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Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Chris Reykdal, Superintendent

November 18, 2025

() Action Required
Due date: March 13, 2026, and
May 8, 2026
(X) Informational

BULLETIN NO. 056-25 SPECIAL EDUCATION

TO: Educational Service District Superintendents
School District Superintendents
School District Business Managers
Educational Service District Special Education Directors
School District Special Education Directors
Public Charter Schools
Tribal Compact Schools
Juvenile Rehabilitation Institutions
Residential Habilitation Centers

FROM: Chris Reykdal, Superintendent of Public Instruction

RE: Special Education Safety Net Application for 2025–26

CONTACT: Amber O'Donnell, Assistant Director of Special Education Data Operations
Contact 360-725-6075, amber.odonnell@k12.wa.us

PURPOSE/BACKGROUND

Safety Net funding is available to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with a demonstrated capacity for special education funding in excess of state and federal funding otherwise available to the LEA. This bulletin provides application instructions for applying for special education Safety Net funding in the 2025–26 school year.

The Special Education State Oversight Committee makes Safety Net funding decisions pursuant to [RCW 28A.150.392](#) and [WAC 392-140-600](#) through [WAC 392-140-685](#) based on the LEA's application and information available to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). Once available, instructions and training opportunities will be available for download on [the Safety Net website](#).

Key Changes in 2025–26

- Per RCW 28A.150.392(8) the threshold for 2025–26 will either be calculated at two times average per pupil expenditures (APPE) or 1.8 times APPE. LEAs that meet the following criteria will have the 1.8 multiplier:
 - The school district has fewer than 1,000 full-time equivalent students;
 - The school district has a percentage of identified students as defined in RCW 28A.235.300 of at least 60 percent; or
 - The school district has at least 60 percent of students enrolled in the transitional bilingual instructional program under chapter 28A.180 RCW.
- Worksheet A will be completed in Excel and uploaded to EGMS instead of completed within the application.
- Applicants will only need to submit current Individualized Education Program (IEP) for fiscal verification (unless previous IEPs were significantly different from the current IEP).
- Community Impact will no longer be available as funding cap was removed by Legislature.
- During the 2025 legislative session, the state expanded the types of services subject to state retail sales and business and occupation (B&O) tax, effective October 1st. Any contracted services that are part of a safety net application should include all applicable state and local taxes paid by the district.

Allocated Funding

The state Safety Net funding amount will be determined in the upcoming legislative session. Federal Safety Net funding in the amount of \$14,787,000 is available to the state for the 2025–26 school year. Any funding needed in excess of the state and federal amounts will be requested from the legislature.

Information about prior year Safety Net applications and funding are available on [OSPI's Safety Net website](#).

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

OSPI staff will offer training sessions, tutorials, webinars, and office hours. For training opportunities and instructions on submitting applications, visit the [OSPI's Safety Net website](#). To request additional training opportunities or technical assistance for LEA-specific questions, please email the [Safety Net team](#).

Online Training

The following online training courses are available:

- [Safety Net Overview](#)

- EGMS Safety Net Application Overview (available soon on the [Safety Net website](#))

Q&A Sessions

The Safety Net team will set up Q&A sessions at each Educational Service District (ESD). Check with your local [ESD](#) for information about when your region's Q&A session will take place.

Office Hours

Safety Net EGMS office hours will begin January 5, 2026, and will continue through to May 6, 2026.

- [Join Monday office hours from 1–2](#)
- [Join Wednesday office hours from 11–12](#)

APPLICATION DEADLINES AND MEETING DATES

Deadline for Receipt of Application at OSPI	Type of Application	Oversight Committee Meeting Date	Meeting Location
March 13, 2026	High-Need Individuals (HNI)	June 17–18, 2026	Zoom
May 8, 2026	HNI Updates Only	June 17–18, 2026	Zoom
	Final Verification & Award Meeting	August 10, 2026	Zoom

[Download this one-pager that includes calendar invites, due date reminders, and meeting links.](#)

The State Oversight Committee approves or disapproves of all Safety Net applications at the committee meetings. The Committee will make conditional awards in June 2026, and final awards in August 2026. OSPI will notify applicants in writing of the determination of the committee after each meeting.

To observe the process, applicants may attend the State Oversight Committee meeting via Zoom on June 18, 2026, and/or August 10, 2026. The Zoom meetings will be available to all applicants. Each LEA, regardless of planned attendance at the meeting, will receive an emailed draft summary of applications submitted at the June and August 2026 meetings. LEAs will receive funding determinations by an emailed letter after each meeting.

Most of the High-Need Individual applications must be submitted by the March 13, 2026, deadline, except in the following circumstances. The May 8, 2026, submission deadline for High-Need Individuals applies **only** to:

- Students enrolling in the LEA after the March 13, 2026, submission deadline.
- Students with a significant change in services or placement after the March 13, 2026, submission deadline.

