	63%
Eligibility Renewals	17%	28%	30%
Total – Online Submissions	37%	44%	45%

Source: DSHS Barcode

Efforts continue to increase the percentage of paperless applications. Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 2782, however, cautions that the Department must comply with federal statutes and regulations to allow applicants to submit applications by alternate means to ensure access to benefits will not be restricted. Applying by paper may be easier than applying online for some, including homebound elderly, individuals with disabilities and persons who cannot read English or Spanish (translations in other languages are available in paper forms only). To address these issues, ore community outreach organizations are taking the online application process to individuals, using mobile devices such as i-Pads, tablets and laptops.

Providing equipment to registered community partners through approved CHIPRA funding helped expand online access across the state, as seen in the maps below. Increased numbers of registered partners, targeted marketing to underserved areas as well as using mobile devices to help individuals submit online applications contributed to the increased use of online applications in most counties.

Figure 2 – Percent of Online Applications by County: June 2013 and June 2014



Clark County, for example, has been above 72 percent in the two time periods compared below. Both individuals and assisting agencies are well above the state averages in submitting applications online through Washington Connection. Contributing factors for Clark County may include its location as a metropolitan area that is bordered by the populous Portland, Oregon metropolitan area, well-established broadband routes and excellent download speeds that boost online application use and participation in trainings.

The Department found not all agencies and local jurisdictions can use an online application process.

- Some benefit programs require an in-person assessment or consultation with local contracted agencies as part of their application process, such as the Women, Infants and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program (WIC) and the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program for aged, blind or disabled individuals with little or no income.
- Certain governmental entities do not have centralized or compatible database systems to receive or process online application data. For example, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) managed by the Department of Commerce relies on local contractors to process applications rather than through a central application process.

The proportion of online applications is undercounted due to the way in which some applications have been coded. CSO workers improved customer service by encouraging individuals to go through an interactive interview in which workers typed their information into the ACES online system. This information was coded

and counted as “paper” not “online” applications. DSHS changed the coding in July 2014 so it will be possible to accurately count these types of online applications in the future.

Washington Connection recently developed reports on how individuals apply for child care subsidy programs and how clients complete the Mid-Certification Review (MCR), which is a six-month check-in for clients receiving services. Last year’s report included information on how clients apply for subsidized child care programs. This year’s report includes information on how clients complete their MCR forms.

- 1) Child Care – Most (92 percent) applications for subsidized child care (Working Connections Child Care and Seasonal Child Care) are paperless – 54 percent by phone and 38 percent online. Only 8 percent are submitted by paper. From January 2010 through June 2014, the Department processed 367,817 child care applications, a monthly average of 6,811.
- 2) Mid-Certification Review – Clients completed MCR paper forms or called in to complete their forms until July 2013 when an ACES letter offered clients the option to complete their MCRs online through Washington Connection. To do so, however, clients had to sign into their Client Benefit Accounts (CBAs) or set up a CBA to use the online process, which was not clearly stated in the letter. In July 2014, further clarification was added to ACES letters. In October 2014, the website was enhanced to give more guidance about how to complete MCRs online.

The data from July 2013 show 55 percent of MCRs were completed by paper, 45 percent by phone and less than 1 percent online. In June 2014, of the total 33,595 MCRs, 2 percent were completed online, 60 percent were by paper and 38 percent were by phone.

## Using Feedback from Customers and Partners to Improve Usability and Access

The Department communicates with customers and partners who use Washington Connection through a variety of means, including committees, emails, focus groups, *Contact Us* and *Feedback* links, as well as online surveys for customers and partners on the website. This input helps the Department improve the usability of Washington Connection. (See *Figure 3, Goal 2 for online survey results from customers and partners.*) Examples of usability enhancements implemented in 2014 follow:

