



REDUCING POVERTY & INEQUALITY IN WASHINGTON STATE

10-YEAR PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

January 2020

COORDINATING DRAFT

A NOTE FROM THE STEERING COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS

"As people experiencing the issues addressed in this plan, we are as hopeful as we are anxious about submitting it. Trust is something that comes hard for many of us, and a plan without action is just a plan. We wholeheartedly want to believe that the time and energy we invested in this effort will result in the policy and program changes so desperately needed for our children, families, and communities, but remain concerned that politics and privilege will trump the bold steps needed for more Washingtonians to achieve the independence, self-determination, and economic success that can be shared with our children and grandchildren.

We are deeply grateful to Governor Inslee for taking a stand on poverty and inequality.

For those of you with the power to now decide whether and how to act, please remember that millions of Washingtonians, just like us, will continue to struggle to keep a roof over our head, struggle to feed our children, and live without peace of mind that things will be okay. Please don't forget that we are the people behind the numbers, the lives that will benefit should you choose to act."

~Drayton Jackson and Juanita Maestas, Co-Chairs

A LETTER FROM THE CO-LEADS

In November 2017, Governor Inslee directed the departments of Commerce, Employment Security, and Social & Health Services to form a Poverty Reduction Work Group (PRWG) and develop a 10-year comprehensive plan for reducing poverty and inequality in Washington state. We are proud and excited to share this *10-Year Plan for the Future* that we believe will measurably and meaningfully reduce poverty and inequality in communities across our state – if we take action.

This was a bold, necessary, and arduous assignment – one that took two years to complete. Poverty is influenced by multiple systems, sectors, and jurisdictions, all of which have a role to play in reducing it. People in every community and from every demographic and geographic background experience it, but Indigenous, Black, and Brown Washingtonians are disproportionately and uniquely affected. To fulfill the governor's directive, PRWG needed time to understand poverty in its totality – the root causes of its existence, the first-hand experience of people living it, evidence-based solutions and promising innovations across multiple systems, and how the nation's unique history of colonialism, oppression, and racism contribute to it.

It was not an easy or perfect process, but we did not expect it to be. Throughout the development of recommendations, we had to remind ourselves that if this felt easy, we were unlikely to produce a strategic plan that, if implemented, would succeed. The magnitude and complexity of poverty and inequality demanded that difficult conversations take place and be given adequate time to build trust and understanding. Our process was data-driven and grounded in evidence, but also intentionally designed to ensure that the expertise of people experiencing poverty was respected and prioritized and that our commitment to equity – especially racial equity – was authentic and actionable.

The process was hard because it had to be – and it was worth it. This *10-Year Plan for the Future* is indeed comprehensive, with recommendations enlisting the support of public and private partners from state entities, legislators, tribal nations, community-based organizations, employers, and funders, in the fields of early learning, K-12, higher education, health, human services, housing, workforce development, business, juvenile and criminal justice, and the child welfare system. It is bold and ambitious because it has to be – two million Washingtonians are counting on us.

As Drayton and Juanita, co-chairs of the Steering Committee, express in their opening statement, a plan without action is just a plan. As co-leads of this effort, standing side-by-side with the Steering Committee and the full PRWG, we commit to bringing this plan to action. We hope you will join us in ensuring that all Washingtonians live with the dignity of having their foundational needs met and access to the building blocks of opportunity essential for reaching their full potential in life, so future generations can reach theirs.

Sincerely,

Diane Klontz

Department of Commerce
Assistant Secretary, Community
Services and Housing Division

Tim Probst

Employment Security Department
Grants Manager

David Stillman

Department of Social & Health
Services
Assistant Secretary, Economic
Services Administration

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This 10-Year Plan for the Future would not have been possible without the substantial contributions of individuals and organizations throughout Washington state with a vested interest in reducing poverty and inequality. The co-lead agencies deeply appreciate all of the advisors, presenters, hosts, special guests, and people with lived experience who gave us an unvarnished view of the challenges people experiencing poverty face and offered solutions to meaningfully and measurably improve the social and economic well-being of all Washingtonians. We are deeply grateful to the following people and organizations who dedicated their time, talents, and expertise to this effort.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS & STAFF

Penny Archer • Marcy Bowers • Rebecca Boyer • Ceasar Carter • Ashley Chambers • Christianna Clinton • Liliana Cory • Krystina Cummins • Jennifer Delia • Claudia Franson • Sherri Hall • Monette Hearn • Johnathan Hemphill • Victoria Hilt • Miranda Hunter • Drayton Jackson • Tracy Lang'at • Juanita Maestas • Korbett Mosesly • Dante Pollard • Shereese Rhodes • Amy Roark • Kristina Sawycky • Carla Smith • Alina Swart • Omar Cuevas Vega

STEERING COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS & AGENCY CO-LEADS

Drayton Jackson (Kitsap School Board) • **Diane Klontz** (Department of Commerce) • **Juanita Maestas** (Statewide Poverty Action Network) • **Tim Probst** (Employment Security Department) • **David Stillman** (Department of Social & Health Services)

AGENCY STAFF, INTERNS, & CONSULTANTS

Carol Albert (Department of Social & Health Services) • **Briana Allen** (Department of Social & Health Services) • **Marie Bruin** (Employment Security Department) • **Cecil Daniels** (Department of Commerce) • **Roxanne Garcia** (PRWG Intern) • **Jorji Knickrehm** (Department of Social & Health Services) • **Patricia Lally** (Racial Equity Works) • **Lori Pfingst** (Department of Social & Health Services) • **Babs Roberts** (Department of Social & Health Services) • **Lindsay Morgan Tracy** (Department of Social & Health Services) • **Amy Willerford** (PRWG Intern)

PRWG MEMBERS & ORGANIZATIONS

Amina Ahmed & Hien Kieu (Partners in Employment) • **Jim Baumgart** (Office of Governor Inslee) • **Mark Bergeson & Ami Magisos** (Student Achievement Council) • **Sarah Buhayar & Lindsay Hunsicker** (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation) • **Luba Bezborodnikova & Nicole Rose** (Department of Children, Youth, & Families) • **Sue Birch & James Brackett** (Health Care Authority) • **Gary Chandler** (Association of Washington Businesses) • **Jim Cooper** (United Ways of Pacific Northwest) • **Senator Manka Dhingra** (Washington State Senate Democrats) • **Eu-wanda Eagans** (Goodwill Industries of the Olympic & Rainier Region) • **Colleen Echohawk** (Chief Seattle Club) • **Larry Eyer** (Community Action Partnership) • **Cheryl Fambles** (Pacific-Mountain Workforce Development Council) • **Erin Frasier** (State Board of Community & Technical Colleges) • **Nova Gattman** (Work Force Training & Education Coordinating Board) • **Claude Green** (Mentor Washington) • **Ellen Austin Hall** (Attorney General's Office) • **James Harms** (Department of Corrections) • **Lonnie Johns-Brown** (Office of the Insurance Commissioner) • **Kate Kelly** (Washington Hospitality Association) • **Haley Lowe** (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction) • **Nickolaus Lewis** (Lummi Nation) • **Sandra Miller** (Office of the Attorney General) • **Erin Monroe** (Workforce Snohomish) • **Nam Nguyen** (Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs) • **Daisye Orr** (Department of Health) • **Sharon Pesut** (Partners in Careers) • **Dona Ponepinto** (United Way Pierce County) • **Ed Prince** (Commission on African American Affairs) • **Michael Reichert & Josephine Tamayo Murray** (Catholic Community Services) • **Maria Sigüenza** (Commission on Hispanic Affairs) • **Neil Strege** (Washington Business Roundtable) • **Marisol Tapia Gonzales** (Puget Sound Training Center) • **Traci Underwood** (Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence) • **Julie Watts** (Washington State Budget & Policy Center) • **Jan Wichert** (Vancouver Housing Authority) • **Christina Wong** (Northwest Harvest) • **Senator Hans Zeiger** (Senate Republicans)

PRESENTERS & ADVISORS

Penny Archer (Moses Lake Food Bank) • **Laura Armstrong** (La Casa Hogar) • **Amy Bell** (Goodwill Industries of the Olympic and Rainier Region) • **Rachel Turner-Benson** (Goodwill Industries of the Olympic and Rainier Region) • **Mark Bergeson** (Washington Student Achievement Council) • **Brian Bonlender** (Department of Commerce) • **Kelly Blucher** (Goodwill Industries of the Olympic and Rainier Region) • **Marcy Bowers** (Statewide Poverty Action Network) • **Norman Brickhouse** (Goodwill Industries of the Olympic and Rainier Region) • **Amador Castro** (Jobs for Washington Graduates) • **Colleen Chalmers** (Chief Seattle Club) • **Sarah Chaoui** (Intern, Disability Rights Washington) • **Nawiishtunmi Conner** (Chief Seattle Club) • **D'Adre Cunningham** (Washington Defender Association) • **Felice Davis** (Washington Corrections Center for Women) • **LaNesha DeBardelaben** (Northwest African-American Museum) • **Karen Dove** (Apprenticeship Pathways to Construction Careers) • **Cindy Farnsworth** (Goodwill Industries of the Olympic and Rainier Region) • **Darya Farivar** (Disability Rights Washington) • **Maria Flores** (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction) • **Emil Floresca** (The Accelerator YMCA) • **Edel Galgon** (Intern, Disability Rights Washington) • **Leon Garnett** (Byrd Barr Place) • **Cecilia Gonzales** (La Casa Hogar) • **Kim Gunning** (Columbia Legal Services) • **Dr. Marisa Herrera** (Shoreline Community College) • **Darrell Hillaire** (Lummi Nation) • **David Hlebain** (Statewide Poverty Action Network) • **Elizabeth Hodges** (Communities in Schools) • **John Holland** (Community Services of Moses Lake) • **Rebecca Hopper** (YouthWorks participant) • **Heather Hudson** (Washington Student Achievement Council) • **Bill James** (Lummi Nation) • **Gerald James** (Lummi Nation) • **Heather Jefferson** (Lummi Nation) • **Princene Johnson** (Beacon of Washington) • **Marie Jubie** (Disability Rights Washington) • **Jeremiah "Jay" Julius** (Lummi Nation) • **Jayne Kaniss** (Goodwill Industries of the Olympic and Rainier Region) • **Tedd Kelleher** (Department of Commerce) • **Rebecca Kinley** (Lummi Nation) • **Amber Leaders** (Office of Governor Inslee) • **Dr. Terry Leas** (Moses Lake Community College) • **Portia Lee** (participant of Goodwill Industries of the Olympic and Rainier Region's Women to Work program) • **Laurie Lippold** (Partners for Our Children) • **Shannon Loew** (FIX Impact Capital) • **Victor Loo** (Asian Counselling & Referral Services) • **David Lord** (Disability Rights Washington) • **Elana Mainer** (Room One) • **Reneeka Massey-Jones** (Equity in Education Coalition) • **Brent Mayo** (Grant County Economic Development Council) • **Michael Mirra** (Tacoma Housing Authority) • **Sharonne Navas** (Equity in Education Coalition) • **Michael Nguyen** (Seattle Teacher Residency) • **Frank Ordway** (Department of Children, Youth, and Families) • **Estela Ortega** (El Centro de la Raza) • **Aija Ozolin** (Community Advocate – Reach Center graduate) • **Erika Koch Pablo** (Strategic Advisor) • **John Page** (Equity in Education Coalition) • **Dr. Robbie Paul** (Nez Perce, Washington State University) • **Chris Poulos** (Washington Re-entry Council) • **Lua Pritchard** (Asia Pacific Cultural Center) • **SL Rao** (Department of Commerce) • **Yolanda Rios** (Skill Source) • **Sara Robbins** (Solid Ground) • **Susanna Rudnitsky** (Community Services Specialist , Moses Lake) • **Marilyn Scott** (Upper Skagit Indian Tribe) • **Lawrence Solomon** (Lummi Nation) • **Jamie Stout** (Goodwill Industries of the Olympic and Rainier Region) • **Laura Lee Sturm** (Seattle Department of Transportation) • **Michelle Tinkler** (TACID, Pierce County) • **Silvie Valdez** (SL START) • **Gabriele Valencia** (WIOA youth participant, Family Services, Grant County) • **Deborah Wofford** (Washington Correction Center for Women) • **Kelsey Wiltfong** (former WorkFirst participant) • **Tamar Zere** (Green River College) • **Lin Zhou** (Bates Technical College)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