- Students accessing extended school year (ESY) when the ESY decision is made after the March 13, 2026, submission deadline.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Demonstration of Capacity (Worksheet A)

Worksheet A is used to demonstrate if an applicant has capacity to receive additional funds via a Safety Net award. Demonstration of capacity on Worksheet A does not entitle an applicant to Safety Net funding. Worksheet A and related documentation must be submitted with both High-Need Individual and Community Impact applications. See Worksheet A Line-by-Line Instructions for assistance when completing Worksheet A.

Worksheet A compares expenditures and revenues associated with special education and related services. If expenditures exceed the revenues, the LEA will show demonstrated capacity on Worksheet A. Once the data are available, Worksheet A is pre-populated with:

- 2025–26 budgeted F-195 revenues and expenditures (generally available in December).
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) federal flow-through allocations and carryover for Part B 611 and 619.
- The LEA's federal restricted indirect rate plus one percent.
- 2024–25 F-196 year-end data (generally available in January).

The Worksheet A components required to be submitted through the Supporting Documents Checklist section of EGMS are:

- Worksheet A Template
- Worksheet A Budget Reconciliation, **if applicable**
This is an **optional** tab within the Worksheet A Template. This form compares the LEA's budgeted expenditures and the anticipated year-to-date program expenditures based on information from the LEA's detailed expenditure reports. In the review for the LEA's conditional award, the lesser of the amounts between the budgeted and annualized year-to-date amounts will be used in the analysis. An LEA may request otherwise and provide additional information on this reconciliation worksheet. In the review for the LEA's final award, the annualized year-to-date expenditures will be used unless the LEA requests otherwise and provides an explanation as to why a different number should be used.
- The most recently completed monthly **detailed** expenditure reports for the special education programs showing the budgeted and actual year-to-date expenditures. The reports must subtotal at three separate levels:
 - Object (i.e., 21-27-5)
 - Activity (i.e., 21-27)
 - Program (i.e., 21)

High-Need Individual Applications

- LEAs should request Safety Net funding on behalf of eligible, resident high-need students. Costs eligible for consideration in a Safety Net award must be associated with providing direct special education and related services identified in IEP(s) for the period of funding requested.
- The annualized threshold for a High-Need Individual application is based on a multiple of the statewide average per-pupil expenditure (APPE), as determined by OSPI in collaboration with the Office of Financial Management (OFM) and legislative fiscal committees. For the 2025–26 school year:
 - LEAs that meet the criteria outlined in RCW 28A.150.392(8) will use a threshold of **1.8 times the APPE**, which equals **\$34,426**.
 - All other LEAs will use a threshold of **2.0 times the APPE**, which equals **\$38,252**.
- Applicants are required to submit the current IEP in effect for the 2025–26 school year for each High-Need Individual application to validate and quantify reimbursable special education services for the period of the funding requested. Information referred to in IEPs should also be included, such as Emergency Response Protocols (ERPs), Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs), and High School and Beyond Plans (HSBP).
 - If there is a major change in services between the current and previous IEP iterations, all IEPs in effect for the school year should be included. Examples of major changes in services include, but are not limited to:
 - Change in student placement.
 - Addition of services that will be claimed for reimbursement (e.g. a paraeducator is added to the IEP mid-year).
 - Removal of services to be claimed.
 - Change in student service minutes of 10% or more.
- Per [WAC 180-51-220](#), each student must have a high school and beyond plan (HSBP) initiated during 7th or 8th grade. As part of the Safety Net review, HSBPs are required to be submitted for students in the 9th grade and above.
- Students with disabilities served in residential schools, programs for juveniles under the Department of Corrections, and programs operated under city and county jails are also eligible to receive Safety Net funding.
- To receive reimbursement the student must be receiving services and services must be quantified in the IEP.
- Calculate teacher caseload using the November caseload report. If the student is not included on the teacher's November caseload report, use the report from the first month the student appears on the teacher's caseload.
- It is the responsibility of the LEA to ensure that each application is complete and accurate when submitted. OSPI staff may contact the LEA to request missing documentation. The State Oversight Committee may also request additional documentation during the review process and concerns with the accuracy of financial

records may be referred to the State Auditors' Office (SAO) for review and/or the Washington Integrated System of Monitoring (WISM) for program monitoring.

