



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
— OFFICE OF GOVERNOR BOB FERGUSON —

**DIRECTIVE OF THE GOVERNOR**

**26-02**

March 31, 2026

To: Washington Department of Social and Health Services  
From: Governor Bob Ferguson  
Subject: Continuity of services for community protection program clients

The Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services waiver program is a federal program authorized in section 1915(c) of the Social Security Act. The program permits a state to furnish an array of home and community-based services that assist Medicaid beneficiaries to live in the community and avoid institutionalization. The community protection program is a Medicaid waiver offered by the Washington state Department of Social and Health Services. This program is a voluntary community program for people with developmental disabilities that is an opportunity for program participants to live successfully in the community while avoiding engaging in activities that may result in law enforcement involvement. Substitute House Bill 1390 will bring an end to the community protection program by January 2027. The bill directs the Department of Social and Health Services (Department) to devise and implement a plan to transition current participants in the program into other supportive and intensive services. The Department must develop and implement this plan by December 31, 2026.

In addition to signing SHB 1390 into law, I am directing the Department of Social and Health Services to take additional steps to provide the needed support, supervision, and individualized care for clients transitioning from the community protection program as it ramps down. This legislation moves our state in the right direction toward person-centered care, but we must be thoughtful and deliberate in our efforts to transition clients from this program to other community programs. Additional steps are necessary to ensure safe and healthy transitions for the individual clients, as well as safe and healthy outcomes for our communities. Therefore, I am directing Department of Social and Health Services to implement the following measures:

- The Department must provide an individualized assessment for each community protection program client. The assessment must include a risk assessment prior to transition from the community protection program unless they have met graduation requirements. The assessment must identify, and services must be offered, to meet the unique needs and address the individual risks of each client.

- When reviewing options for services and placements, the Department must consider the safety of other residents, as well as the safety of the community.
- Clients will remain on a specialized caseload with low client to case manager ratios, and the Department shall perform quarterly in-person visits during the first year that a client has transitioned from the community protection program.
- The Department will also track and review outcome data for clients that have transitioned from the community protection program for at least 18 months after transition.

These efforts, combined with the legislation I am signing, are an opportunity to provide individualized and robust services including risk assessments, community residential services/life skills training, 24-hour supervision, supported employment, treatment and therapies that have not always been available to these individuals under the community protection requirements. These statutory changes and the Department's additional efforts will allow for more individualized care, ensuring client support and community safety. These changes will also preserve the intensive, specialized services that will have the greatest benefit for the individuals, while maintaining diligent oversight and connection with these clients who need significant support.