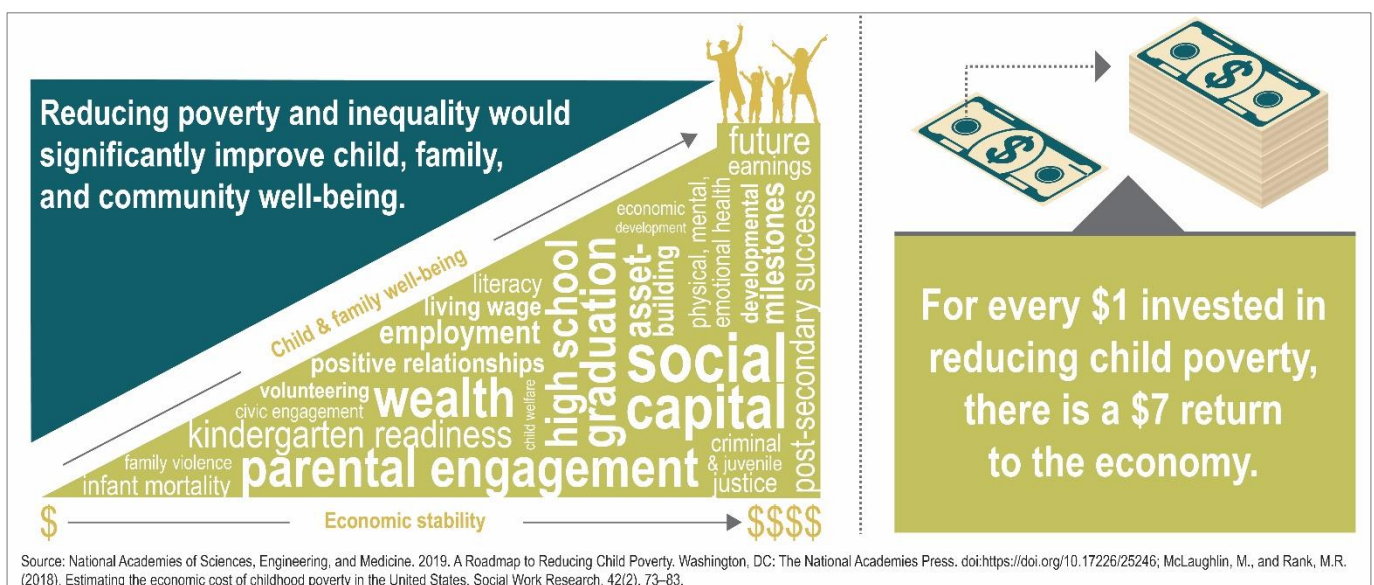
REDUCING POVERTY AND INEQUALITY IN WASHINGTON STATE

Children, adults, families, and communities are more likely to thrive when their foundational needs are met. Trusting relationships with parents, friends, and neighbors. A safe, affordable home. Abundant and nutritious food. And the building blocks we all need to succeed – a high quality education from cradle to career, a job that pays a living wage, and healthy communities to support how we live, love, work, and play. This is the foundation of opportunity all Washingtonians need to thrive.

People experiencing poverty are less likely than their peers to have a strong foundation from which to build for the future. Today, 1.8 million Washingtonians – over 500,000 of them children – live in a household that struggles to make ends meet. That's enough people to fill 25 stadiums the size of CenturyLink Field.¹

The research is crystal clear – there is a causal relationship between poverty and its negative effects on child, adult, family, and community well-being. Nearly every goal Washington state wishes to make progress on – including kindergarten readiness, high school graduation, an educated workforce, healthy families, less crime, and strong communities – would significantly improve if poverty and inequality were reduced. Investing in the social and economic well-being of Washingtonians is not just the right thing to do, it also saves money – for every \$1 invested in reducing child poverty there is a \$7 return to the economy due to increased earnings when children become adults and savings from reduced state spending on homelessness, health, and crime.

Washington state will not reach its full potential until its residents can. Reducing poverty and inequality is an essential investment in the collective well-being of our communities and economy.



¹ DSHS|ESA analysis of 2017 American Community Survey data

A 10-YEAR PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Governor Inslee's Poverty Reduction Workgroup (PRWG) aims for a future in which *all* Washingtonians live with the dignity of having their foundational needs met and access to the building blocks of opportunity essential for reaching their full potential in life so future generations can reach theirs.

The *10-Year Plan for the Future* is the culmination of two years' work with a diverse group of state agencies, legislators, racial and ethnic commissions, community-based organizations, advocates, employers, and philanthropy that met monthly to develop strategies and recommendations that, if implemented, will meaningfully and measurably reduce poverty and inequality in our state. The strategies and recommendations are grounded in existing data and evidence, and strongly influenced by the expertise of a 22-member Steering Committee made up of people experiencing poverty. PRWG also utilized a racial equity consultant and toolkit to specifically address the undue burden of poverty among Indigenous, Black, and Brown Washingtonians, and includes recommendations specific to other groups most affected, including women, children, seniors, single parents, rural communities, LGBTQ, people with disabilities, and immigrants and refugees.

PRWG identified the following eight strategies, with 56 specific recommendations that – if implemented – will reduce poverty and inequality in Washington state, and ensure social and economic opportunity be passed on from this generation to the next...and the next...and the next.

Strategies & Recommendations

STRATEGY #1: Understand structural racism and historical trauma, and take action to undo their harmful effects in state policy and programs. [2 Recommendations]	STRATEGY #5: Address the urgent needs of people experiencing homelessness, violence, mental illness, and/or addiction. [7 Recommendations]
STRATEGY #2: Make equal space in decision-making for people and communities most affected by poverty and inequality. [3 Recommendations]	STRATEGY #6: Build an integrated human service continuum of care that addresses the holistic needs of children, adults, and families. [6 Recommendations]
STRATEGY #3: Target equitable education, income growth, and wealth-building opportunities for people with low incomes. [16 Recommendations]	STRATEGY #7: Decriminalize poverty and reduce reliance on the child welfare, juvenile justice, and criminal justice systems. [10 Recommendations]
STRATEGY #4: Strengthen health supports across the life span to promote the intergenerational well-being of families. [6 Recommendations]	STRATEGY #8: Ensure a just and equitable transition to the future of work. [6 Recommendations]

To stay informed about the state's poverty reduction efforts and learn how you can support the strategies and recommendations, visit www.dismantlepovertyinwa.com and sign up for updates and events.

INTRODUCTION

"In Washington state, more than a half-million children live in families that struggle to make ends meet. This is unacceptable anywhere, but especially in a state with so much prosperity." ~Governor Jay Inslee

A Plan for the Future

Washington made national headlines recently for being ranked the Best State in the Nation by U.S. News & World Report.² Strong technology, manufacturing, and energy sectors, combined with high scores for health care, education, and opportunity, propelled us to the top of the list. It is exciting many people recognize our state for what Washingtonians already know – our beautiful corner of the Pacific Northwest is indeed unique for all it has to offer.

While there is much to be celebrated, data about our most precious resource – the individuals, children, families, and communities that call Washington state home – paint a more nuanced picture. **Today, 1.8 million Washingtonians – over 500,000 of them children – live in a household that struggles to make ends meet; enough to fill 25 stadiums the size of CenturyLink Field.³** For one in four of our neighbors, the foundation needed to support them reaching their full potential is cracked, making it challenging to build for the future. Many more live on a financial fault line, with few resources to weather the life storms that can affect all of us – a sudden illness, a major car repair, or getting laid off. Most are working, but find that it is increasingly difficult to afford the basics in communities throughout the state. A disproportionate share of people are Indigenous, Black, and Brown – the legacy of a social and economic system built on our history of colonialism, racism, oppression, and exclusion.

Washington state cannot reach its full potential until our residents can. That is why Governor Inslee created a Poverty Reduction Work Group (PRWG) and tasked it with creating a comprehensive 10-year plan to reduce poverty and inequality in Washington state. This *Plan for the Future* is the culmination of PRWG's work over the last two years, and includes recommendations that agencies, legislators, businesses, community-based organizations, and funders can all work on together to ensure social and economic opportunity and well-being exists for all Washingtonians, and that it be passed on from this generation to the next...and the next...and the next.

The goal of this strategic plan is to create a future in which *all* Washingtonians live with the dignity of having their foundational needs met and access to the building blocks of opportunity essential for reaching their full potential in life so future generations can reach theirs.

² U.S. News & World Report (May 14, 2019) "Why Washington is the Best State in the Nation" downloaded on June 5, 2019 @ <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/articles/2019-05-14/amazon-clean-power-help-fuel-washington>

³ DSHS|ESA analysis of 2017 American Community Survey data

Governor Inslee's Poverty Reduction Work Group

Governor Inslee's Poverty Reduction Work Group (PRWG) was created via Directive in November 2017. PRWG is co-led by the state departments of Commerce, Employment Security, and Social & Health Services, in partnership with tribal and urban Indians, state racial and ethnic commissions, employers, community-based organizations, legislators, advocates, and philanthropy (**Figure 1**). A steering committee made up of 22 people reflecting the demographic and geographic experience of poverty provides critical oversight to PRWG and contributed substantially to the development and prioritization of recommendations. The groups have met monthly since their inception.⁴ Full documentation of all PRWG meetings can be found on [Governor Inslee's PRWG issues page](#).

