SENATE BILL REPORT
SB 6163

As of January 16, 2026

Title: An act relating to eliminating wait lists for the individual and family services waiver by including estimated expenditures for the waiver in maintenance level budgets.

Brief Description: Eliminating wait lists for the individual and family services waiver by including estimated expenditures for the waiver in maintenance level budgets.

Sponsors: Senators Braun, Christian, Dhingra, Kauffman, Muzzall and Trudeau.

Brief History:
Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 1/20/26.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires expenditures for the Individual and Family Services waiver to be included in maintenance level budgets.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Maria Hovde (786-7474)

Background: The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) assists individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families to obtain services and supports based on individual preferences, capabilities, and needs. While some DDA clients live in residential habilitation centers, most clients live in the community. Home and community-based services waivers allow clients who live in community settings to receive optional services at the same level as they would receive in an institutional setting, although waiver services are not an entitlement. Waiver services are designed to promote everyday activities, routines, and relationships, and may include services targeted at community integration, support services provided by contracted professionals, caregiving, equipment, supplies, and other specialized services.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

DDA offers services under five waivers: Basic Plus, Children's Intensive In-Home Behavioral Supports, Community Protection, Core, and the Individual and Family Services (IFS). To be eligible for waiver services, an individual must meet certain criteria, including:

- having a qualifying disability;
- meeting the intermediate care facility requirements for individuals with an intellectual disability level of care;
- meeting financial eligibility criteria;
- choosing to receive services in the community rather than in an intermediate care facility; and
- meeting other waiver-specific criteria.

Under DDA rules, when there is capacity on a waiver, first priority is given to current waiver participants assessed as needing a different waiver. From there, DDA may consider other priority populations, such as those statutorily identified, those at immediate risk of institutionalization, those who pose a community safety risk, those who are being served with state-only funds, and others. There are also statutory requirements to provide waiver services to eligible individuals who are or recently were subject to a dependency or receiving extended foster care services, and is a parent of a child who is about to be placed for adoption or foster care, in order to promote the integrity of the family unit.

If there is insufficient capacity in a waiver, DDA will place individuals on a service request list which is defined as a list of eligible persons who have received an assessment for service determination and their assessment shows that they meet the eligibility requirements for the requested service but were denied access due to funding limits. The Caseload Forecast Council (CFC) prepares a courtesy forecast of the number of individuals on the service request lists for DDA waiver services. DSHS is statutorily required to annually submit a budget request for expenditures for the Basic Plus and IFS waivers.

The IFS waiver provides a variety of services to qualified individuals including, but not limited to, respite, therapies, skilled nursing assistance, specialized nutrition and clothing, behavior management, parent and sibling education, assistive technology, transportation, and architectural and vehicular modification. Based on assessment, participants receive an annual budget to purchase the types of services needed. Annual budget allocations range from $1,560 to $4,680. The caseload for the IFS waiver is capped at 7,610 individuals. By the end of fiscal year 2027, CFC forecasts that a total of 460 individuals will be on the service request list for the IFS waiver.

Summary of Bill: Beginning with the Governor's budget proposal submitted in December 2026, expenditures for the IFS waiver must be included in maintenance level budgets. DSHS must annually submit a budget request for these expenditures.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 15, 2026.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.