

# HEAL Act Dashboard Report

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*As required Section 17 (2), Chapter 314, Laws of 2021*

## Preface

The following report, a deliverable requirement under Section 17 (2), Chapter 314, Laws of 2021, which directs the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) to publish or update annually a dashboard report in a uniform dashboard format on the Office of Financial Management's (OFM) website. This report will describe WSDA's progress in the following areas:

- Integrating environmental justice into its strategic plan.
- Meeting budget and funding obligations under section 16 of the HEAL Act.
- Conducting environmental justice assessments for proposed significant agency actions, including metrics for completing these assessments by covered agencies.

### Reporting Requirements RCW 70A.02.090

(2)(a) Beginning in 2024, as part of each covered agency's annual update to the council under subsection (1) of this section, each covered agency must include updates on the agency's implementation status with respect to the environmental justice assessments under RCW 70A.02.060.

(b) By September 1st of each year beginning in 2024, each covered agency must publish or update a dashboard report, in a uniform dashboard format on the office of financial management's website, describing the agency's progress on:

- (i) Incorporating environmental justice in its strategic plan;
- (ii) The obligations of agencies relating to budgets and funding under RCW 70A.02.080; and
- (iii) Its environmental justice assessments of proposed significant agency actions, including logistical metrics related to covered agency completion of environmental justice assessments.

(3) Each covered agency must file a notice with the office of financial management of significant agency actions for which the agency is initiating an environmental justice assessment under RCW 70A.02.060. The office of financial management must prepare a list of all filings received from covered agencies each week and must post the list on its website and make it available to any interested parties. The list of filings must include a brief description of the significant agency action and the methods for providing public comment for agency consideration as part of the environmental justice assessment.

(4) Each covered agency must identify overburdened communities, as required by RCW 70A.02.050, in such a way that the performance effectiveness of the duties created by this chapter can be measured, including the effectiveness of environmental justice assessments required by RCW 70A.02.060. Each covered agency may identify and prioritize overburdened communities as needed to accomplish the purposes of this chapter.

## Introduction

The Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act was passed by the Legislature in 2021. This comprehensive act is the first statewide law to create a coordinated and collaborative approach to environmental justice, ensuring that no aspect is overlooked. This new law represents a historic moment in our state's commitment to environmental justice. It not only makes environmental justice a priority but also integrates it into the mission of key state agencies. The law mandates Ecology and the state departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Health, Natural Resources, Transportation, and the Puget Sound Partnership to identify and address environmental health disparities in overburdened communities and underserved populations. Other agencies have the option to opt in.

The purpose of this environmental justice law is to:

- Ensure that environmental reviews, funding, and permitting decisions identify and address environmental health disparities.
- Reduce exposure to environmental hazards on tribal lands.
- Track and measure the implementation of environmental justice in state agencies.

The HEAL Act outlines specific responsibilities for the seven covered agencies, including the following:

- Serve on the Environmental Justice Council as a non-voting liaison and participate in the HEAL Interagency Work Group to collaborate with other agencies.
- By July 1, 2022, developing and implementing a community engagement plan.
- Develop and implement tribal consultation frameworks to demonstrate respect for tribal sovereignty and offer consultation on key actions that may impact tribes.
- By January 1, 2023, environmental justice will be incorporated into WSDA's strategic plans to reaffirm the commitment to this crucial aspect of policy implementation.
- By July 1, 2023, integrate environmental justice into budget development processes, funding, and grant decisions.
- By July 1, 2025, expand the scope of significant agency actions that receive assessments.
- Develop metrics to measure progress on environmental justice goals by September 1, 2024, and every year thereafter, and report to the Environmental Justice Council and Office of Financial Management via the dashboard.

## About WSDA

WSDA, a cornerstone of Washington's agricultural history, was established in 1913 and was initially called the Washington Agriculture Commission. In 1915, WSDA was given the authority to create and enforce grading standards for apples and other tree fruit. This pioneering step marked the birth of the first apple grading system in the United States.

The spirit of the HEAL Act is embodied within the agency's mission and guiding principles. The cornerstone of the agency's work is providing services to all communities, promoting Washington's safe agricultural products, ensuring regulations are observed, and protecting consumers, public health, and the environment.

## MISSION

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) supports the viability and vitality of agriculture while protecting consumers, public health, and the environment through service, regulation, and advocacy.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Serve the customer and the public.
2. Act with integrity, consistency, transparency, and respect.
3. Pursue practical, reasonable solutions.
4. Cultivate partnerships.
5. Use science and data to inform decisions.
6. Fulfill statutory responsibilities.
7. Anticipate the future.

WSDA is a multifaceted organization consisting of seven vital divisions: Administration Services, Agricultural Environmental Services, Animal Services, Commodity Inspection, the Director's Office, Food Safety and Consumer Services, and Plant Protection. Each division works together to evaluate and create opportunities to fulfill the vision of the HEAL Act.

## Agricultural Environmental Services

The Agricultural Environmental Services Division protects the agricultural viability, human and environmental health, and natural resources of the people of the state of Washington. The work in this division is statewide and is split between regulatory and technical assistance programs in pesticides, dairy nutrient management, cannabis/hemp, and fertilizers, and environmental services focused on science policy, equity and environmental justice, aquaculture and rural policy, soil health, water quality and quantity, pesticide stewardship and education, and land use. This division consists of six programs: Pesticide Compliance, Dairy Nutrient Management, Pesticide Registration, Licensing and Certification, Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences, Technical Services and Education, and Cannabis.