Items Required for Each High Need Individual Application

- Application Forms (in EGMS platform)
 - Worksheet C Student Overview
 - Worksheet C IEP Staff and Other Staff Costs, if applicable
 - Worksheet C ESY Staff and Other Staff Costs, if applicable
 - Worksheet C Student Summary
- Application Files (attachments in EGMS platform)
 - Medicaid Reimbursement Calculator, if applicable.
 - Billing Percentage Calculator for Contracted 1:1 Providers, if applicable.
 - Transportation Cost Calculator, if applicable.
 - Student's complete current IEP in effect for the 2025–26 school year. If IEP iterations in effect for 2025–26 include major changes, submit the previous IEP(s). Please include any referenced documents, such as IEP amendments, PWNs, ERPs, and BIPs.
 - Purchase Orders, contracts, and invoices for any expenditure claimed for contracted staff and/or purchased materials for students as required and quantified on the IEP. When including contracted providers on an application, use both the contracting entity and the name of the person providing the service.
 - One copy of the November caseload report used to calculate teacher caseloads included on Worksheet C. Reports submitted must include service minutes for all students served by the teacher. If a different month is used to calculate caseload, include that report as well.

Allowable Costs

The following are costs that are eligible for Safety Net funding. This list is not exhaustive.

- Direct services to students that are quantified in the IEP.
 - Quantified special education teachers
 - Quantified paraeducators
 - Quantified interpreters
 - Quantified nurses
 - Quantified related service providers (in district and contracted). Providers could be:
 - speech language pathologists (SLPs)
 - occupational therapists (OTs)
 - physical therapists (PTs)
 - teachers of the visually impaired (TVIs)
 - teachers of the deaf (TOD)
 - orientation and mobility (O&M)

- counselors.
- Transportation, if specified in the student's IEP, for:
 - Student transportation to a residential placement.
 - Student transportation to an out-of-district placement. Include the transportation cost calculator with the submission. Applicants can only receive this funding if transportation reimbursement rate is less than 100 percent.
 - Student transportation for ESY. Include the transportation cost calculator with the submission.
 - Parent/guardian travel to a student's residential placement when the travel is to transport the student to the placement, or to participate in services specified in the IEP with the student.
- Braille translation if specified in IEP.
- After-school activity support (such as interpreting or nursing) if specified in the IEP and supported by backup documentation (timesheets, event, sport or activity calendar, etc.)
- Supplies and equipment if specified in the IEP. Include purchase orders (POs) and invoices for supplies with submission.
- Out-of-district placement costs. IEP should specify the placement. Include POs, contracts, and invoices for these costs with submission.
- ESY (extended school year) – if claiming, include the ESY Addendum with the submission.

Unallowable Costs

The following are costs that are **not eligible** for Safety Net funding; however other special education funding may be used. This list is not exhaustive.

- Construction costs
- Costs not coded to a special education program (21, 24, 26, 29)
- Consultant costs (if not providing a direct service to the student)
- Teacher training
- Parent/guardian initiated travel to a residential placement that is not outlined in the IEP.
- Provider travel to and from work (bus paraeducators traveling with student are allowable).

Medicaid Adjustments

Per [WAC 392-140-602](#), applicants must either submit verification of Medicaid billing for each High-Need student application, if applicable or receive a deduction. If an LEA is billing for Medicaid, they should continue to calculate Medicaid adjustments for students who are Medicaid eligible by using the Medicaid Reimbursement Calculator. If an LEA is not billing for Medicaid, awards will be reduced by taking 70% of the average Medicaid award for a Medicaid

eligible child. The average Medicaid award will be calculated using the Medicaid report provided to OSPI by the Health Care Authority (HCA).

May 8, 2026, Deadline

If submitting an update to an application submitted in March, the LEA should [complete a revision request in Smartsheet](#). Completing this form will allow OSPI staff to unlock the current Safety Net submission in the EGMS platform. To update an application, revise the applicable Worksheet C forms in EGMS and upload as attachments in the platform:

- The student's new IEP or IEP amendment.
- Any purchase orders, contracts, or invoices applicable to the adjusted amount.
- Other back-up documentation needed to support the adjustment.

If applying for a student **not** included in your March 13, 2026, submission:

- Application Forms (in EGMS platform)
 - Worksheet C Student Overview
 - Worksheet C IEP Staff and Other Staff Costs, if applicable
 - Worksheet C ESY Staff and Other Staff Costs, if applicable
 - Worksheet C Student Summary
- Application Files (attachments in EGMS platform)
 - Medicaid Reimbursement Calculator, if applicable.
 - Billing Percentage Calculator for Contracted 1:1 Providers, if applicable.
 - Transportation Cost Calculator, if applicable.
 - Student's complete current IEP in effect for the 2025–26 school year. If the current IEP contains major changes over previous IEPs for the school year, submit the previous IEP(s) ([see page 5 for more details](#)). Please include any referenced documents, such as IEP amendments, Prior Written Notices (PWNs), Emergency Response Protocols (ERPs), and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs).
 - Purchase Orders, contracts, and invoices for any expenditure claimed for contracted staff and/or purchased materials for students as required and quantified on the IEP.