Figure 1: PRWG Membership & Structure



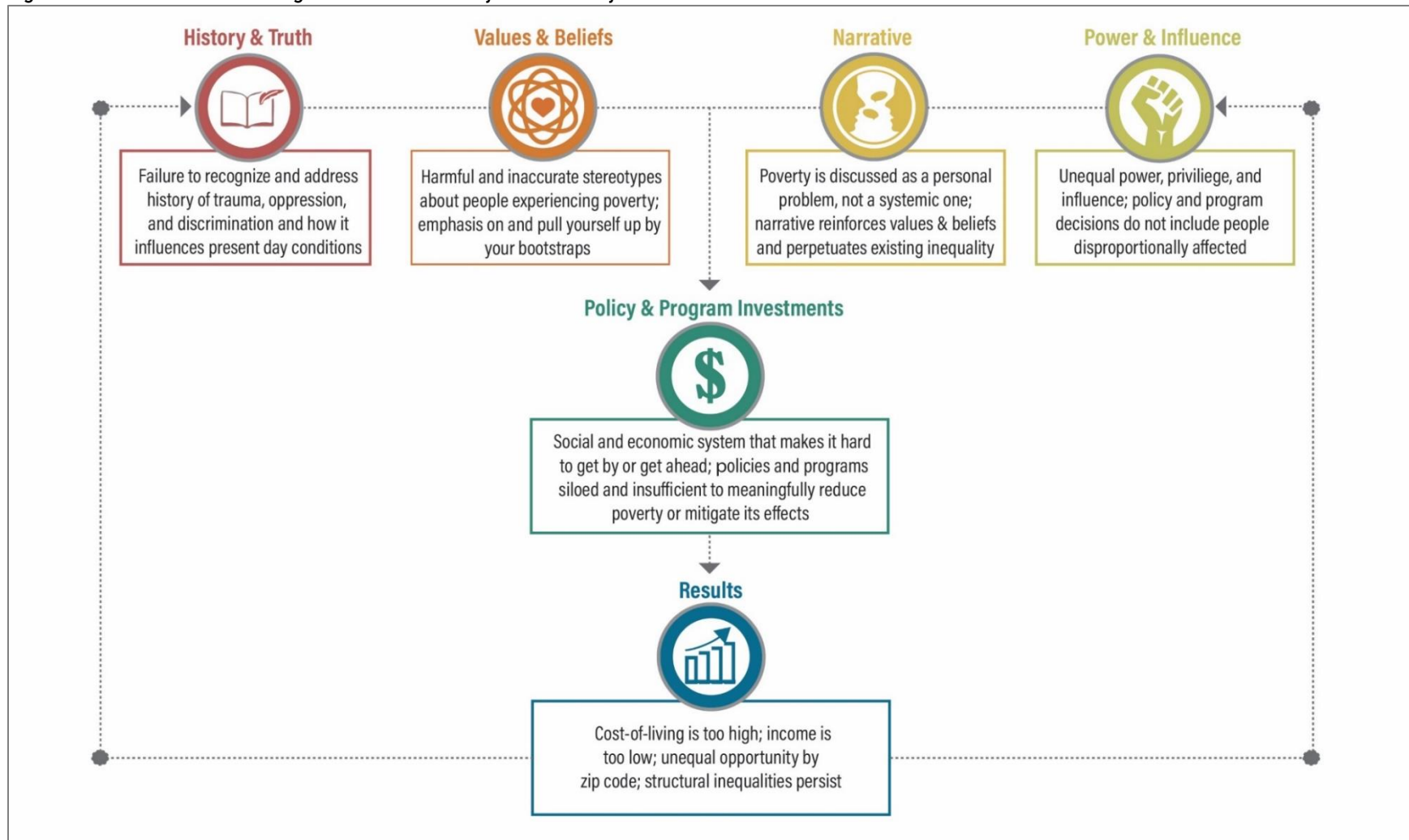
Process & Priorities for Developing Recommendations

PRWG adopted the following priorities and process to develop recommendations for the strategic plan.

Addressing root causes AND the urgency of now. PRWG prioritized addressing the root causes of poverty (**Figure 2**) in the development of the strategic plan, the data and evidence for which can be found in the [Interim Progress Report](#). While a focus on root causes and systemic change is essential to reducing the incidence of poverty in Washington state, PRWG also recognizes there is an urgent need to provide resources to the 1.8 million children, adults, and families struggling to make ends meet *today*. Our recommendations, therefore, address root causes and the urgency of now.

⁴ Governor Inslee issued the directive creating an Interagency Poverty Reduction Work Group in November 2017. The group formed in February 2018 and immediately prioritized creating a steering committee, which began meeting in October 2018. Both groups have met monthly since their inception.

Figure 2: Root Causes of Intergenerational Poverty Identified by PRWG



Elevating the expertise and influence of people experiencing poverty. As the foremost experts on their lives, PRWG placed a high priority on the perspectives of people experiencing poverty and organizations serving them in preparing recommendations. The steering committee was invaluable to the creation of recommendations and is a powerful example of how to institutionalize the practice of including people most affected by an issue at decision-making tables (**Bright Spot #1**).

Achieving equity, especially racial equity. The experience of poverty is not shared equally. Indigenous, Black, and Brown Washingtonians, women, families with young children, youth, rural residents, immigrants and refugees, seniors, LGBTQ, and people with disabilities have poverty rates above the state average. Reducing poverty in a way that achieves equity for each of these groups is essential for Washington state to maximize the well-being of its residents and fully realize the talent, potential, and contributions they have to offer. The strategies and recommendations contained in *A Plan for the Future* target groups most affected by poverty so equity can be achieved.

PRWG places special emphasis on racial equity. With poverty rates nearly double that of the state average, we cannot untangle the undue burden of poverty among Indigenous, Black, and Brown Washingtonians from the history and perpetuation of colonialism, oppression, and racism embedded throughout systems that influence the opportunities we need to succeed, such as

BRIGHT SPOT #1: Poverty Reduction Work Group Steering Committee

Recognizing that people experiencing poverty are the foremost experts in their lives, PRWG prioritized elevating the leadership and expertise of those most affected by poverty in the development of strategies and recommendations for the 10-year strategic plan. Toward that end, the group unanimously decided to create a Steering Committee whose role was to set priorities for the plan and provide honest and critical feedback throughout the process. Quotes from Steering-Committee members are presented throughout the report to give voice to the specific issues, themes, and solutions highlighted throughout the plan.

The 22-member Steering Committee was convened by PRWG member Statewide Poverty Action Network. Membership includes people from urban, suburban, rural, and tribal areas in Washington state, and has diverse representation from communities most affected by poverty, including: Indigenous, Black and Brown people, people with disabilities, LGBTQ, immigrants and refugees, and single parents. The steering committee held monthly, full-day meetings to determine priorities, and elected two co-chairs to represent them in the full PRWG meetings.

The Steering Committee provided the knowledge and expertise PRWG needed to develop a strategic plan that, if implemented, would actually work. They are also the heart and soul of the effort – grounding the larger group in what it means to experience poverty in Washington state, and why listening to people most affected by it is essential for us to succeed in reducing it.

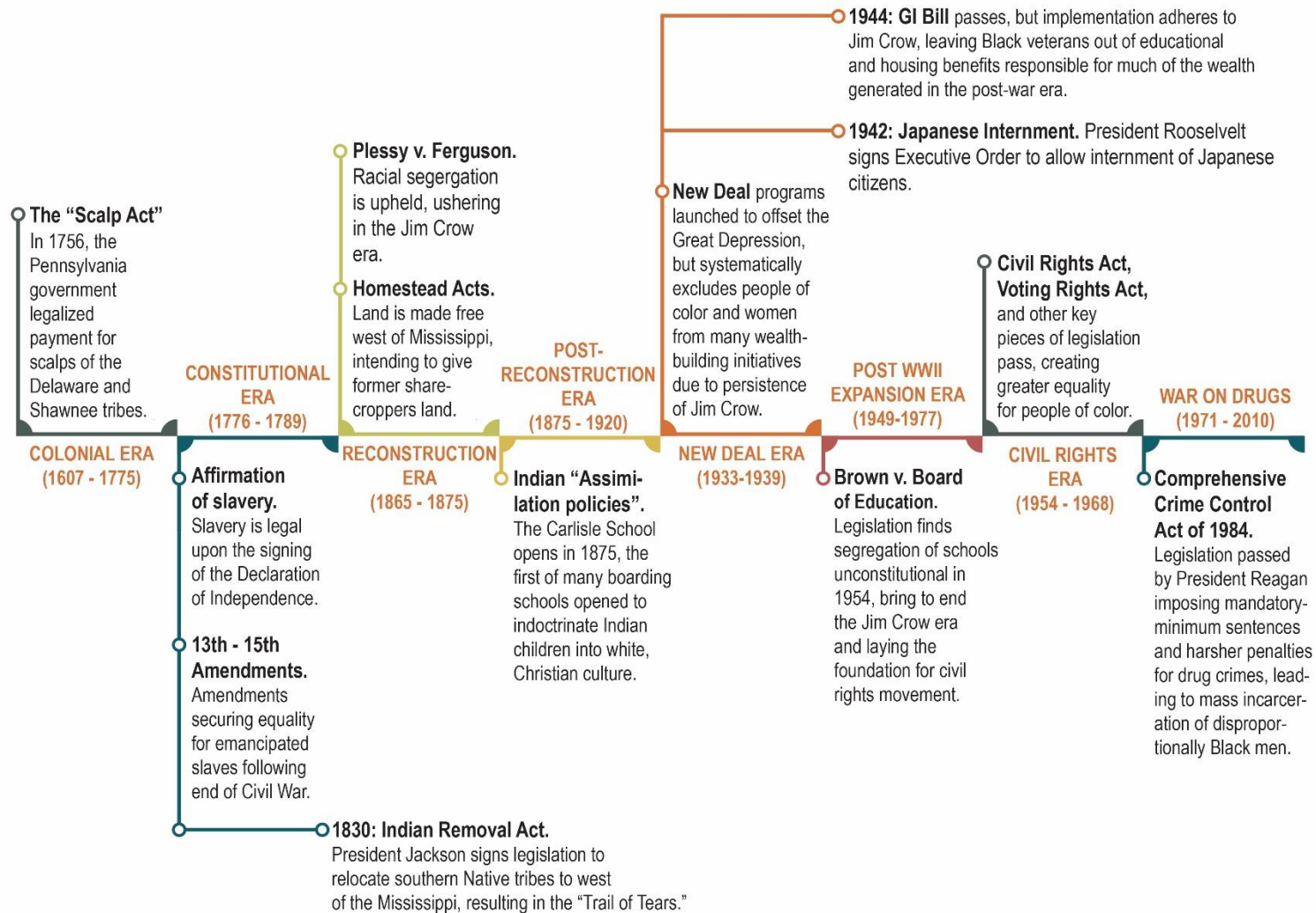
education, employment, and housing. Indeed, throughout history policies have systematically excluded people of color from the opportunities we all need to thrive, directly affecting their disproportionate experience of poverty today **(Figure 3)**. Racial discrimination also overlaps with other forms of discrimination – ageism, sexism, classism, homophobia, xenophobia, and ableism – to deepen the experience of poverty. Emphasizing race is not ignorant of the fact that poverty affects people from all backgrounds; however, Indigenous, Black, and Brown people nearly always fare worse than their white peers regardless of other demographic and geographic circumstances. By emphasizing race we tackle the most egregious roots of disproportionality, the elimination of which will allow us to make meaningful and measurable progress for all Washingtonians.⁵

Toward this end, PRWG hired a racial equity consultant to facilitate our work and adopted the use of a racial equity toolkit – a process designed to guide, inform, and assess how policies, programs, and practices burden or benefit people of color – to ensure strategies and recommendations address the disproportionate experience of poverty among Indigenous, Black, and Brown Washingtonians with intention. (see Appendix A for full racial equity toolkit).

“If you truly believe that racial groups are equal, then you also believe that racial disparities must be the result of racial discrimination.” ~Ibram X. Kendi

⁵ For a deeper understanding of how a focus on race is essential for an equitable future, see PolicyLink’s Curb-Cutting Effect by Angela Glover Blackwell, available at <https://www.policylink.org/about-us/curb-cut-effect>.