- Enabling account users to delete unwanted incomplete applications from their accounts
- Adding a warning message 3 minutes prior to *Time Out*
- Revising and simplifying online application questions for child care applicants
- Enhancing the community partnership database with expanded search criteria
- Adding a link to Healthplanfinder in *See if I Qualify* pre-screening and online applications
- Permitting Assisting Agencies to view a client’s subsidized child care status from their Partner Accounts
- Adding links to *Find Services* for free tax return preparation, addiction and behavioral health treatment resources, homeless prevention, etc.
- Adding Mid-Certification Review information to the Homepage, FAQs and Tutorial
- Enabling account users to print their names on their benefit history
- Providing more information on the Client Benefit Account registration process

- Updating the Public Access Directory to include new and revised contact information of partners

The Department also added more support for community partners who help people access benefits and services through Washington Connection. There are now three regional Community Access Consultants who conduct frequent trainings and site visits to support partners throughout the state. Beginning in July 2014, they held “dual-service” webinars that instructed partners on how to help individuals apply for services through Washington Connection and the Healthplanfinder. There is also an *Online Toolkit* posted on the Community Partnership Program website that gives updated, easily accessible information and tips for assisting clients.

The Washington Connection Advisory Committee is sponsoring a Referral Communications Committee co-chaired by the Department, the Health Care Authority (HCA) and the Health Benefit Exchange (HBE). The charter for the committee was finalized June 2014 with a goal to maximize customers’ access to health care services and public assistance benefits by providing information and resources.

The Referral Communications Committee is using results from a survey sent to HBE in-person assisters and authorized HCA volunteers in April 2014 as well as other information to identify barriers for consumers seeking services and benefits from the three agencies. They are developing and implementing communication strategies to remove barriers based on this information.

## Washington Connection Annual Staff Costs

The total annual (SFY 2014) staff cost for Washington Connection was \$450,216, which is 46 percent federal funds and 54 percent General Fund State.

- The information technology staff cost was \$125,365 for maintenance and operations, which excludes resources devoted to implementing the Affordable Care Act.
- The administrative staff cost was \$324,851, which includes supporting the Advisory Committee, community partner outreach and training, public marketing, partnership development with governmental agencies, as well as data analysis and reporting. (See Figure 3, Goal 5.)

## Strategic Plan Performance Measures

**FIGURE 3 – WASHINGTON CONNECTION  
STRATEGIC PLAN PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

GOAL 1. INCREASE COMMUNITY OUTREACH TO ACHIEVE PUBLIC AWARENESS						
OBJECTIVES	PERFORMANCE MEASURE <i>ONLINE SUCCESS</i>	BASELINE Dec 2010	CY 2011	CY 2012	CY 2013	Jan-Jun 2014
<p>A. Increase outreach to Community-based organizations so they can help clients with online applications or refer clients to Washington Connection</p> <p>B. Increase client outreach to better serve existing clients and reach more residents in need through Washington Connection</p>	Applications for Benefits	52%	54%	54%	52%	54%
	Change of Circumstances	45%	54%	65%	64%	63%
	Eligibility Reviews	17%	20%	27%	28%	30%
	Total Online Submissions	37%	41%	44%	44%	45%
	<b>% of Counties with 50%+ of Online Applications</b>	<b>Dec 2010</b>	<b>Dec 2011</b>	<b>Dec 2012</b>	<b>Dec 2013</b>	<b>Jun 2014</b>
	Assisting Agencies Only	38%	38%	72%	87%	97%
	Total from Individuals & Assisting Agencies	44%	55%	53%	62%	62%
GOAL 2. IMPROVE PORTAL FUNCTIONALITY SO USERS CAN EASILY FIND INFORMATION AND COMPLETE TASKS ONLINE						
OBJECTIVES	PERFORMANCE MEASURE <i>SURVEY FEEDBACK</i>	BASELINE Oct-Dec 2012	Oct- Dec 2013	Jan- Mar 2014	Apr-Jun 2014	
<p>A. Improve usability of Washington Connection by enhancing portal functionality for clients</p> <p>B. Improve usability of Washington Connection by enhancing portal functionality for community partners</p> <p>C. Establish a comprehensive customer support team</p>	<b>Customer Feedback from Online Survey</b>					
	Rated as Good/Very Good	42%	72%	70%	74%	
	Would recommend to others	60%	85%	85%	87%	
	Reported no trouble using website	42%	64%	64%	68%	
	<b>Community Partner Feedback for Online Survey</b>					
	Rated as Good/Very Good	65%	76%	75%	78%	
	Would recommend to others	69%	84%	85%	86%	
	Reported no trouble using website	68%	78%	71%	72%	