## **Animal Services**

The Animal Services Division consists of the Animal Health, Animal Disease Traceability, Avian Health, Compliance, and Livestock Identification programs. Together, these programs safeguard the citizens of Washington State from zoonotic diseases, protect and enhance animal health, and support domestic and international trade and the economic viability of Washington livestock. Animal Services does this by providing asset protection, conducting surveillance, responding to disease outbreaks, tracking animals from birth to slaughter, identifying and limiting the exposure to diseases, ensuring division regulations are met, and educating animal owners.

## **Commodity Inspection**

The Commodity Inspection Division provides unbiased third-party inspections for a wide variety of Washington State agricultural products and assists agricultural companies in exporting their products. The Fruit & Vegetable Inspection, Grain Inspection, and Seed programs provide verification services of product quality, condition, and volume, as well as certification that products are free from quarantine pests and diseases for international export markets. These programs operate on delegated authority from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and play a vital role in the movement of Washington apples, cherries, and potatoes, along with wheat, dry peas, dry beans, and certified seed produced in Washington as well as around the U.S. The Grain Warehouse Audit Program protects Washington grain producers by licensing and regulating grain storage warehouse operators and dealers.

## **Director's Office food policy programs**

### **WE FEED WASHINGTON**

Launched as a COVID-19 relief pilot in 2021, We Feed Washington is a grant program that funds the purchase and distribution of essential food for people experiencing hunger through partnerships with local or regional food producers, farmers and ranchers, processors and distributors, and hunger relief organizations that serve socially disadvantaged communities and vulnerable populations.

### **INTERNATIONAL MARKETING**

The WSDA International Marketing Program provides export resources and assistance, connects Washington food and agriculture exporters with qualified foreign buyers, promotes Washington food and agriculture internationally, and works in collaboration with industry to advocate for global market access

### **REGIONAL MARKETS**

WSDA Regional Markets supports the economic viability of small and direct marketing farms and food businesses and fosters development of vibrant local food economies. The program helps small farms and value-added food businesses prepare for and access local markets that are a good fit for their scale and products, including schools and institutions. The program provides regulatory guidance, peer-to-peer education and networking, technical assistance, and grants.

## **Food Safety and Consumer Services Division**

### **ANIMAL FEED PROGRAM**

The WSDA Animal Feed Program regulates the production and distribution of animal food, which includes but is not limited to pet and specialty pet food and treats along with livestock and poultry feed. This program's work helps ensure:

- Animal food is safe for animals to consume.
- Animal products (meat, dairy, eggs, etc.) are safe for humans to consume and free from hazards passed through the production of animal feed.
- Pet and specialty pet food is safe for humans to prepare for their pets in their homes.
- Consumers are protected from misleading or false labeling.
- Market fairness and viability.

The Animal Food Program does this by:

- Inspecting locations to verify best practices, sanitation, and hazard prevention/mitigation.
- Collecting samples to verify safety and truth in labeling.
- Conducting label reviews for all pet and specialty pet food sold in Washington and routine reviews for livestock and poultry feed labels.
- Providing certificates of free sale to encourage international viability for animal food.
- facilitating significant stakeholder outreach and participation to prevent unsafe or incorrect practices.
- Issuing fair compliance and enforcement actions to remedy unsafe or incorrect practices.
- Responding to consumer complaints, outbreaks, recalls, or emergencies in a timely and efficient manner.

### **FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

In partnership with hunger relief organizations, tribes, and the agricultural community, WSDA's Food Assistance program ensures access to healthy food to sustain vibrant communities for all Washingtonians. Food Assistance works to alleviate hunger, increase client access, and support organizations that feed hungry people in a variety of ways, including:

- Managing logistics, warehousing, and distribution of USDA foods.
- Providing funding, food, program management, technical assistance, and grants to support food banks, food pantries, tribes, meal programs, and similar hunger-relief organizations.
- Partnering with hunger relief organizations and tribes to help increase purchasing capabilities, funding, and other opportunities.
- Identifying and addressing critical funding gaps to improve hunger relief efforts in Washington.

### **ORGANIC PROGRAM**

WSDA Organic Program is accredited as an organic certification agent by USDA's National Organic Program. As a certification agent, WSDA Organic Program's role is to inspect and certify organic operations in Washington State, verifying that they are meeting the requirements of federal organic standards. The Organic Program, a 100% fee for service program, strives to provide quality services

to our stakeholders—the over 1,000 certified operations we work with, new applicants considering organic certification, the nearly 300 manufacturers that provide compliant input materials, and the many consumers that support the organic industry.

## **PRODUCE SAFETY PROGRAM**

The WSDA Produce Safety Program promotes understanding of and compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule (PSR), 21 CFR 112 (adopted by reference in RCW 15.135). This rule, published in 2015, is the first mandatory standard for the production of fruits and vegetables in the United States and helps growers and packers identify and reduce microbial risks during produce growing, harvesting, packing, and holding.

The WSDA Produce Safety Program achieves the objectives of the FDA-State Produce Safety Implementation Cooperative Agreement Program primarily through:

- Education, outreach, and technical assistance to produce growers.
- Maintenance of an inventory database of produce farms for use in work planning.
- Inspection of covered produce farms for compliance with the PSR.

In addition, the Produce Safety Program is prepared to assist the Washington Rapid Response Team and the WSDA Emergency Management Program as necessary in the event of a produce-related outbreak or emergency affecting produce farms.

## **RAPID RESPONSE TEAM**

The Rapid Response Team (RRT) is a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary team that aims to protect public health by coordinating and documenting responses to emergency food or feed illness events. The goal is to quickly resolve the problem and identify contributing factors for why food or feed related illness or contamination events occurred. RRT coordinates actions to eliminate or ameliorate the root cause of the illness outbreak for ongoing illness elimination. The RRT also works with WSDA, Department of Health (DOH), and federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) personnel to prevent further distribution and sale of implicated products by coordinating regulatory actions such as recalls, embargoes, administrative detentions, and more. The RRT is a much more organized way of responding quickly to protect public health, but only about half of U.S. states have an RRT. Washington is the only Pacific Northwest state to maintain an RRT. We believe it provides better public health service to Washington citizens.