Revise the Total Budget Requested field on the Overview tab of the application in EGMS to reflect the new request amount listed on the Certification form.

Please note, if your LEA does not have any applications to submit in March 2026, you may submit your initial application in May 2026.

Certification

The Certification form must be completed for High-Need Individual Safety Net funding. This form details the LEAs requests, assures OSPI of accuracy of the application, and outlines the conditions associated with Safety Net funding.

Submission Process

Applications are submitted through EGMS. Announcement numbers will be posted on the OSPI Safety Net website and sent via GovDelivery when available.

CONDITIONS ASSOCIATED WITH FUNDING FOR SAFETY NET

State and federal Safety Net funding is not an entitlement. Safety Net funding is an annual grant application. Safety Net funding in prior years does not guarantee future eligibility. The following are conditions associated with Safety Net funding:

- Capacity for funding is based on legitimate actual expenditures and all available revenues included on Worksheet A, which determines maximum funding capacity; however, maximum funding capacity does not entitle an LEA to Safety Net funding.
- Safety Net funding is only for direct special education and related services validated and quantified in an IEP.
- Safety Net award may be less than the amount of capacity demonstrated on Worksheet A, but in no case may exceed that amount.
- Funding is only provided for resident students (as defined by state law).
- Safety Net funding is only available for the excess cost of educating students with disabilities with an IEP, as required by RCW 28A.150.392, 34 CFR § 300.16, and WAC 392-172A-01075.

FINAL APPLICATION DETERMINATIONS

The Legislature requires OSPI to make funding determinations for Safety Net awards in August of each year. The state portion of the LEA's Safety Net award will be distributed through August apportionment; the federal portion of Safety Net award are drawn using EGMS.

ADJUSTMENT AND RECOVERY

All Safety Net funding is subject to adjustment and recovery pursuant to WAC 392-140-630, 392-140-675, and 392-140-685. OSPI may review and verify data submitted in Safety Net applications, including certifications made by LEAs. Reviews may consider whether IEPs are properly formulated, verify student enrollment data, available revenue, and legitimate actual expenditures.

After the end of each school year, state special education revenue (Account 4121) that is not expended in the state special education program (Program 21) is subject to recovery by OSPI through the School Apportionment and Financial Service Office.

Additionally, Safety Net applicants are subject to audit by the SAO at the request of the State Oversight Committee and/or OSPI. Audits by the SAO may also affect Safety Net eligibility and funding. The results of the auditor's reviews may be considered by the oversight committee in determining, adjusting, or recovering Safety Net funding.

SURVEY

Per [RCW 28.150.392](#), OSPI must annually survey LEAs about their satisfaction with the Safety Net process. The survey is also used to consider feedback from LEAs to improve the Safety Net process. The 2024–25 Safety Net Survey Legislative Report will be available in December 2025. Once available, the report will be posted to [OSPI's Reports to the Legislature webpage](#).

2025–26 MEMBERS OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STATE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Committee Member	Position and LEA
Tania May, Manager	Assistant Superintendent, Special Education, OSPI
Kira Acker	Director of Finance & Operations, Tumwater School District
Jennifer Acuña	Director of Special Services, ESD 114
Sue Ann Bube	Special Education Consultant, Dynamic Education Solutions
Lori Buijten	Director of Special Education, North Kitsap School District
Kathryn Coleman	Director of Student Services, Vashon Island School District
Franklin Day	Director of Student Support Services, Cheney School District
Patty Dowd	Assistant Superintendent, Mukilteo School District
Dana Floyd	Executive Director of Special Services, ESD 105
Cody Gardiner	Director of Special Services, Sunnyside School District
Dylan Hance	Business Manager, Central Valley School District
Gavin Hottman	Chief Financial Officer, ESD 112
Darcy Johnson	Associate Director of Student Success and Learning, ESD 171
Ivy Kardes	Director of Special Education, Shelton School District
Erika Kmiecik	Assistant State Auditor, State Auditor's Office (Non-voting)
Lisa Muchlinski	Special Services, Kennewick School District
Daniel Pham	Budget Manager, Clover Park School District
Andrea Staton	Assistant Principal, Mead School District
Alternate Jeffrey Niess	Executive Director of Specialized Services, ESD 112

INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

For questions regarding this bulletin, please contact Amber O'Donnell, Special Education Data Operations Assistant Director, at 360-725-6075 or email safety.net@k12.wa.us. The OSPI [Telecommunication Relay Services](#) number is 711 or 1-800-833-6384.

This bulletin is also available on the [Bulletins](#) page of the OSPI website.

Susan Lathrop
Chief Education Officer

Tania May, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent
Special Education

Amber O'Donnell
Assistant Director of Data Operations
Special Education

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