Figure 3: Examples of Significant U.S. Policies Affecting Poverty Outcomes by Race and Ethnicity



Source: Adapted from Ellis, W. (2019) Community Resilience: A Dynamic Model for Public Health. Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Database (UMI No. 13811038)

Blending evidence, innovation, and collaboration. PRWG placed a high priority on using existing research and evidence to formulate the recommendations and, in several cases, relied on the efforts of other work groups and task forces with expertise on specific issues related to poverty. However, while there is no shortage of promising policies, programs and practices, existing evidence has thus far failed to meaningfully reduce the demographic and geographic gaps in poverty among people of color and other groups disproportionately affected. Therefore, PRWG also prioritized innovative approaches informed by groups most affected, including and especially those recommended by PRWG Steering Committee members. We believe this approach – blending strong evidence with solutions informed by people experiencing poverty – increases the likelihood that our recommendations, should they be implemented, will succeed.

Inspiring hope and building on resilience. Current policies, programs, and practices are built on a long legacy of shaming and punishing people in poverty, instilling a sense of fear, and undermining progress. Strong and growing evidence from brain science and behavioral economics shows that children, adults, and families experiencing poverty are remarkably resilient, especially when they have a sense of hope. The recommendations contained in this plan were intentionally crafted to eliminate shame and punishment from policies, programs, and practices, and inspire a sense of hope.

Building Momentum

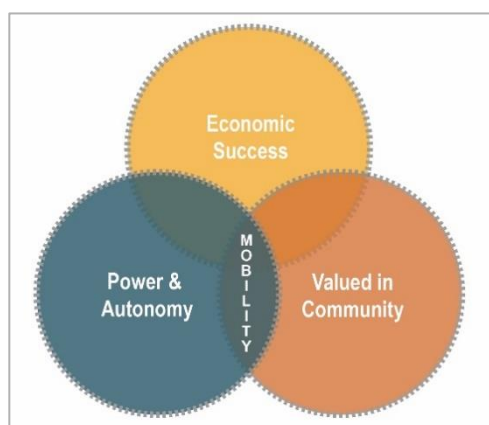
To ensure that the strategies and recommendations represent diverse points of view, PRWG members will be conducting extensive outreach and engagement with stakeholders throughout Washington state from January to June 2020. During this time, we will discuss the process for developing the strategic plan and request feedback on the strategies and recommendations. PRWG will consolidate this feedback into the final 10-year plan, to be submitted in July 2020.

To stay informed about the state's poverty reduction efforts and learn how you can support the strategies and recommendations, visit www.dismantlepovertyinwa.com and sign up for updates and events.

DEFINING & MEASURING POVERTY IN WASHINGTON STATE

The experience of poverty varies considerably, as do the ways different communities and cultures recognize and define it. While traditional definitions and measures of poverty focus on a lack of economic resources, people experiencing poverty go without much more – too often feeling isolated, judged, and disconnected from the support they need to thrive.

The [*U.S. Partnership on Mobility from Poverty*](#), a partnership between the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Urban Institute, envisions a nation where “all people achieve a reasonable standard of living with the dignity that comes from having power over their lives and being engaged in and valued by their community.”⁶ The partnership developed a new, evidence-based framework to show that mobility from poverty is possible when three key elements are present, defined as follows:



“**Economic success** is foundational and entails many of the traditional measures of poverty, including income and assets. However, it is not enough.

Equally important are **power and autonomy**, which speak to individual agency, having a sense of control and a say in the trajectory of one’s life and one’s community.

And **being valued in community** speaks to dignity, belonging, social capital, and social inclusion.”

This framework is a powerful platform for Washington state to build from and shift our understanding of poverty and inequality, including how we define and measure it. Traditional measures remain valuable, but are outdated and limit our understanding of the diverse experience Washingtonians in poverty face. Moreover, numbers only tell part of the story, and the ones reported too often paint a misleading and harmful picture of communities most affected by poverty. For example, Abigail Echohawk, Chief Research Officer for the Seattle Indian Health Board, explains how current data systems harm Indigenous people and why “decolonizing” data and storytelling is essential for making progress for all marginalized communities:

“When we think about data and how it's been gathered from marginalized communities, it was never gathered to help or serve us. It was primarily done to show the deficits in our communities, to show where there are gaps. And it's always done from a deficit-based framework...what they don't talk about is the strengths of our community. Decolonizing data is about controlling our own story, and making decisions based on what is best for our people.”⁷~Abigail Echohawk, Chief Research Officer, Seattle Indian Health Board

⁶ Ellwood, D. T., & Patel, N. G. (2018, June 1). Restoring the American Dream. Retrieved from <https://www.mobilitypartnership.org/restoring-american-dream>

⁷ Secaira, M. (2019, May 31). Abigail Echo-Hawk on the art and science of 'decolonizing data'. Retrieved from <https://crosscut.com/2019/05/abigail-echo-hawk-art-and-science-decolonizing-data>

We need to tell a better story about poverty and inequality. Working in partnership with communities most affected by poverty to improve data collection that is representative of their perspectives, experience, and strengths is key to dismantling myths and developing the most effective solutions. **PRWG encourages policymakers and stakeholders to adopt the practice of letting people represented by data bring meaning to it to tell a better story and inform more effective solutions.**

In the meantime, an overview of existing data is below to provide a baseline understanding of the size and extent of poverty and inequality in Washington state.

Official Poverty Measure

The official poverty level for the U.S. is based on a measure developed in 1963 during the War on Poverty and remains in wide use today to track economic hardship and determine eligibility and assistance levels for programs. In 2019, a family of three falls under the official definition of poverty if they make under \$21,330 per year, no matter where they live in the continental U.S.⁸ The severity of poverty is often defined as a ratio to the federal poverty level (FPL) (**Table 1**).

Table 1: Economic Hardship by Degrees of Severity, 2019

SEVERITY	FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL	INCOME FOR A FAMILY OF 3
Deep Poverty	0% – 49%	\$0 – \$10,665
Poverty	50% – 99%	\$10,665 – \$21,330
Low Income	100% – 200%	\$21,330 – \$42,660

Over time, many people have increasingly criticized the official measure as outdated and insufficient at capturing the true extent of economic hardship in the U.S.⁹ In recent decades, new measures have emerged to overcome limitations of the official poverty measure by estimating actual cost-of-living for basic needs – such as housing, food, child care, and transportation – for different geographies, family size, and age of children (*see Cost-of-Living Measures*). These measures consistently show that it takes at least 200% FPL to meet the basic needs of most families in most communities in Washington state. Therefore, PRWG uses 200% FPL to provide a *conservative* estimate of the size and extent of economic hardship in Washington state.

On average, 1.8 million Washingtonians – one in four (25%) – live below 200% FPL. Disaggregating the data shows that indigenous, black, and brown Washingtonians experience much higher rates than the state average, as do women, families with young children, people with disabilities, immigrants and refugees, and rural populations (Figures 4–6).

⁸ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (2019). U.S. Federal Poverty Guidelines to Determine Financial Eligibility for Certain Federal Programs. Retrieved from <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>; Alaska and Hawaii have slightly higher poverty thresholds than the contiguous 48 states

⁹ Blank, R., (2008, July 17). Why the United States Needs an Improved Measure of Poverty. Congressional Testimony available at <https://www.brookings.edu/testimonies/why-the-united-states-needs-an-improved-measure-of-poverty/>

Figure 4: Poverty for Major Demographic Groups by Degree of Severity, Washington State 2013-2017

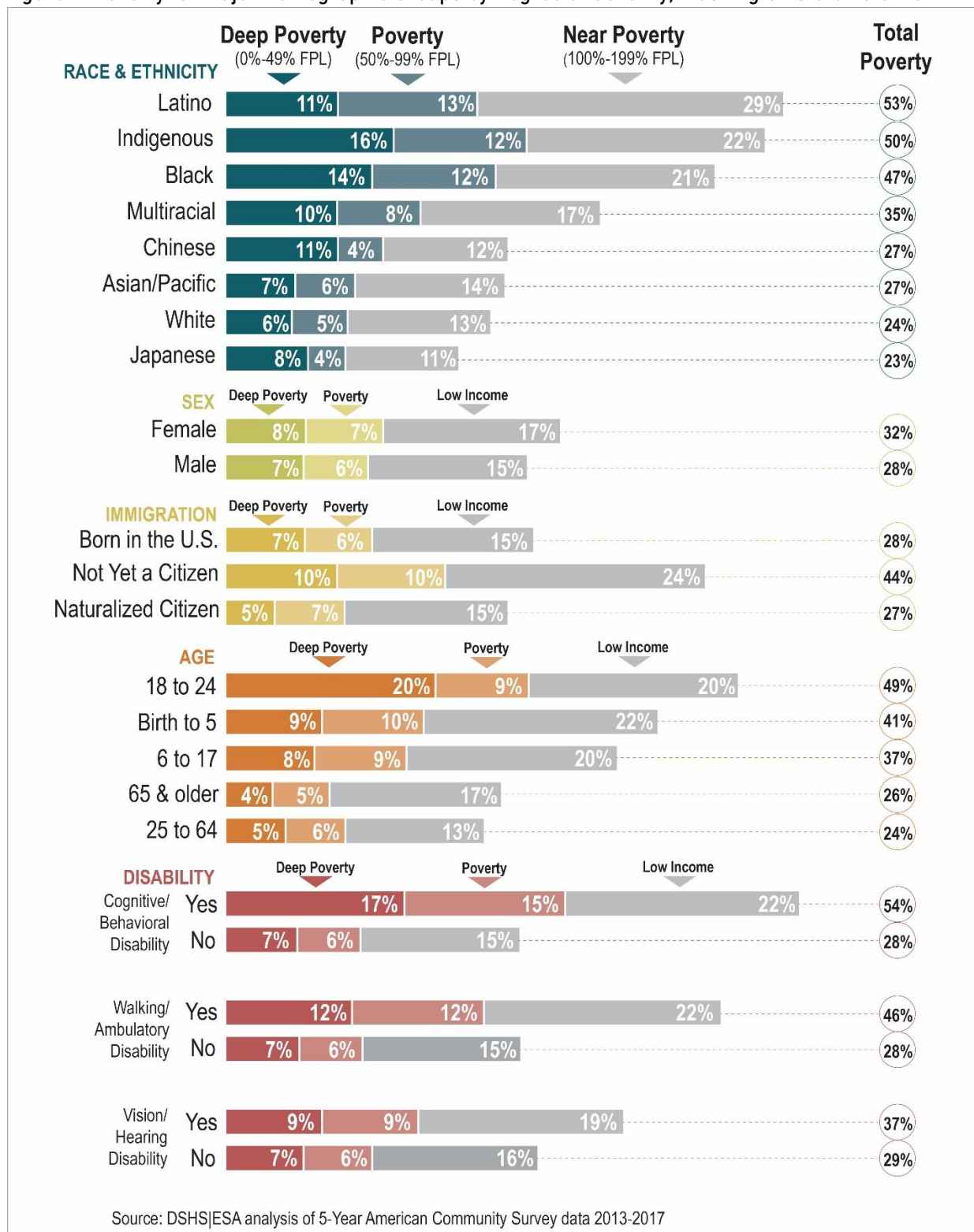


Figure 5. Percent of People Living Below 200% FPL for Detailed Asian, Pacific Islander, Latino, & Tribal Nations in Washington State, 2013-2017