## **FOOD SAFETY PROGRAM**

The Food Safety Program is responsible for regulation, licensing, and inspection of food processing facilities, food storage warehouses, dairy farms and processing plants, cottage food operations, custom meat facilities, eggs, and cannabis-infused edibles. The program also works closely with the dairy industry to maintain the ability to ship milk and milk products out-of-state, as well as with FDA and DOH in conducting investigations of facilities and collecting samples for testing. Food safety also issues export certificates.

## **MICROBIOLOGY LAB PROGRAM**

The Food Safety and Consumer Services Laboratories Program is comprised of four distinct laboratories—the State Central Dairy Laboratory, the State Food Safety Laboratory, the Animal Feed

Laboratory, and the Federal Collaboration Laboratory—plus a dedicated laboratory support section, all working together to help protect public health, bolster agricultural aims and economies throughout the state, and provide opportunities for growth to members of the local community. The program works closely with WSDA sister programs, including the Animal Feed Program and the Food Safety Program, to test a wide variety of ready-to-eat human food, animal feed, pet food, and environmental samples for several food-borne pathogens and other biohazardous agents that are harmful to human and animal health. In addition to the regulatory surveillance activities carried out in accordance with RCW 15.36 and others, the program also participates in research assignments with federal partners.

## **Plant Protection Division**

The Plant Protection Division supports the agriculture industry and protects the environment and consumers by protecting agriculture and the environment from insect, weed, and pathogen pests; supporting pollinator and soil health; and testing for proper weights and measures and pesticide use.

### **PEST PROGRAM**

The Pest Program detects and controls deleterious invasive organisms and provides pest-free verification via surveys to protect trade opportunities as well as diagnostic services. The program is conducting an eradication program for Japanese beetle in the lower Yakima valley. The population in the area is made up mostly of people of Latino and Hispanic heritage. Several excellent staff members were recruited that are English/Spanish speaking including an outreach and education specialist from the local population to help with informing and interacting with non-English speaking people.

### **PLANT SERVICES PROGRAM**

The Plant Services Program licenses and inspects horticultural producers to ensure consumer protection and identify pest and disease threats to the producers and growers of the state. The program also provides inspection and certification required for commodity exports.

### **WEIGHTS AND MEASURES PROGRAM**

The Weights and Measures program inspects and certifies measuring devices used in commerce to ensure consumers are receiving what they pay for, and businesses are not losing revenue based on erroneous measuring devices.

### **CHEMISTRY AND HOP LAB**

The Chemistry and Hop Lab Program provides diagnostic service to the WSDA Pesticide Management Division for residue monitoring and human exposure investigations. Additionally, the program provides diagnostic support to the Liquor Cannabis Board for residue and potency testing. The program also surveys and certifies the annual hop harvest to support grower contracts and export documents.

## AGRICULTURAL INVESTIGATIONS PROGRAM

The Agricultural Investigations Program monitors and facilitates contract agreements and disputes between bonded dealers and growers. The program provides investigation services, mediation and bond recovery. The Pollinator Program promotes and protects pollinator habitat and the health and sustainability of pollinator species throughout Washington State.

## COMPOST REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

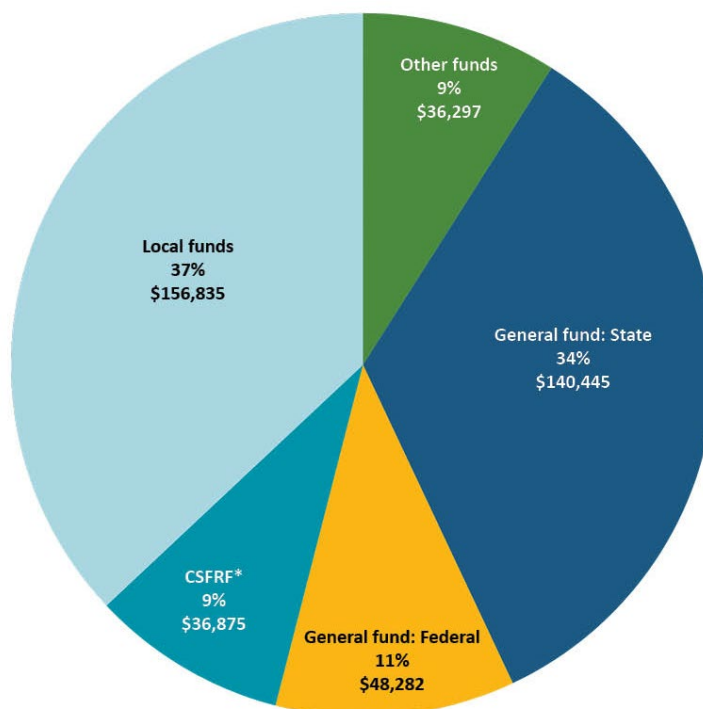
The Compost Reimbursement Program reimburses a wide range of farming operations, both large and small, that span multiple industries across the state for purchasing and using compost products and determines the effects of compost use on soil.

## Introduction to the WSDA budget

WSDA's operating budget differs from the other seven named HEAL Act agencies in two main ways. First, 37% of the agency's operational budget comes from fee-for-service accounts. Second, WSDA operates a limited number of grant programs, and we currently have nine grant programs. WSDA receives appropriations from the state general fund and other state accounts, federal funds, and fees paid by our customers for our services (called local funds). This diverse funding model, along with our 150 separate fee-for-service accounts, provides a robust financial foundation for our operations. WSDA incorporates environmental justice principles into its budget decisions to comply with the HEAL Act. The chart and table below show the operation budget proportions and amounts by fund sources for the 2023–25 biennium as of the 2024 enacted Supplemental Budget.