## FIGURE 3 – WASHINGTON CONNECTION STRATEGIC PLAN PERFORMANCE MEASURES *(continued)*

**GOAL 3. INCREASE THE NUMBER OF ACCESS POINTS (PLACES) WHERE CLIENTS CAN GET HELP (ASSISTING AGENCIES) OR USE A COMPUTER (HOST ORGANIZATIONS)**

OBJECTIVES	PERFORMANCE MEASURE <i>REGISTERED COMMUNITY PARTNERS</i>	Baseline October 2011 (Agencies)	Update June 2014 (Sites)
A. Secure additional resources to help partners build capacity	Assisting Agencies	84 (14%)	537 (55%)
B. Recruit and retain Assisting Agencies and Host Organizations by providing training and support	Host Organizations	516 (86%)	446 (45%)
C. Collaborate with organizations to coordinate outreach initiatives to leverage community networks and resources	Total Registered Partners	600	983

**GOAL 4. EXPAND ONLINE APPLICATIONS TO INCLUDE MORE BENEFIT PROGRAMS**

OBJECTIVES	
A. Identify, initiate and collaborate with potential benefit administrators	Discussions continue with potential benefit administrators
B. Modify online application to meet requirements of Medicaid Expansion and Affordable Care Act	Working collaboratively with Health Benefit Exchange and Health Care Authority

**GOAL 5. ENHANCE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE TO SUPPORT GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY FOR WASHINGTON CONNECTION**

OBJECTIVE		
A. Develop and implement a review process of the governance structure to identify needed changes	<b>Financial</b>	
	Annual Maintenance & Operations/ Administration	\$450,216
	Cost/benefit analysis (CBA) – The Case of Basic Food	Positive CBA – see page 17 for more details
	<b>Advisory Committee Indicators</b>	
	Increase community partner representation	2013 – 27% 2014 – 37%
	Implement succession model for Co-Chair	Approved revised Charter on 1/28/14
	Nominate and appoint Vice Co-Chair for 2014	Appointed Vice Co-Chair 2/10/14

## ***Strategic Plan Initiatives with Status Updates***

### Goal 1 – Increase effective community outreach to achieve public awareness of Washington Connection

- Target marketing efforts (including radio public service announcements, billboard display, online advertisement, cinema theater advertisements, postcard direct delivery, etc.) to underserved counties – Ongoing
- Explore using social media to promote Washington Connection – Ongoing

### Goal 2 – Improve portal functionality so users can easily find information and complete tasks online

- Use surveys and other feedback to identify and initiate improvements – Ongoing  
Examples of usability enhancements implemented in 2014 follow:
- Enabling account users to delete unwanted incomplete applications from their accounts
- Adding a warning message 3 minutes prior to *Time Out*
- Revising and simplifying online application questions for child care applicants
- Enhancing the community partnership database with expanded search criteria
- Adding a link to Healthplanfinder in *See if I Qualify* pre-screening and online applications
- Permitting Assisting Agencies to view a client’s subsidized child care status from their Partner Accounts
- Adding links to *Find Services* for free tax return preparation, addiction and behavioral health treatment resources, homeless prevention, etc.
- Adding Mid-Certification Review information to the Homepage, FAQs and Tutorial
- Enabling account users to print their names on their benefit history
- Providing more information on the Client Benefit Account registration process
- Updating the Public Access Directory to include new and revised contact information of partners