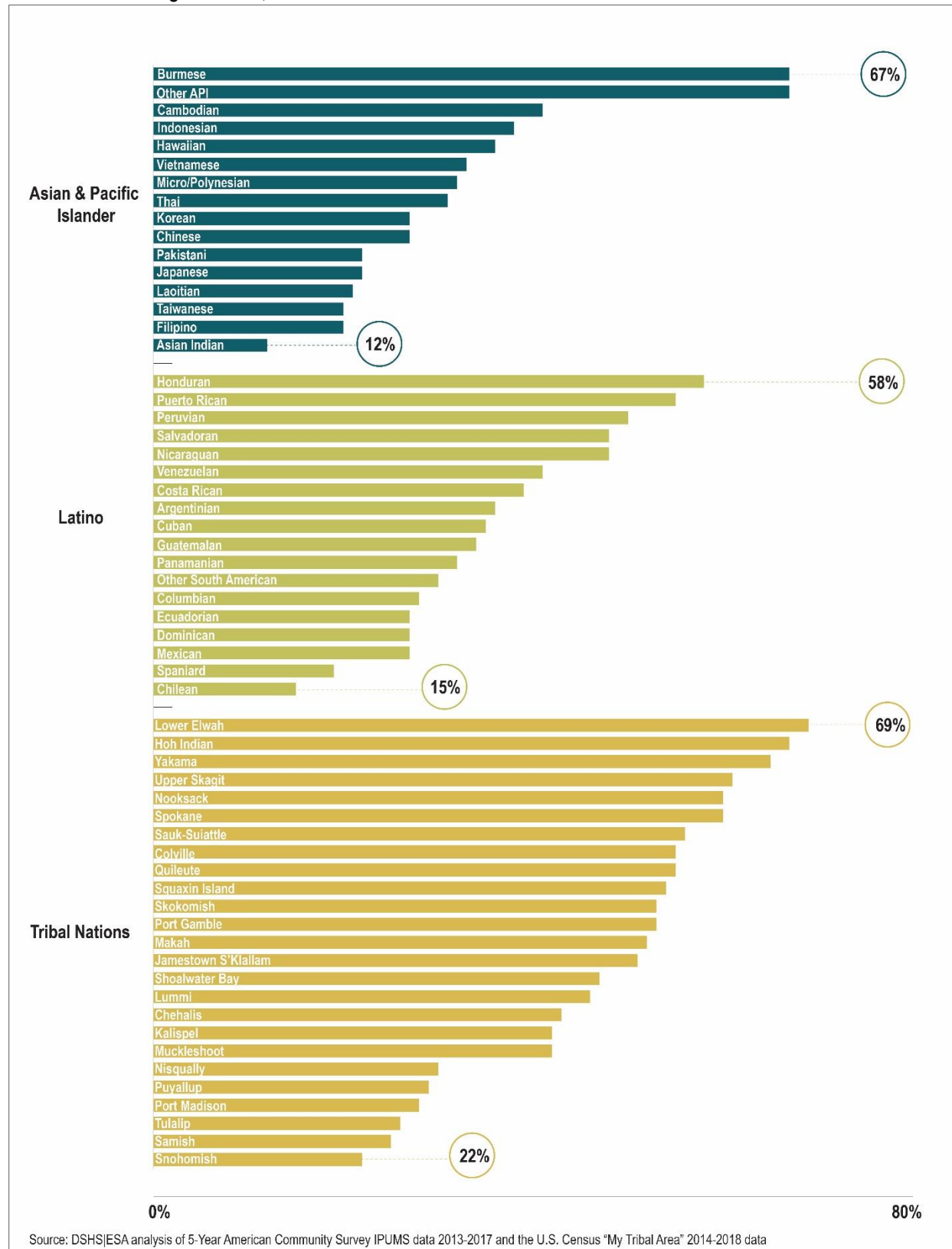
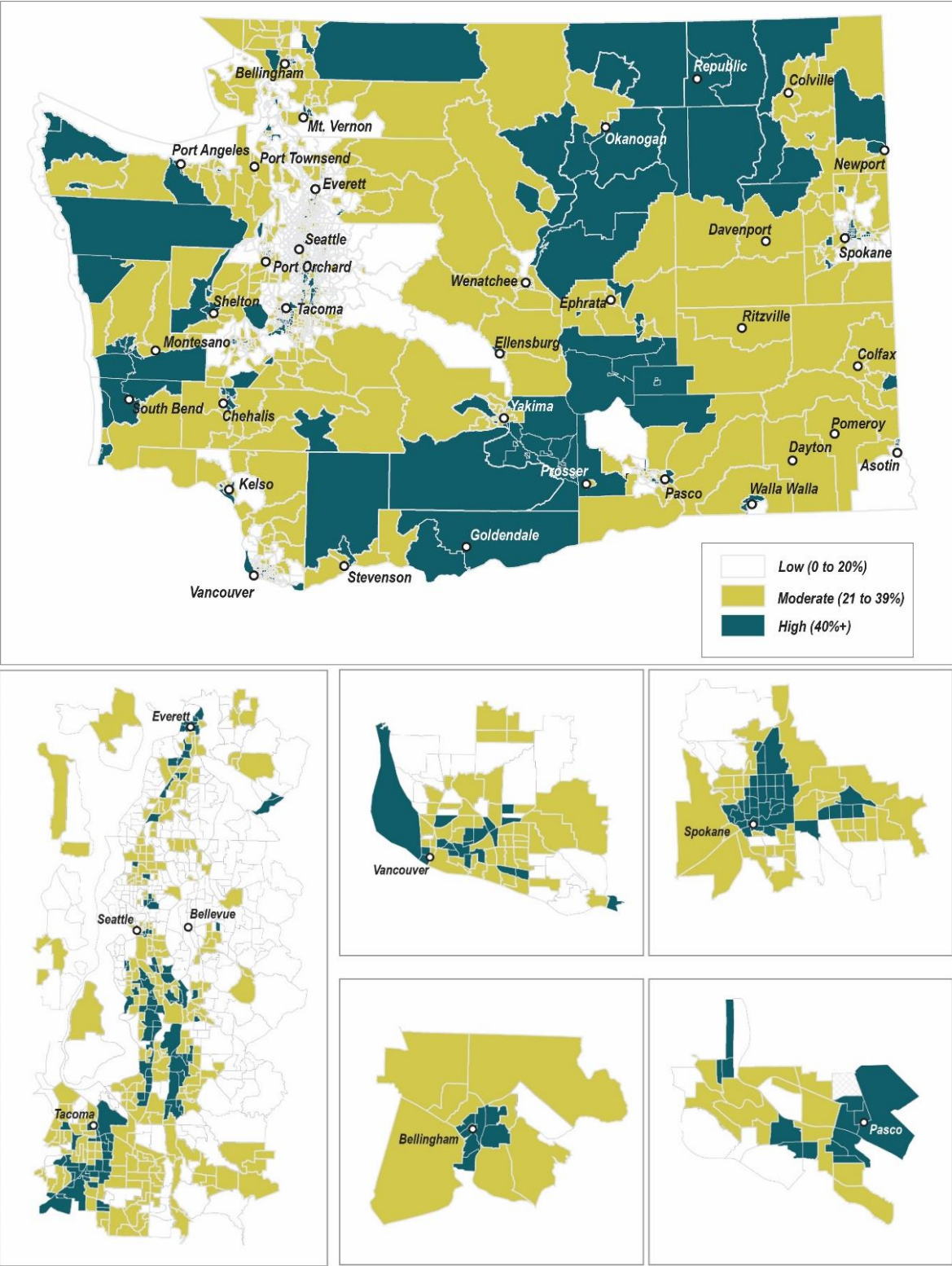


Figure 6: Percent of People Living Below 200% FPL by Census Tract, Washington State, 2013-2017



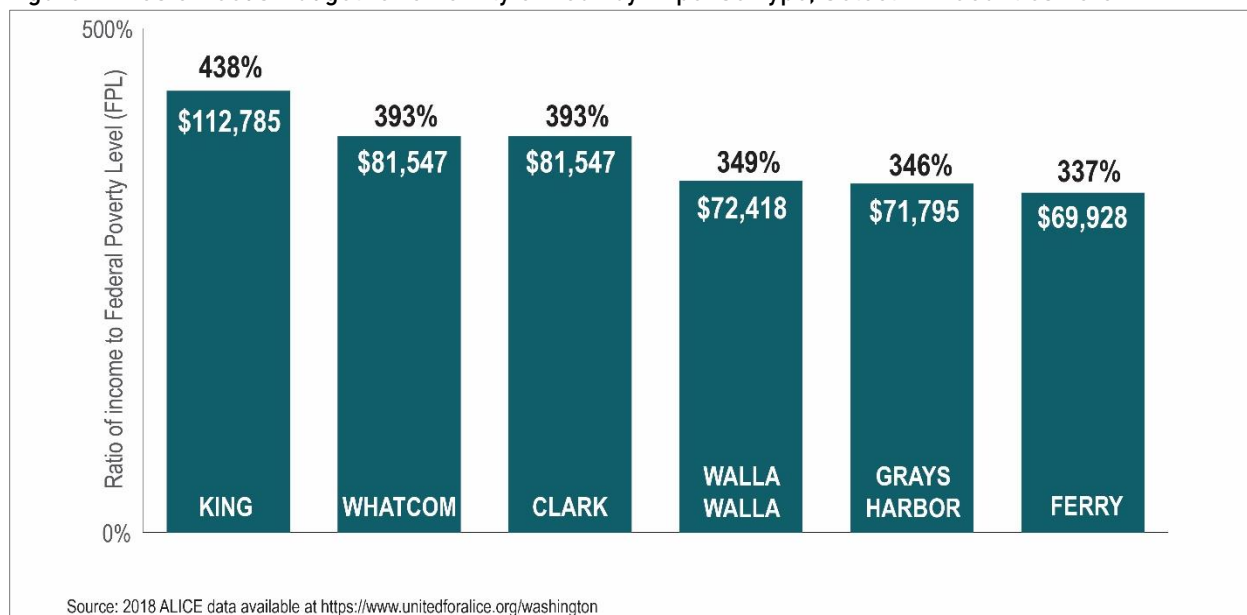
Cost-of-Living Measures

While using 200% FPL is a step in the right direction for how we measure the extent of economic hardship, it still suffers from the limitations inherent to the official measure, most notably: it does not reflect the modern costs incurred by families in the 21st century, and it does not adjust for geography, family structure, or age of children, all of which significantly influence what a household needs to get by.

Over the last two decades, new measures and tools have emerged to overcome the limitations of the official measure and provide a more accurate picture of the budget needed for an individual or family to meet their foundational needs. One such measure – ALICE (Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed)¹⁰ – shows that in most places in Washington state, it takes much more than 200% FPL to make ends meet (**Figure 7**). Housing and child care alone, for example, can consume between 40%-50% of a family's budget in many communities in Washington state (**Figure 8**).

ALICE estimates two main groups: (1) the number of households that are working and still struggling to afford the basics, like housing, food, transportation, child and health care, and (2) people living in deeper poverty who are more likely to experience significant barriers to employment (e.g., homelessness, violence, mental illness, addiction). **ALICE reveals a much greater share of Washingtonians experiencing economic hardship compared to the official measure – a high of 55% in Adams County and a low of 26% in Kitsap County – painting a more realistic picture of the size and extent of poverty in Washington state (Figure 9).**

Figure 7: Basic Needs Budget for a Family of Four by Expense Type, Select WA Counties 2018



¹⁰ The University of Washington's [Self-Sufficiency Standard](#) is a similar tool and has a high correlation to ALICE. ALICE is chosen for the purposes of this report because, unlike the Self-Sufficiency Standard, ALICE establishes a cost-of-living threshold and provides estimates for who is living above and below it.