## WSDA funding breakdown

WSDA Operating Budget, as of the 2024 Supplemental Budget (dollars in thousands).



\*CSFRF: Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund



Local funds, which are fees paid by farmers, ranchers, and food producers and processors, for the services WSDA provides are subject to strict regulation by the Revised Code of Washington (RCW). This comprehensive collection of all the permanent laws in Washington State dictates and identifies the authorized expenditures for these funds, ensuring a clear and focused use. The RCW, a compilation of session laws organized by topic, with amendments and repealed laws removed, is a crucial tool in ensuring the responsible use of local funds. The Washington State Legislature hosts and maintains the RCW.

WSDA's 2023–2025 biennium operating budget of \$418.73 million includes projected estimates of non-appropriated funds from our fee-based services. The budget enables us to carry out our important work, including some new and expanded responsibilities approved during the 2024 legislative session.

WSDA currently is operating nine competitive grants, many of which create opportunities for overburdened communities and vulnerable populations.

- **Compost Reimbursement Program:** The Compost Reimbursement Program offers farms the opportunity to have up to 50% of compost and compost application costs reimbursed.
- **Farm-to-School Purchasing Grants:** The Farm to School Program offers purchasing grants to help expand farm to school efforts statewide.
- **Food Assistance Grants:** WSDA Food Assistance grants encourage innovation and efficiency in the hunger relief system, while providing operational support for food assistance organizations.
- **Local Food System Infrastructure Grant:** The Local Food System Infrastructure Grant supports local food supply chains and market access for farms, ranches, food processors, and food distributors. This grant also offers technical assistance available for those who may be new to receiving grant funding.
- **NE WA Wolf Livestock Management Grant:** These grants aim to develop community-based, nonlethal methods to protect livestock from wolves in Northeast Washington.
- **Resilient Food System Infrastructure Program:** This program intends to offer more and better market opportunities to small and mid-sized agricultural producers. Grants will go towards domestic food and farm businesses and other eligible entities.
- **Resiliency Grants:** These grants aim to address the needs of hunger relief organizations across Washington.
- **Seafood processor Grants:** Provides grants to support seafood processors in Washington. The grants are intended to help seafood processors who were impacted by COVID-19 safety protocols.
- **Specialty Crop Block Grants:** The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program is meant to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops, defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops.
- **Specialty Crop Multi-State Program:** The Specialty Crop Multi-State Program offers grants to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crop by funding collaborative, multi-state projects addressing regional or national specialty crop issues.

- We Feed WA Grant: This grant reimburses food purchases, staffing, contracted services, and other related expenses.

## **WSDA Incorporating and meeting all the statutory requirements**

WSDA embraces the following environmental justice principles to inform and guide us on initiatives, assessments, and the implementation of our programs. These principles also guide WSDA through the process of identifying where we will direct funds and services. WSDA is committed to:

- Prioritizing vulnerable populations and overburdened communities.
- Developing budgets and funding processes that recognize the importance of environmental justice.
- Developing policy; reviewing implementation processes; and enforcing environmental laws, rules, and policies.
- Identifying and actively seeking opportunities that promote meaningful engagement with tribes and communities that have historically been harmed or faced barriers to incorporating their voices in decisions.
- Mitigating, reducing, and eliminating environmental harms.
- Collaborating with other state and federal agencies to reduce the burden on communities to gain access to resources.

WSDA has the most significant opportunity to actively involve overburdened communities and vulnerable populations in three specific ways outlined in the HEAL Act. These ways include participating in the rulemaking process, making requests for legislation, and creating and implementing new grants as authorized or required by statute. The rulemaking process is the agency's most common activity for identifying, reducing, or eliminating environmental harm, and through these initiatives, we are making significant strides toward a healthier environment.

WSDA has completed five environmental justice assessments, is actively conducting six more, and plans to initiate an additional five within three months. The agency is unwavering in its commitment to improving the process of determining when an environmental justice assessment is impactful, how we measure their impact on communities and tribes, and the overall efforts taken to have meaningful community and/or tribal engagement. This commitment aims to reassure our community members, tribes, and other HEAL Act agencies to build confidence in our work.

## **Assessment of expenditures**

WSDA conducted a comprehensive review and evaluation of 337 expense accounts. We used the HEAL Act's definition of environmental harm as the criteria to determine whether applicable expenses provide environmental benefits for overburdened communities and vulnerable populations. These criteria include assessments of the following:

- Exposure to pollution, conventional or toxic pollutants, environmental hazards, or other contamination in the air, water, and land;

- Adverse environmental effects, including exposure to contamination, hazardous substances, or pollution that increase the risk of adverse environmental health outcomes or create vulnerabilities to the impacts of climate change;
- Loss or impairment of ecosystem functions or traditional food resources or loss of access to gather cultural resources or harvest traditional foods; or
- Health and economic impacts from climate change.

Our review found that the vast majority of expense accounts evaluated (83.4%) did not meet the criteria for environmental benefits nexus, while 34 (10.1%) identified environmental benefits, 20 need additional evaluation to determine environmental benefit (5.9%), and 2 (0.6%) represent funding from the Climate Commitment Act.

Number of accounts	Account categories
<b>34</b>	Environmental benefits identified
<b>20</b>	Needs additional evaluation to determine environmental benefit
<b>281</b>	Does not meet the criteria for environmental benefits nexus

The data and calculations in this report align with the Office of Financial Management (OFM) guidance for HEAL Dashboard reporting. However, not all agency activities with an environmental benefit are captured in the dashboard reporting. On the OFM Dashboard, the pesticide compliance enforcement locations were changed to the identified county clerk's office, a measure taken to protect personal and confidential information.

