

Caseload Forecast

November 12th proved to be a busy day for us policy wonks. That afternoon, the Washington State Caseload Forecast Council met to receive the latest projected [caseloads](#) for state entitlement programs such as K-12 enrollment, long-term care and prisons. Just as the Revenue Forecast is an important input for budget writers, so is the Caseload Forecast as it directs how much the state must spend on entitlement programs.

On part of the [summary document](#), there is a section where state programs are broken out into whether the most current forecast came in higher than the previous forecast; lower than the previous forecast; or negligible or unchanged from the previous forecast. Particularly during tight budget times, it is favorable when the “lower than” and “unchanged/negligible” lists are longer than the “higher than” previously forecasted.

Early Learning Caseloads

ECEAP

ECEAP caseloads came in under the “negligible/unchanged” category, with an increase of 31 children projected this State Fiscal Year (SFY 26) and 32 additional children projected to be served in SFY 27. **Note this forecast was completed prior to the gift announcement by the Ballmer Group**, so the February 13, 2026, Caseload Forecast should reflect that projected impact.

Working Connections Child Care

Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) is projected to have the second highest percentage growth of all forecasted programs, with 2.6% growth in SFY 26 and 5.3% growth in SFY 27. WCCC is projected to increase its caseload by 974 to 38,975 in SFY 26 and by 2,143 in SFY 27 to 42,239.

The forecast [narrative](#) notes that aspects of [ESSB 5752](#) implementation related to 12-month implementation have been delayed due to informational technology challenges, impacting caseload.

Transition to Kindergarten

Finally, Transition to Kindergarten (TTK) sits squarely in the “negligible/unchanged” category, because its caseload is capped by funding in the 2025-27 biennial budget. Its caseload remains at 7,266.

Revenue Forecast

The Washington State Economic and Revenue Forecast Council met on November 18th to receive an updated [Revenue Forecast](#) from State Economist Dave Reich.

In contrast to the [June](#) and [September](#) revenue forecasts, this forecast saw only a minor adjustment, with total projected revenues through State Fiscal Year 2029 reduced by an additional \$66 million. This places the cumulative revenue available for budget writers over the 2025-29 biennia at \$1.686B (that's billion with a "B") less than when the budget was signed by Governor Ferguson this spring.

Our shortfall was helped by higher-than-expected estate tax revenues and tobacco tax settlement payouts. Sales tax revenues continue to come in lower than projected.

Due to the federal shutdown, Forecast Council staff needed to wait on certain federal data to confirm certain portions of the forecast. If that information alters the forecast, an update will be issued.

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