Figure 8: Basic Needs Budget for a Family of Four by Expense Type for Select Counties in WA, 2018

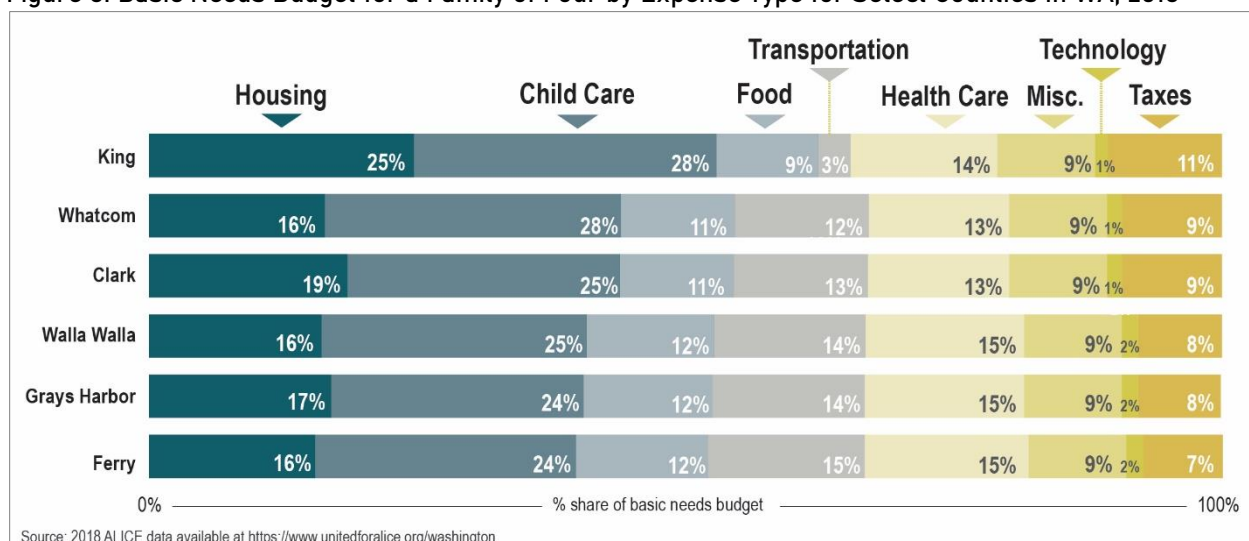
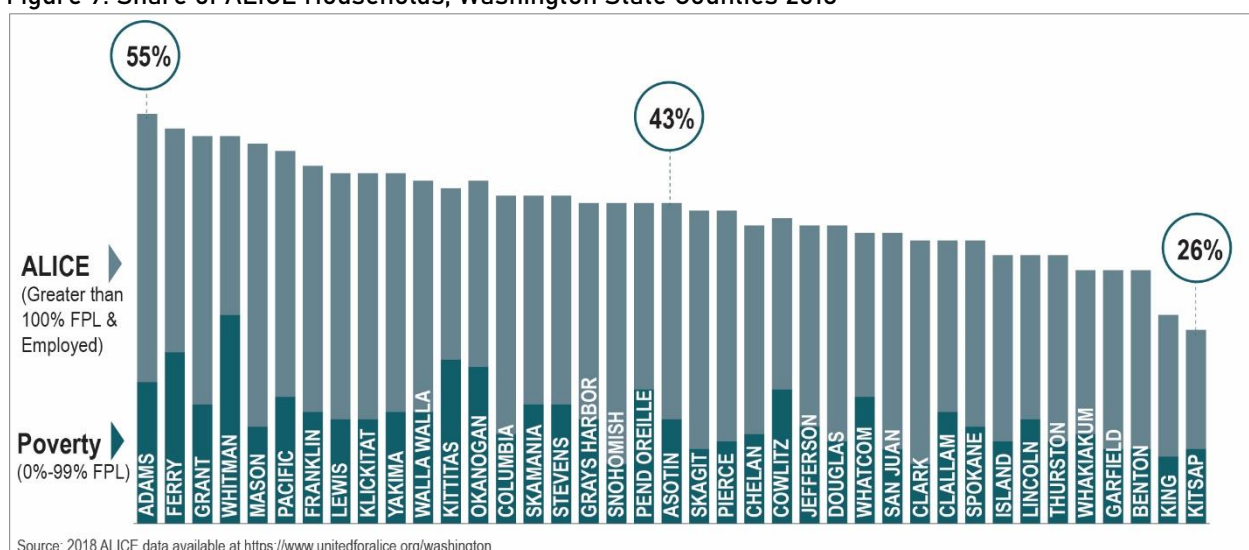


Figure 9: Share of ALICE Households, Washington State Counties 2018



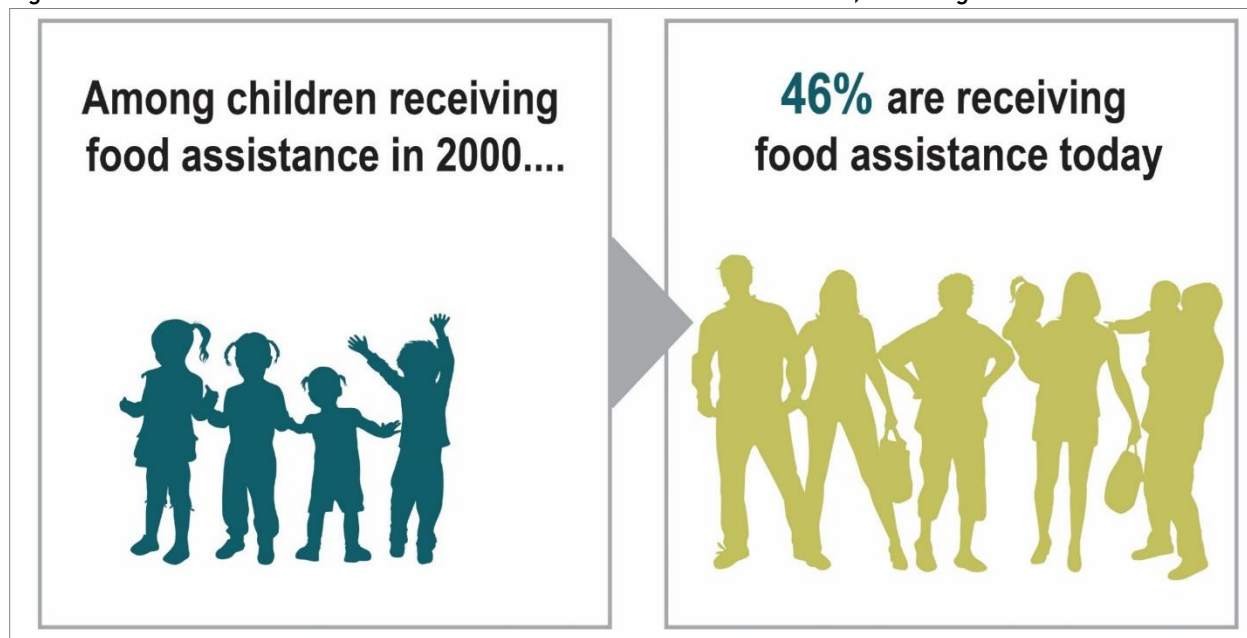
Intergenerational Poverty Measures

The duration of an individual's or family's experience with poverty may be episodic or longer-term, depending on the circumstances. Following the Great Recession in 2008, for example, many middle-class families found themselves struggling to make ends meet for the first time, but rebounded as the economy recovered. For families with a history of poverty, the experience can be harder to recover from, often spanning generations. Increasingly, poverty is a condition that people cycle in and out of overtime, a product of a changing economy, unstable labor market, and growing inequality.

Research shows that the experience of child poverty, even if short, can have a lifelong impact and consequences for future generations. Efforts are emerging around the country to define and measure intergenerational poverty, as well as evaluate "two-generation" or "multigenerational"

policies and programs to end the cycle of poverty in families. While there is not yet a consensus on how to measure and track intergenerational poverty, estimates show that 46% of children receiving food assistance in 1997 remain on food assistance today, suggesting that rates of intergenerational poverty are likely high and that policies and programs could be more effective in reducing it (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Percent of Adults Who Received Food Assistance as Children, Washington State 2018



Telling a Better Story

Census data show that 1.8 million Washingtonians (25%) live below 200% FPL, the minimum threshold by which we should be measuring economic hardship. Significant variation in poverty rates exists both *between* and *within* racial and ethnic groups, and people of color, women, children and youth, rural residents, people with disabilities, and immigrants and refugees yet to obtain citizenship carry a disproportionate burden of poverty. The Census data is valuable for its ability to provide the scale of poverty in Washington state, as well as demographic and geographic variation. However, cost-of-living measures suggests the Census data is conservative – the ALICE data show a far higher share of children, adults, and families struggling to meet basic needs – ranging from 55% in Adams County to 26% in Kitsap County. And new estimates for intergenerational poverty show that nearly half (46%) of children experiencing poverty – as measured by food assistance participation – remain so in adulthood.

Taken together, these data show that poverty and inequality in Washington state is extensive, with significant intergenerational consequences. Yet, as Abigail Echohawk notes, cultural bias in these data limit our understanding of the experience of poverty, too often lending themselves to myths and negative stereotypes. Building better data systems in collaboration with people of color and other groups most affected by poverty is essential to telling a better, more accurate story about the size, scope, and experience of economic hardship in Washington state. In addition, embracing

the practice of giving people represented by the data the opportunity to bring meaning to it can overcome limitations and support more effective, equitable solutions.

STRATEGIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

"I am the light at the end of the tunnel for my family. I need someone who is truly committed to helping me succeed so I can overcome this generational curse." ~ PRWG Steering Committee member

Organization of Recommendations

Below are recommendations for how to reduce poverty and inequality in Washington state. They are informed by existing data and research, people experiencing poverty and organizations working on their behalf, and innovations happening in communities in Washington state and throughout the country.

Overall, eight strategic themes emerged from the work group (**Figure 11**), with 56 specific recommendations. Guidance on how to prioritize and sequence recommendations is provided on page 50, in the *Implementation & Accountability* section.

FIGURE 11: Summary of Strategies to Reduce Poverty & Inequality in Washington State



STRATEGY 1: Understand structural racism and historical trauma, and take action to undo their harmful effects in state policy, programs, and practice.

The causes and consequences of poverty are experienced most profoundly among Indigenous people and people of color nationally and in Washington state. A large body of research draws a direct, causal relationship between structural racism, historical trauma, and the creation of policies, programs, and practices that result in inequitable outcomes.¹¹ Reducing poverty in Washington state, therefore, requires an approach that strategically centers Indigenous, Black, and Brown people in the implementation of recommendations that result in racial equity.

Recommendation 1a. Require state entities to collaborate with the emerging Office of Equity (Bright Spot #2) to develop trainings on historical trauma, institutional racism, and implicit bias that are required of all public employees in systems that touch upon the lives of people experiencing poverty (e.g., health care providers, child care and early learning providers, educators, police, state patrol, caseworkers, judges, etc.). The curriculum should be developed in collaboration with Indigenous- and people of color-led organizations throughout Washington state, and be free of charge to organizations working in partnership with Washington state.