## **Fiscal Year 2024 expenditures for overburdened communities & vulnerable populations**

After identifying 34 expense accounts with identified environmental benefits, we found that 28 programs had the potential to identify costs supporting overburdened communities and/or vulnerable populations and developed metrics to report on the expenditures, appropriations, and awards/allotments for these cost centers. Some programs receive funding from multiple sources, and some match federal grant funds. We reported separately for each fund source based on the dashboard structure. The total amount spent in FY 2024 in the programs that were identified to benefit both overburdened communities and vulnerable populations at the agency level was \$3,396,784. While many of the program expenditures benefited vulnerable populations, this figure represents costs that also provided benefits within the boundaries of overburdened communities according to location census tracts on the Overburdened Communities of Washington State Map. WSDA found that these expenditures comprised 22% of awarded/allotted funds for the program purposes.

The table below provides detail on FY 2024's expenditures, allocations, and appropriations for the 28 programs with environmental benefits, for which HEAL Act analysis was possible.

**FY 2024 expenditures for overburdened communities and vulnerable populations (OBC & VP), compared to awarded and appropriated funding**

Program description	FY 2024 Expenditures for Overburdened Communities and Vulnerable Populations (OBC & VP)	Total Amount Awarded/Allotted for the 2023–25 Biennium	Total Appropriation Amount for 2023–25 Biennium <sup>1,2</sup>	FY 2024 Expenditures for OBC & VP, as a percentage of Total 2023–25 Amounts Awarded/Allotted	FY 2024 Expenditures for OBC & VP, as a percentage of Total 2023–25 BN Appropriation <sup>3</sup>
Cannabis pesticide and fertilizer registration and compliance	\$0	\$37,852	\$635,000	0%	0%
Cannabis pesticide regulation and analysis compliance	\$0	\$94,104	\$635,000	0%	0%
Climate response strategy	\$0	\$161,994	\$261,000	0%	0%
Compost reimbursement	\$234,402	\$548,638	\$3,038,000	43%	8%
Dairy Nutrient Management Program	\$295,271	\$815,366	\$487,016	36%	61%
EPA - Worker protection standard / farmworker Pesticide safety education	\$21,899	\$30,550	\$35,129	72%	62%
Farmworker leadership	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	100%	100%
Farmworker pesticide safety education	\$413,622	\$849,028	\$1,903,980	49%	22%
Food waste reduction	\$0	\$212,000	\$212,000	0%	0%
Ground and surface water pesticide analysis	\$233,027	\$1,196,877	\$4,656,852	19%	5%
Hazardous waste disposal	\$196,969	\$725,914	\$1,244,967	27%	16%
Invasive knotweed	\$0	\$67,967	\$446,344	0%	0%
Invasive knotweed contractual	\$100,201	\$461,000	\$600,000	22%	17%
Pesticide compliance enforcement (EPA grant-funded)	\$218,520	\$414,227	\$581,310	53%	38%
Pesticide compliance enforcement (state-funded)	\$853,513	\$2,541,011	\$5,886,835	34%	14%
Pesticide compliance technical assistance (EPA grant-funded)	\$41,443	\$42,699	\$581,310	97%	7%
Pesticide compliance technical assistance (state-funded)	\$161,873	\$166,778	\$5,886,835	97%	3%
Pesticide licensing	\$0	\$1,748,906	\$2,351,590	0%	0%
Pesticide registration	\$0	\$1,483,298	\$1,605,373	0%	0%
Policy and outreach	\$0	\$322,243	\$426,575	0%	0%
Promoting diversity in agriculture leadership and education opportunities	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$112,000	100%	54%
Purple Loosestrife	\$5,208	\$63,096	\$149,184	8%	3%

<sup>1</sup> The biennial appropriation amounts for general fund-state (a fiscal year appropriation) are the appropriated amounts for FY 2024 only. All other funds’ appropriation amounts represent biennial appropriations.

<sup>2</sup> Several Appropriations, such as the Cannabis Pesticide Regulation and Testing General Fund State Proviso, support multiple programs within the agency, including ones that did not meet the criteria to be included in the HEAL Act reporting dashboard. To fully represent the appropriation amount for the biennium in the table, the full appropriation is entered for each program connected to the appropriation. This scenario also applies for the Pesticide enforcement and technical assistance. Both functions are performed within the same budgets and grant funds. For the following activities, the appropriation amounts are duplicated: Cannabis Pesticide Regulation and Analysis Compliance, Cannabis Pesticide and Fertilizer Registration and Compliance, Pesticide Compliance Enforcement (EPA grant-funded), and Pesticide Compliance Technical Assistance (state-funded). When the duplicate values are removed, the sum of appropriations is \$31,803,047.

<sup>3</sup> The overall percentage of expenditures benefitting OBC & VP as a fraction of the total appropriations in the table includes duplicated appropriation amounts as described in footnote #2 above. When the total appropriation amount is adjusted to the value removing duplicates, the overall expenditures benefitting OBC & VP are 11% of the total appropriations for these activities.

Reduce nitrate pollution (Lower Yakima Valley GM)	\$61,322	\$1,492,000	\$1,492,000	4%	4%
Saving Tomorrow's Agricultural Resources (STAR)	\$0	\$218,245	\$581,000	0%	0%
Soil health	\$121,176	\$275,559	\$620,337	44%	20%
Spartina	\$0	\$513,337	\$1,115,156	0%	0%
Spartina contractual	\$40,285	\$385,000	\$500,000	10%	8%
USDA Farm to Food Bank Program	\$88,052	\$234,718	\$2,611,399	38%	3%
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>\$3,396,784</b>	<b>\$15,412,405</b>	<b>\$38,906,192</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>9%</b>

## Expenditures in overburdened communities

The two categories of expenditures in overburdened communities are described below, and details for each program's costs and number of census tracts for expenditures are provided in the table below.

