

## WASHINGTON STATE DSHS LAYS OFF 120



Washington's Department of Social and Health Services, the state's largest agency, has issued layoff notices to 120 employees. Some laid off employees may be able to move into other positions with the agency. The layoffs have been taking place statewide since November. Governor Chris Gregoire proposed a no-new-taxes budget that would eliminate about 2,600 full-time positions across state government over the next two years, nearly 1,000 of them in the social services department. The Washington Federation of State Employees represents more than 8,000 of the 20,000 employees in the department, and few union members have been affected by layoffs so far. The union has opposed the budget, saying the expected shortfall, \$8 billion over two years, would require too many service cuts and layoffs without new tax income. Gregoire lifted a hiring freeze on state agencies in December, but the legislature passed a law reinstating the freeze last month.

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