Recommendation 1b. Require state entities to collaborate with the emerging Office of Equity to develop data, processes, and tools that prioritize racial equity in state government policies, programs, practices, and partnerships, including:

- A racial equity impact statement process to evaluate the effects of policy and programs on reducing disparities in outcomes and achieving equity;
- Best practices for recruitment, hiring, and contracting to increase racial and ethnic diversity among leadership, staff, and partnerships in all areas of public service;
- Mentoring, fellowship, apprenticeship, and internship opportunities for people from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds; and
- Data systems and methods that better represent the priorities, experiences, and strengths of Indigenous, Black, and Brown Washingtonians.

BRIGHT SPOT #2: Washington State Office of Equity

A proviso in the 2019-2021 biennial operating budget directed the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities to convene and staff an Office of Equity Task Force. The purpose of the task force is to develop a proposal for the creation of a state Office of Equity, whose purpose is to promote access to equitable opportunities and resources that reduce disparities, including racial and ethnic disparities, and improve outcomes statewide across all sectors of government.

¹¹ There are numerous books and articles that could serve as a reference for this point. PRWG recommends *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* by the historian, Ibram X. Kendi for a comprehensive overview.

STRATEGY 2: Make equal space for the power and influence of people and communities most affected by poverty and inequality in decision-making.

“We love our children. We work hard to get by. We are smarter than we are typically given credit for. How do you design a system without the input of the people using it and expect it to work? I think the greatest opportunity we have is to build understanding about our experiences and design a system together that is based in reality and believes we can be successful.”

~ PRWG Steering Committee member

People experiencing poverty are the foremost experts on their lives and possess considerable knowledge as users of the systems and programs intended to assist them. Incorporating the knowledge and expertise of those most affected by poverty, as well as sharing power and resources with them, is essential to the design of equitable policies, programs, and practices that will increase social and economic mobility for all Washingtonians.

Recommendation 2a. Task the emerging Office of Equity to collaborate with Indigenous, Black, and Brown Washingtonians to develop a formal process for truth and reconciliation. Truth and reconciliation efforts can be a powerful way to educate people about injustice, both past and present, and accelerate healing from the effects of historical trauma and its present day impacts.

Recommendation 2b. Institutionalize the practice of including people most affected by poverty in decision making by establishing a state-level entity to collaborate with stakeholders on the implementation of this *10-Year Plan for the Future*. This body should be designed in collaboration with the PRWG Steering Committee, agencies, legislators, and other major stakeholders to ensure:

- System-wide adoption of the practice of including people most affected by poverty in the implementation of policies, programs, and practices that affect their lives;
- An organizational structure, principles, and practice that grants sufficient authority for such a body to have influence; and
- Members receive professional development, education, and training opportunities that maximize their participation and contributions.

Recommendation 2c. Invest state resources to increase ownership capacity in communities most affected by poverty. Partner with communities most affected by poverty to develop ownership capacity in poor communities by building new “capital assets” that revitalize community centers, become financial assets owned by community organizations, employ local community members, support community-centered small business enterprise, and root people to a place with an incentive to remain and build it up for generations to come. **(Bright Spot #3).**

BRIGHT SPOT #3: Communities of Concern Commission

The *Communities of Concern Commission* is a coalition of leaders from communities of color and poor rural communities that are disproportionately affected by poverty and have yet to fully benefit from the economic growth that is so apparent in many areas of Washington State.

Community organizations strongly rooted in poor communities of color and rural communities have the cultural understanding, imagination, and vision to create capital assets that will help reduce poverty and build stronger and more sustainable communities. These capital assets should be self-determined, managed and owned by the communities they serve. The Communities of Concern Commission doing business as the Washington Community Development Authority seeks to change structural barriers by partnering with the state to build the capacity of communities to conceive, design, finance, construct and manage the types of assets that are essential to reducing poverty. Communities of Concern seeks to:

- Make immediate changes to simplify public processes and procedures and remove barriers;
- Design funding for public programs to have the greatest strategic impact on poverty by designating it for and allowing access directly by communities to be invested for long term self-sufficiency;
- Involve community members in leading the effort to identify needs and design solutions to meet those needs through the development of community growth plans and funding strategies; and
- Increase collaboration with other federal, state, and local programs to provide more access and resources (e.g., education, employment related, health) based in poor communities.

(see Appendix B for the full Briefing Paper on Communities of Concern)

STRATEGY 3: Target equitable education, income growth, and wealth-building opportunities for people with low incomes.

In 2019, income inequality in the U.S. reached its highest level in the 50 years since the U.S. Census began tracking data, part of a decades-long trend.¹² Washington has the eleventh highest income inequality in the nation,¹³ which contributes to poverty by: stagnating wages and income of low- and middle-income households; limiting revenue that the state can invest in policies and programs that promote widespread social and economic mobility; and compounding racial gaps in health, wealth, and well-being.¹⁴ Reducing income inequality, therefore, is a necessity for reducing poverty, as well as improving the lives of all Washingtonians and the state's economy.

Income inequality is deeply connected to education, employment, and wealth opportunities. Consider the following statistics:

- Education is the foundation of economic development, and the majority of jobs today requiring postsecondary education. Yet, only 57% of adults in Washington state have earned a credential beyond high school.
- The majority (51%) of people with incomes below 200% FPL are working or actively looking for work. Even with recent minimum wage increases, many full-time workers are still unable to afford “the basics” – housing, food, transportation, health and child care – in communities throughout Washington state, primarily due to a lack of living-wage jobs and/or not having the advanced education and skills needed for higher-paying jobs.
- Employers in lower-paying fields, such as food service, caregiving, and retail, are less likely to offer full-time work and employee benefits (e.g., health insurance, retirement plans), leaving an increasing number of workers with little choice but to cobble together multiple part-time “gigs” to make ends meet.
- Wages for workers in lower- and median wage jobs have been stagnant for decades, while those in higher-paying jobs have reaped the most from economic growth (Figure 12).
- Eliminating racial disparities in income and wealth would increase Washington state's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by \$38 billion annually (Figure 13).¹⁵

Washington state can achieve greater income equality in three main ways: expanding equitable opportunities for obtaining a post-secondary credential, increasing wages and compensation, and making cost-of-living more affordable. Detailed recommendations in these three categories are outlined below.

¹² Institution on Taxation and Economic Policy. (2018, October). *Who Pays? 6th Edition*. Retrieved from <https://itep.org/whopays/>

¹³ Sommeillier, E., & Price, M. (2018, July). *The Unequal States of America: Income inequality in Washington*. Retrieved from <https://www.epi.org/multimedia/unequal-states-of-america/#/Washington>

¹⁴ Leachman, M., Mitchell, M., Johnson, N., & Williams, E. (2019, October 2). *Advancing Racial Equity with State Tax Policy*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbpp.org/research/state-budget-and-tax/advancing-racial-equity-with-state-tax-policy>

¹⁵ National Equity Atlas (2020). *Data to Build an Equitable Economy: Washington*. Retrieved from <https://nationalequityatlas.org/data-summaries/Washington>

Figure 12: Wages for Low- and Median Wage Earners Have Remained Stagnant Since 1979

Wages by Decile, Washington state 1979-2018 (\$2018)

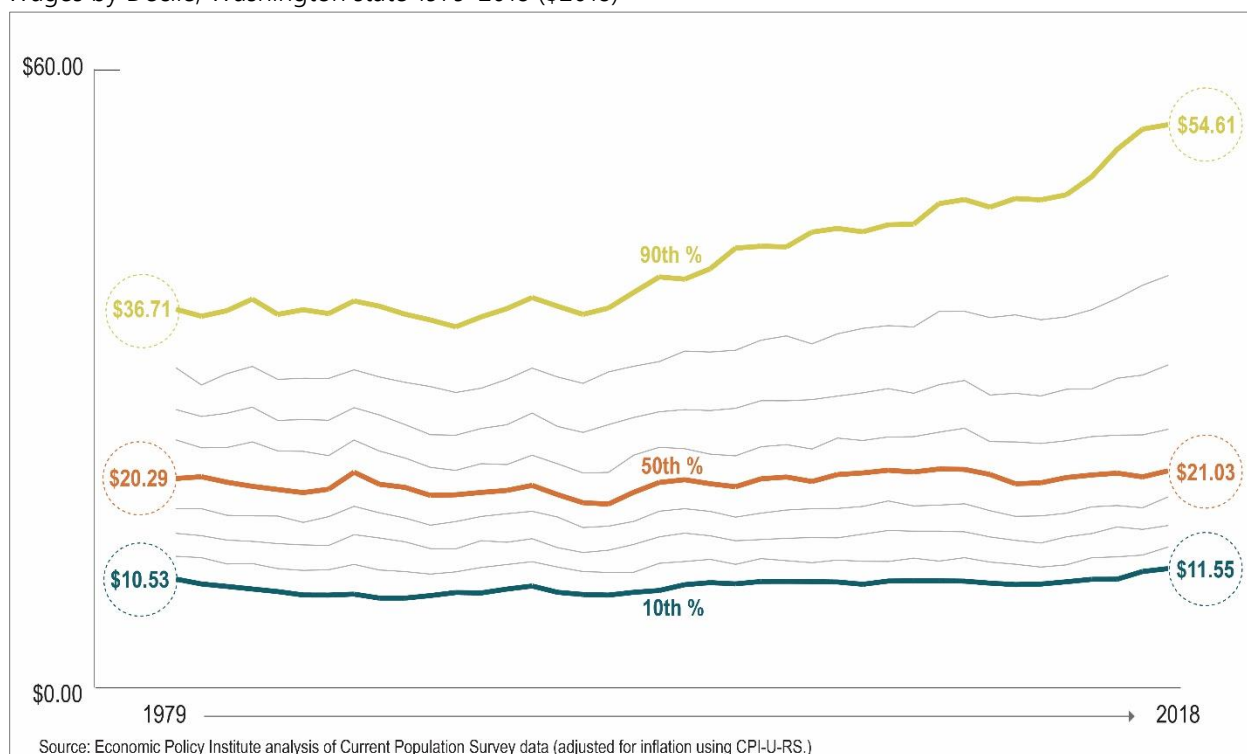
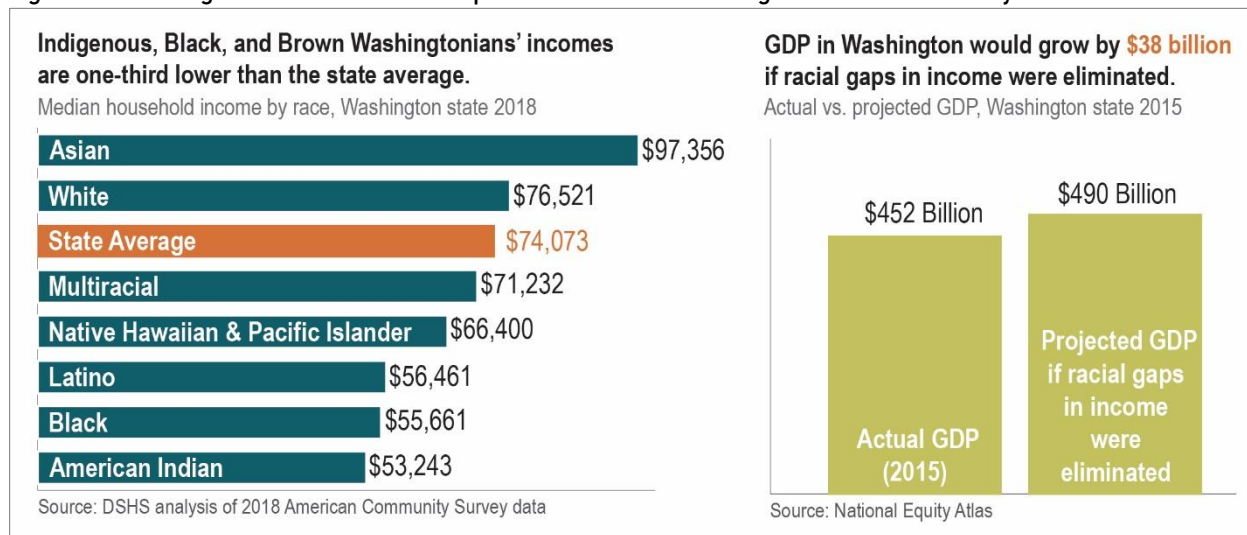


Figure 13: Closing the Racial Income Gap Would Bolster Washington State's Economy



EXPANDING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Recommendation 3a. Adopt the *Washington Kids for Washington Jobs* recommendations, but bolster with more specific, intentional strategies to achieve equity. The [Washington Kids for Washington Jobs](#) (WK4WJ) initiative, a partnership between the Washington Business Roundtable and the Partnership for Learning, estimates that there will be 740,000 job openings by 2021, the

majority of which will require a post-secondary credential (including those in two- and four-year institutions, as well as through apprenticeship).¹⁶ The effort aims to meet the state goal of increasing the share of Washington students with a credential to 70%, and recommends 21 specific actions to achieve the following:

- Increase the high school graduation rate to 95%;
- Increase post-secondary enrollment into the state's two- and four-year institutions to 95%;
- Increase post-secondary graduation rates to 70%; and
- Re-engage students who become disconnected from education in K-12 and higher education.

