

Support WIC Lapse in Funding through OCRC

Situation: OCRC in collaboration with SJC Health & Community Services has asked for additional support for WIC recipient families on Orcas. These individuals have a potential loss in their access to resources because of a lapse in government funding.

As an entity already helping to provide access to these services, OCRC has asked to be the conduit for helping WIC families access resources in the interim. OCRC has asked to increase their potential cap on 2025 funding from OIHCD to \$45,000, in case they need to utilize an amount of funds to support WIC families.

Background: Due to the federal government shutdown, the WIC program has been without funding for the past several weeks. With the uncertainty around when that funding will return, there is a lapse in funding for various portions of this service. Access to formula, and other food for these families is one area, but SJC Health & Community Services is also lacking the funds to support staff roles of their program as well.

OCRC helps to administer resources for the WIC team, and serves as the front-door in many instances as connecting these individuals to WIC resources at the county level. As such, SJC has reached out to the resource centers to help serve as the connector organizations for these services while the county struggles with dollars to pay staff.

Assessment: Based on conversations with OCRC, it is predicted that roughly 60-70 families utilize WIC related funds, which amounts to about \$100/month at the most. The amount of staff support dollars that SJC is in need of is unknown at this point.

Many other hospital districts in Washington help to administer WIC programs in their community, and this program serves as a critical health resource for families.

Recommendation: OCRC is authorized to request up to \$40,000 from OIHCD in 2025 to support health access related services for Orcas Islanders. They are requesting that we bump that number up to \$45,000 maximum, to make sure there is a safety net for access to WIC services. OCRC will not request these funds if not needed, but would like the flexibility to serve those individuals under the OIHCD funding.

Potential Action: Approve an increase in OCRC funding in 2025 to support WIC access during the government shutdown lapse in funding. This increase will be an additional \$5,000 if needed, with a total cap for OIHCD funding to OCRC in 2025 of \$45,000.