### Goal 3 – Increase the number of places where clients can get help or use a computer

- Pass through CHIPRA grant to CHIP community partners to purchase equipment – Completed (remaining CHIPRA grant fully expended August 2014)
- Make 24 SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) kiosks available to community partners (seven per region plus three contact centers) – In regions for placement
- Coordinate with the Health Care Authority on Medicaid Expansion and Health Benefit Exchange ([Washington Healthplanfinder](#)) in marketing, training and communication – Ongoing

### Goal 4 – Expand online application to include more benefit programs

- City of Seattle uses the portal’s eligibility pre-screening for its seven programs – Ongoing
- In 2015, Washington Connection’s eligibility pre-screening will add the:
  - Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction’s Free and Reduced Price Meals



- Community Colleges and Technical Colleges' [Start Next Quarter](#) (links students to free workshops and resources)
- Support efforts to amend Washington Connection to separate MAGI Medicaid – Completed

Goal 5 – Enhance governance structure to support growth and sustainability

- Develop a Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) to determine the value of Washington Connection – Preliminary analysis (Basic Food Case Study) – Completed
  - Estimated Financial Cost Benefit: for every \$1.00 invested, provides value of \$1.64
  - Estimated Economic Benefits:
    - \$144.5 million per year in increased federal food payments
    - 831 jobs per year
    - \$8.1 million per year in tax revenues
  - Social Benefits: Quicker response, community partnerships, national leader, premium service (tools and functionality, customer service, personalized features, service integration), improved information and empowerment, choices and convenience
- Initiate a review of 2014-2017 rotation of membership – Completed

# Appendices



## Appendix A – Advisory Committee Membership 2014

Officers			
Officer Position	Name	Title	Organization
Executive Sponsor	Kevin Quigley	Secretary	DSHS
Chair	David Stillman	Assistant Secretary	DSHS, Economic Services Administration
Co-Chair	Patty Hayes	Director	Community Health Services Division, Public Health Seattle-King
Past Co-Chair	Tony Lee	Advocacy Director	Solid Ground
Vice Co-Chair	Robert Coit	Director	Thurston County Food Bank
Committee Members			
Name	Title	Organization	
Sharon Beaudoin	Director of Programs	WithinReach	
Jim Baumgart	Policy Advisor	Governor’s Executive Policy Office	
John Bowers	Dean	Basic and Transitional Studies, South Seattle College	
Madelyn Carlson	Chief Executive Officer	People for People	
Bradley Finnegan	Associate Director of Operations	Washington Health Benefit Exchange	
Ed Fox	Health Services Director	Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe	
Monica Henry	Social Services Director	Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe	
Catherine Lester	Interim Director	Seattle Human Services Department, City of Seattle	
Lauren McGowan	Associate Director	Ending Homelessness, United Way of King County	
Shannon Monroe	Regional Medical Enrollment Administrator	Eligibility Policy and Services Delivery, Health Care Authority	
Mary Schwartz	Data Systems Manager	Housing Assistance Unit, Department of Commerce	
Laura Smith	President/Chief Executive Officer	Washington Dental Service Foundation	
Kathy Thamm	Director	Community-Minded Enterprises	

## Appendix B – Benefit Programs through Washington Connection

### Food Assistance

- Basic Food – federally funded
- Food Assistance Program for Legal Immigrants – state funded

### Cash Assistance (the worker determines programs for which the client is eligible)

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF)
- Refugee Cash Assistance
- State Family Assistance Program
- Aged, Blind or Disabled Cash Assistance
- Pregnant Women Assistance
- Diversion Cash Assistance
- Consolidated Emergency Assistance Program
- State Supplemental Payment

### Medical Assistance

- Aged, Blind and Disabled Medical Programs
- Healthcare for Workers with Disabilities Program
- Medicare Savings Program
- Mental Health Services (for mentally ill prison inmates soon to be released)