### Grant and Voucher Payments

Of 116 vouchers or grants with environmental benefits in FY 2024, 60 were awarded to recipients whose addresses fall within census tracts associated with overburdened communities on the Overburdened Communities of Washington State Map.

### Direct Expenditures

Direct Expenditures in Overburdened Communities were based exclusively on staff costs (salaries and benefits only) for specific positions conducting the work described for these programs in the dashboard. All other costs (travel, goods and services, and administrative costs) were classified as not having direct benefits and were excluded from the sums of expenditures classified as having direct benefits within overburdened communities and vulnerable populations.

The table below represents only those costs that fell within census tracts associated with overburdened communities on the Overburdened Communities of Washington State Map. It excludes expenditures that were likely to have benefited vulnerable populations but did not have a distinct geographic locus or were based out of a location that does not fall within a census tract classified as an overburdened community.

**FY 2024 expenditures for overburdened communities and vulnerable populations (OBC & VP), compared to awarded and appropriated funding**

Program description	Staff Costs and other Direct Expenditures	Number of Census Tracts within boundaries of OBC where Staff Support was Provided	Grant and Voucher Payments	Number of Census Tracts within boundaries of OBC with Grant/Voucher Payments
Compost reimbursement	\$0	0	\$234,402	41
Dairy Nutrient Management Program	\$295,271	2	\$0	0
EPA - Worker protection standard / farmworker Pesticide safety education	\$21,899	30	\$0	0
Farmworker leadership	\$0	0	\$250,000	1
Farmworker pesticide safety education	\$413,622	30	\$0	0
Ground and surface water pesticide analysis	\$233,027	3	\$0	0
Hazardous waste disposal	\$196,969	3	\$0	0
Invasive knotweed contractual	\$0	0	\$100,201	12
Pesticide compliance enforcement (EPA grant-funded)	\$218,520	19	\$0	0
Pesticide compliance enforcement (state-funded)	\$853,513	19	\$0	0
Pesticide compliance technical assistance (EPA grant-funded)	\$41,443	15	\$0	0
Pesticide compliance technical assistance (state-funded)	\$161,873	15	\$0	0
Promoting diversity in agriculture leadership and education opportunities	\$0	0	\$60,000	2
Purple Loosestrife	\$0	0	\$5,208	1
Reduce nitrate pollution (Lower Yakima Valley GM)	\$61,322	1	\$0	0
Soil health	\$121,176	103	\$0	0
Spartina contractual	\$0	0	\$40,285	1
USDA Farm to Food Bank Program	\$0	0	\$88,052	2
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>\$2,618,637</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>\$778,147</b>	<b>60</b>

## Grant funding for tribal governments

Eight programs providing grant funding subject to HEAL requirements, free pesticide disposal, and water quality analysis for pesticide residue were eligible to federally recognized tribes/tribal governments:

- Compost reimbursement
- Food waste reduction
- Promoting diversity in agriculture leadership and education opportunities
- Spartina management contracts
- Invasive knotweed management contracts
- Purple Loosestrife management contracts
- Ground and surface water pesticide analysis
- Hazardous waste disposal

\$10,000 was expended directly to federally recognized tribes/tribal governments:

- Promoting diversity in agriculture leadership and education opportunities: \$10,000 or 9 % of the total amount appropriated.
- \$10,000 was awarded to Washington Future Farmers of America (FFA) Foundation, which provides resources to Washington's Tribal Education Compact Schools (STECs) to establish new FFA chapters. STECs FFA programs can emphasize preserving tribal land management practices, helping students understand the connection between cultural heritage and environmental sustainability. This funding went to the Muckleshoot Tribal School.

## Environmental justice assessment

WSDA has identified specific successes in its environmental justice assessment. We have also identified challenges faced by the agency and have made plans to continue improving our environmental justice impact in the future.

### Success

In implementing the HEAL Act and other related processes, WSDA has experienced several successes in working toward environmental justice. These include:

- Recognizing team members championing equity and environmental justice, leading to positive organizational changes.
- Extensive collaboration among the agency's projects and activities fosters cross-collaboration and information sharing, a crucial step in breaking down internal silos.
- Pooling resources from HEAL and Pro Equity Anti-Racism activities has allowed WSDA to strengthen our agency's focus on equity and environmental justice.
- Targeted discussions at the executive leadership level to push uniform inclusion of environmental justice principals in the "what," "why," and "how" of our work.
- An understanding that adding additional steps to our process produces better community outcomes through increased engagement, reduced burden, and increased access.

### Challenges



WSDA's environmental justice work is ongoing. In implementing our current efforts, we have identified challenges and opportunities, including:

- The lack of unified metrics, reporting, and tracking standards across all HEAL-covered agencies, which may cause confusion in reported data.
- Funding for only 1.5 full-time equivalent positions that are dedicated to implement the HEAL Act and reduced ongoing general funds affecting staffing capacity, WSDA's ability to swiftly adjust to new guidance has been impeded. Additionally, lack of staff and funding has made thorough community engagement difficult to achieve.
- The agency's primary focus is improving environmental benefits and reducing harm to communities through its regulatory activities. However, it is challenging to operate within the narrow parameters of the qualifications needed to be included in the HEAL Act Budget and Funding Dashboard.
- The condensed time between receiving guidance and reporting makes it difficult to engage with the community and gather quality data.

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- The recent departure of WSDA's environmental justice coordinator has left a significant void, impacting our capacity and knowledge base.