### Subsidized Child Care Assistance

- Working Connections Child Care
- Seasonal Child Care

### Long Term Care Medical Assistance

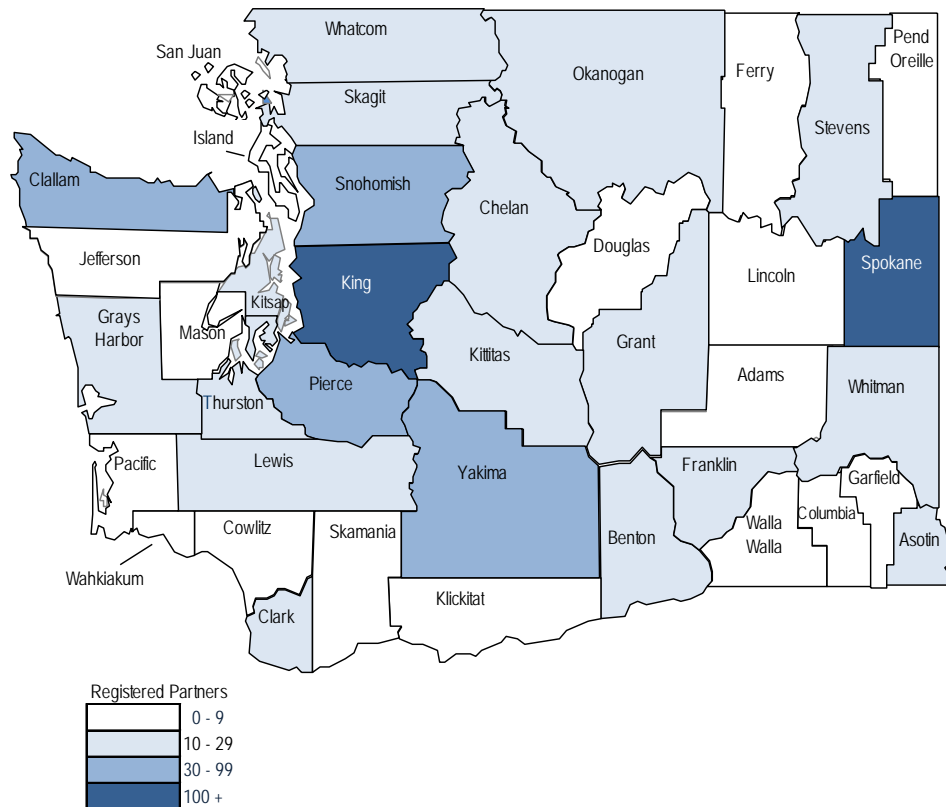
- In-Home Long Term Care Services
- Assisted Living Facility / Adult Family Home
- Nursing Home
- Hospice
- Children’s Long Term Inpatient Program (CLIP, for youth 5-18 with severe psychiatric disorders)
- Developmental Disabilities Services

---

*Notes: As of October 1, 2013, the online application for 13 medical programs under Washington Apple Health was moved from Washington Connection to [Washington Healthplanfinder \(HPF\)](#) of the Health Benefit Exchange. If applicants apply for any of these 13 medical programs through Washington Connection, their applications are electronically transferred to the Health Benefit Exchange. Washington Connection has reference information about and a link to [Washington Healthplanfinder \(HPF\)](#) on its website.*