## **FUTURE PLANS**

WSDA has identified goals and formulated plans to help us continue increasing our agency's environmental justice impact. These include our intention to:

- Develop and refine a toolkit for WSDA staff to establish unified metrics, reporting, and tracking standards.
- Evaluate 20 expense accounts to determine their environmental benefits.
- Revise the agency's community engagement plan
- Enhance staff training on community engagement.

## **WSDA division and program accomplishments**

The following is a collection of WSDA's accomplishments with regard to environmental justice.

### **Agricultural Environmental Services (AES) Division**

- In the last calendar year, AES Technical Services and Education Program staff worked with more than 5,000 individuals to provide farmworker protection training. This figure does not include total trainees as some of our programs train trainers, so the reach into the farmworker community is even greater. All training is provided in Spanish and English by bilingual staff.
- The Dairy Nutrient Management Program and Natural Resources Agricultural Sciences have successfully launched air, water, and soil quality support for farmers and residents in the lower Yakima Valley. This includes a groundwater specialist and agronomist position, as well as contracts with South Yakima Conservation District to provide additional services.

This is all work being conducted in line with recommendations from the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Advisory Committee (LYV GWMA).

- The Dairy Nutrient Management Program published an air quality technical report on the work being done in the Lower Yakima Valley around this topic.
- The Pesticide Compliance Program is working to update a memorandum of understanding that coordinates efforts and reduces redundancies with DOH and the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) for human pesticide exposure investigations.
- AES successfully relaunched our Pesticide Advisory Board, which convenes diverse stakeholders to provide guidance and feedback on pesticide programs, rules, and spending.
- The Pesticide Licensing and Certification Program worked with contractors to create computer-based testing for pesticide licensees. This will increase access to testing, reduce the carbon footprint of the program by making testing more regionally available, and help meet economic goals for pesticide user industries. The program went live on August 1, 2024.
- Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences began the first phase of targeted groundwater monitoring outreach in rural areas identified by using nitrate and contamination data. Agreements to sample and landowner outreach began in FY24 and sampling will commence in the fall of 2024.
- Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences continued to evolve a 23-year-old surface water monitoring program focused on pesticide contamination throughout Washington State's salmon bearing watersheds. This program includes sampling in urban and rural areas for more than 100 contaminants during the plant growing periods.
- The Fertilizer Registration Program helps protect the environment by applying the secondary containment rule to protect groundwater. The program has updated its guidance to include checking containment status at inspected bulk fertilizer distribution facilities every 12 months and completing inspections every 18 months.
- The Fertilizer Registration Program completes complex groundwater and endangered species reviews on standard registrations, special local needs, and emergency use requests. This is done in partnership with AES policy staff, who are completing federal reviews of products and protection measures for endangered species.
- The Fertilizer Registration Program team also reviews and verifies heavy metal concentrations in every fertilizer registration and renewal. This includes approximately 9,000 biennial reviews.
- The Compliance Program has an emergency drift exposure hotline that is always answered and monitored by Spanish-English bilingual staff and is intended to support farmworker health and safety.
- In August of 2023, The Technical Service and Education Program (TSEP) conducted a stakeholder meeting with the following purposes:
  - To maintain a healthy relationship with the agricultural industry and program sponsors.
  - To provide a yearly program accomplishment report.
  - To seek input about the services provided to ensure adequacy of those services.

- As of June 30, 2024, since it began collections in 1988, TSEP has performed 524 collection events and pick-up projects collecting and properly disposing of 3,986,005 pounds of unwanted/unusable pesticide products from 9,271 customers for an overall average of 430 pounds per customer.
- TSEP has established new working collaborations (program sponsors) including reforestation companies, the Christmas tree industry, and Working and Farmer Labor Association (one the largest H-2A contractors in the nation), soil and water conservation districts, and three fruit operations such as Limon Orchards, Douglas Fruit, Blueline Equipment, and B Start Orchards to offer more pesticide safety training opportunities.
- TSEP has collaborated with Washington State University (WSU), the Oregon Department of Agriculture, and The University of Washington Pacific Northwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center to ensure translation (Spanish/English) of educative materials are accurate and relevant.
- TSEP participates in the Ag Safety Organizing Committee to ensure pesticide safety topics get included in all conferences.
- TSEP collaborates with L&I and DOH on pesticide safety related trainings.
- TSEP collaborated with Washington State Tree Fruit Association to develop and deliver two 40-hour Agricultural Leadership Program (ALP) courses where approximately 75 farm supervisors/managers received training on several leadership concepts including: emotional intelligence, delegation, courageous communication, coaching, leading change, effective communication, and more. Additionally, two TSEP supervisors and the program manager participated in Gonzaga's Foundational Leadership Certificate program.
- Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences hired an agronomist to launch the agency's first fertilizer best management practices program. To date, the agronomist has aggregated information on 260+ fertilizer guides from across the Pacific Northwest and contracted with WSU to build a fertilizer and irrigation web tool to reduce nitrate leaching, nitrous oxide emissions, and farmer input costs.
- Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences completed the final year of soil sampling for the State of the Soils Assessment. Nearly 1,200 soil samples were collected from 400+ farms with the collaboration of 34 conservation districts and WSU researchers. Nearly 100 agriculture professionals were trained in soil sampling and test interpretation as part of this effort. Going forward, data will be used to develop soil health benchmarks for different Washington crops and regions.
- Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences launched the STAR program, a national conservation assessment tool that connects growers to financial incentives to practice good stewardship. STAR was funded by a USDA Climate Smart Commodities grant and the Washington state legislature and developed by a local science committee of university, conservation district, and agency scientists.
- Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences hosted the "Making Soils Data Actionable" webinar series aimed at empowering farmers and agriculture professionals to use soils data in their farm management. 196 participants from 25 states attended. Ninety-four percent of attendees reported an increased ability to make informed soil data decisions.
- Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences launched the Soil Health Ambassador program to celebrate soil health stewards and foster peer-to-peer learning. To date, six soil health ambassadors and their farm management practices were highlighted in a short video and article. Ambassadors are also given a stipend for their continued willingness to serve as

a mentor for other interested producers.

- Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences staff represented Washington agriculture and WSDA in an interagency process to update the State Climate Response Strategy. Agricultural topics include strategies and actions for emergency food relief, invasive pest and disease surveillance, water supply and irrigation efficiencies, on-farm management incentives and technical support, animal mortality composting, and a climate resilient agricultural workforce.
- Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences is leading an agency-wide process to produce WSDA's "Climate Resilient Plan for Washington Agriculture." This document will be released in Winter 2025 and will summarize the current science, policy environment, and the results of surveying and interviewing nearly 400 producers. Additionally, the document will contain goals, strategies, and actions to increase climate resilience for Washington agriculture.

### **Director's Office: We Feed Washington**

- Though funding for this program was cut 66% in the current biennium, WSDA was able to issue two-year grant awards totaling nearly \$33 million to 67 farm and food businesses across the state. As demand for food assistance continues to grow, these grants strengthen local food systems and increase equitable access to fresh, culturally relevant foods among low-income and food insecure households.

### **Animal Services Division: Compliance Program**

- In the past year, the Compliance Program helped develop a vaccine exemption process for the ethnic/religious slaughter of livestock animals. The program received input from several markets and organizations expressing concern about the need for vaccination of animals that were to be immediately slaughtered and asking for an exemption process. Through a division wide collaborative effort an exemption policy and pilot program for these exemptions was put into place in April.
- The Compliance Program proposed and received animal health and wildfire informational pamphlets in Spanish, which are now offered by Animal Services staff throughout the state.

### **Animal Services Division: Animal Health Program**

- Our State Veterinarian led the Ag Pest and Disease Response Account Bill to support the economic viability of agriculture, protect jobs and enhance public health.
- The program hosted presentations and engagement of key stakeholders at association meetings, public livestock markets, farm expos, community events, and fairs. The program also hosted public-facing and interagency webinars, as well as in person events, to provide updates, educate the public on zoonotic disease, response, preparedness, and mitigating risk.
- The program maintained a public facing map for HPAI detections to allow all residents in environmentally sensitive areas to understand their risk of HPAI exposure. As well as partnering with USDA to reach out to tribes if HPAI response was on, through, or near tribal lands.

## **Food Safety and Consumer Services Division: Animal Feed Program**

- All animal food ingredients must first be reviewed and approved to ensure safety and efficacy for the intended species. The program assisted a new WA firm that was interested in submitting a new animal food ingredient for national review and consideration. This new definition was approved and will lead to a reduction in food waste, aligning with WA's goal of reducing food waste by 50% by 2030. Produce Safety Program Overview.

## **Food Safety and Consumer Services Division: Produce Safety Program**

- Produce Safety Program team members attended seven statewide and regional agricultural conferences and tabled at five conferences to discuss the Produce Safety Rule with stakeholders and hand out resources.
- Program staff delivered six presentations to provide updates about our program and participated in eight workgroups and committees.
- The program sub-contracted with the Washington State Tree Fruit Association (WSTFA) and WSU to support eight Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) Grower Trainings, co-training at all of the courses delivered in English (two of the WSTFA courses were delivered in Spanish), co-trained at one PSA Grower Training hosted by the Northwest Agricultural Business Center, and presented one in-house PSA Grower Training for WSDA employees, reaching a total of 259 training participants in FY24.
- The program conducted two on-farm readiness reviews and one educational site visit to help growers understand the Produce Safety Rule requirements.

## **Food Safety and Consumer Services Division: Food Assistance (FA) Program**

- In response to crises associated with COVID-19, FA created innovative programming as part of the WSDA Focus on Food Initiative to address hunger and supply chain disruptions. These programs, including Resiliency Grants, SNAP-Ed (Nutrition Education), FA Reserve Warehouse, Food Purchasing, Local Food Purchasing Assistance (LFPA), and crisis funding to fill emergent gaps in the system, endure today as need across the state continues to increase. Key data points include:
  - **4:** Grants managed by Food Assistance to support hunger relief organizations and their clients.
  - **9:** Programs Food Assistance administers to help feed hungry people in Washington.
  - **644:** Organizations Food Assistance partnered with in 2023, including tribes, meal programs, community action programs, food pantries, and mobile food pantries.
  - **1.7 million:** People served by Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) in 2023—a 56% increase over the previous five years.
  - **205 million:** Pound of foods distributed by Washington State food banks and pantries in fiscal year 2023 from EFAP.
  - **400:** Farmers that participated in Farm to Community programs such as F2FP and LFPA.

## **Food Safety and Consumer Services Division: Rapid Response Team (RRT)**

- In the last 18 months alone, the RRT has worked to mitigate 25 food or feed related illness events. RRT work is supported by an FDA Cooperative Agreement (CA). The CA has many reporting and activity deliverables and the RRT met all their expectations. The program also sponsored incident command training for new RRT responders from WSDA, DOH and FDA. One recent RRT success was the tabletop exercise called *Mass Mayhem* that was held in June 2024. This exercise explored a unified response to a large-scale foodborne illness outbreak associated with the state fair. Attendees included 51 potential future RRT event responders from the WSDA Food Safety Program, WSDA Animal Feed Program, FDA inspectors, state Department of Health along with representatives from many different county health districts.

## **Commodity Inspection Division**

- The Commodity Inspection Division's inspection, audit, and phytosanitary procedures provide industry with assurance, reliability, and invaluable knowledge.