## Appendix C – Maps of Registered Community Partners

### Registered Community Partners – November 2012 through June 2014 (cumulative)

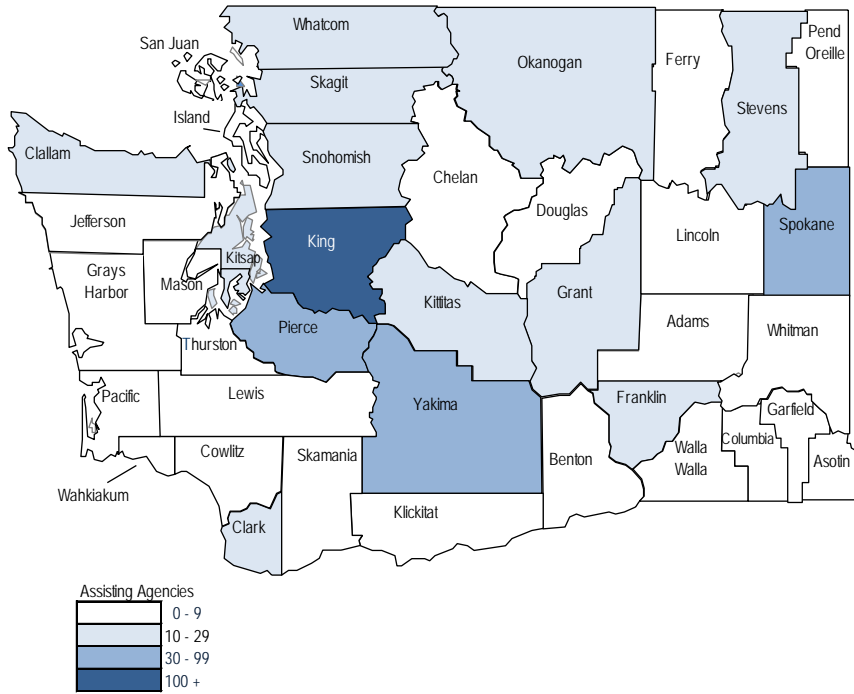


Source: DSHS Cognos WCA05R01 Partner Records - Nov 2012 through June 2014 - Cognos run date August 8, 2014

**Registered Partners** – Organizations that choose to register as Washington Connection community partners and to assist residents in accessing benefits and services. There are two types of registered partners:

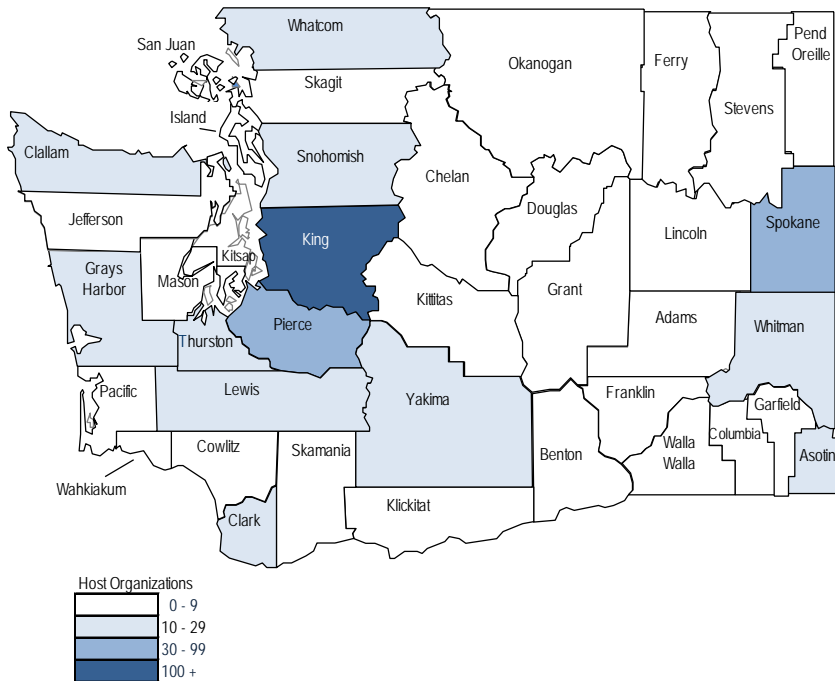
1. **Assisting Agencies** – Organizations that provide applicants with assistance in completing and submitting online Applications, Eligibility Renewals and Changes of Circumstances. An Assisting Agency must fill out Data Share Agreements and Confidentiality Non-disclosure forms. These organizations can view applications and track staff work.
2. **Host Organizations** – Organizations that agree to offer any of the following: 1) display posters and printed marketing materials about Washington Connection, 2) provide applicants with access to a computer with an icon to Washington Connection on the desktop or 3) provide applicants with assistance in answering questions about the Washington Connection website.

**Assisting Agencies – November 2012 through June 2014 (cumulative)**



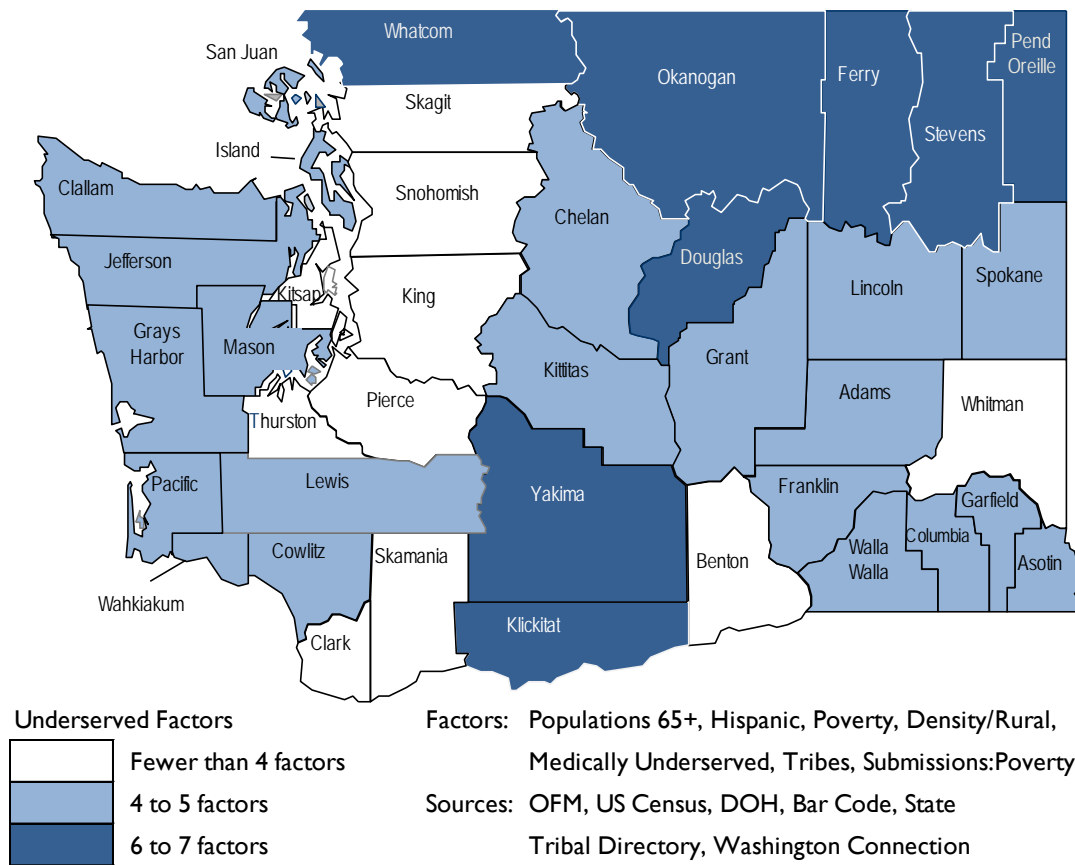
Source: DSHS Cognos WCA05R01 Partner Records - Nov 2012 through June 2014 - Cognos run date August 8, 2014

**Host Organizations – November 2012 through June 2014 (cumulative)**



Source: DSHS Cognos WCA05R01 Partner Records - Nov 2012 through June 2014 - Cognos run date August 8, 2014

## Appendix D – Map of Underserved Counties



Revised August 12, 2014

The map above depicts eight counties that are most underserved with six to seven of the possible seven factors: Hispanic, elderly, medically underserved, ratio of submissions for requests for benefits to poverty, poverty, low population density (rural) and presence of Tribes. All eight counties are rural and medically underserved, and seven have Tribes. Seven of the eight counties are in eastern Washington.

All five of the northernmost counties from Whatcom to Pend Oreille have six to seven of these factors. Six counties have disproportionate elderly populations; one has a concentration of Hispanics; and two have substantial proportions of both elderly and Hispanics. Three of the eight counties have more than one in five residents in poverty.