WK4WJ acknowledges that the above strategies will only be accomplished by eliminating achievement gaps by income, race, and gender. PRWG supports the following additional recommendations to increase the likelihood of the WK4WJ strategies achieving equity:

Recommendation 3a-i. Increase funding to accelerate the process of naturalization for immigrants, refugees, and asylees. There are nearly one million immigrants, refugees, and asylees living in Washington state.¹⁷ Citizenship is an essential stepping stone to education and employment opportunities and drastically reduces poverty; people born outside of the U.S. with citizenship have poverty rates 17 percentage points lower than those yet to obtain citizenship.¹⁸

Recommendation 3a-ii. Strengthen literacy programs and services for children and adults across the entire education and workforce-development pipeline. Limited English proficiency is a major barrier for immigrants and refugees. There are currently over 250,000 people in Washington state age five and older who do not speak English well enough to navigate social, education, and employment opportunities.¹⁹ Ensuring all children and adults have access to culturally relevant literacy programs and services will improve education and employment outcomes.

Recommendation 3a-iii. Eliminate harsh discipline practices in schools and replace them with culturally responsive social, emotional, and engagement supports. Practices such as suspension and expulsion disproportionately affect children that are Indigenous, Black, Brown, male, non-binary, low income, disabled, homeless, involved in the foster care system, or with a special education plan (**Figure 14**), leading to their increased involvement with the child welfare, juvenile justice, and criminal justice systems (a.k.a. the "school-to-prison pipeline"). Replacing discipline with stronger social and emotional programs and family and community engagement strategies can keep more kids in school and improve equity in graduation rates.²⁰

¹⁶ The Washington Round Table (n.d.). Washington Kids 4 Washington Jobs. Retrieved from <https://www.waroundtable.com/wa-kids-wa-jobs/>

¹⁷ Migration Policy Institute analysis of 2013-2017 American Community Survey data available at <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/us-immigrant-population-state-and-county>

¹⁸ DSHS analysis of 2018 American Community Survey data

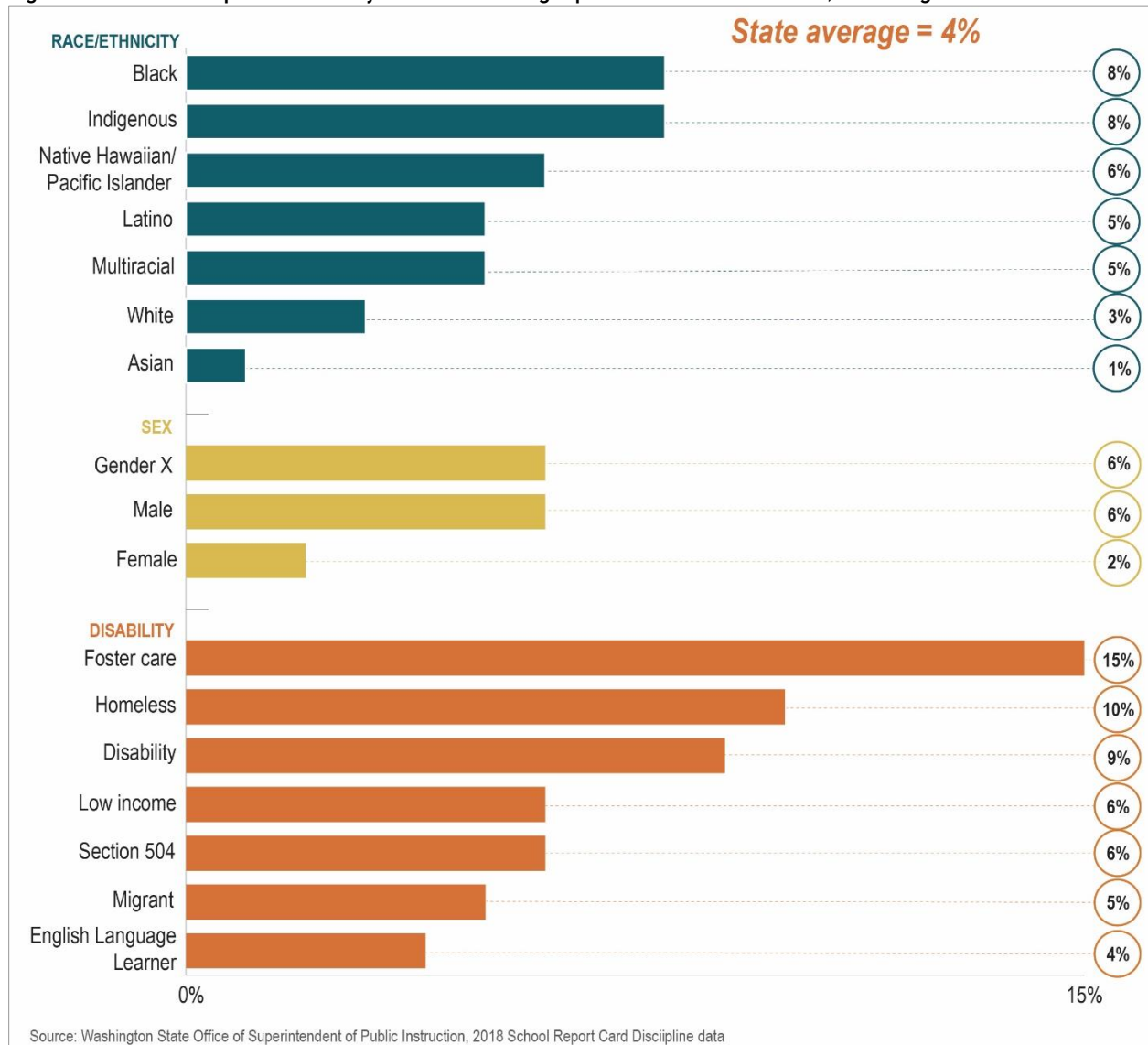
¹⁹ DSHS analysis of 2018 American Community Survey data

²⁰ National Education Association. (2016). Discipline and the School-To-Prison Pipeline. Retrieved from <https://ra.nea.org/business-item/2016-pol-e01-2/>

Recommendation 3a-iv. Increase investment in Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO)

statewide. ELOs are high-quality youth development programs that provide innovative, hands-on learning after school and throughout the year, including summer. Research shows that quality ELO programs improve grades and attendance, and decrease juvenile crime.²¹ Continued investment is needed to support a connected high-quality care continuum, birth through youth for programs that serve as a workforce support to families.

Figure 14: K-12 Discipline Rates by Student Demographics & Characteristics, Washington State 2018



²¹ School's Out Washington. (2017). *The Facts About Expanded Learning*. Retrieved from <https://www.schoolsoutwashington.org/pages/the-facts-about-expanded-learning>

Recommendation 3a-v. Increase investments to improve high school graduation and post-secondary enrollment of children and youth experiencing foster care and/or homelessness.²²

Specifically:

- Align, coordinate, and monitor policy, services, resources and outcomes to ensure academic success for students experiencing foster care/homelessness statewide.
- Use data to inform real time, individualized education supports for students, as well as longitudinal analysis of education outcomes.

Recommendation 3a-vi. Increase the availability of affordable child care and housing for student parents on or near college campuses. Parental education – especially mothers’ education – is one of the best protection against intergenerational poverty. Yet, student parents, especially those that are single with young children, face significant obstacles to furthering their education due to a lack of affordable child care and housing options. Programs like the [*Jeremiah Program*](#) and [*Keys to Degrees*](#), co-locate high-quality early learning, human services, affordable housing, and peer-to-peer support systems on college campuses, and have a proven track record of reducing intergenerational poverty.

Recommendation 3a-vii. Remove residency requirements for refugees seeking higher education. Residency requirements for tuition and financial aid make it difficult for refugees to pursue education that can improve their social and economic circumstances. Removing these barriers would help refugees stabilize more quickly and accelerate education and career pathways.

Recommendation 3viii. Increase opportunities for Washington students and adults who are disconnected from the educational system to prepare for and access affordable and high quality postsecondary educational pathways. Washington students enrolling in postsecondary education complete at rates above the national average.²³ Yet, too few Washingtonians are pursuing education beyond high school to fill employer demand for more highly educated workers. Nearly four in 10 graduating high school seniors delay or forego college enrollment, placing the state 49th on this measure,²⁴ and students of color have college completion rates 16 percentage points lower than the state average. Engaging students and adults no longer connected to the educational system is a key strategy for improving their income, as well as ensuring employers have a competitive workforce. The Washington Student Achievement Council, representing all sectors of education, recommends the following to improve post-secondary outcomes in Washington state:

- Leverage the Washington College Grant and increase awareness of the importance of completing financial aid applications;

²² Washington State Department of Children, Youth, & Families. (2019). *Achieving Educational Success for Washington’s Children, Youth and Young Adults in Foster Care and/or Experiencing Homelessness*. Retrieved from <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/reports/FosterHomelessEducation.pdf>

²³ WSAC staff analysis of 8-year Outcome Measure data as reported by Integrated Postsecondary Education and Data System for entering cohort of 2008.

²⁴ NCHEMS Information Center for Higher Education and Policymaking and Analysis (2014). College Participation Rates: College-Going Rates of High School Graduates Directly from High School. Retrieved from <http://www.higheredinfo.org/dbrowser/index.php?measure=32>

- Support College Bound Scholarship students from low-income families with college readiness activities;
- Reach adults through the new statewide adult reengagement College and Career Compass initiative;
- Increase the number of low-income students enrolled in dual-credit courses (receiving college credit while in high school);
- Understand and address basic needs of college students including food and housing insecurity; and
- Continue to learn and pursue equity-focused policies and strategies to increase educational postsecondary success of students of color.

INCREASING INCOME

Recommendation 3b. Enforce stronger salary/wage transparency and fair labor practices among employers to ensure pay equity for women and people of color. Women and people of color continue to make less than their white male peers, even when they have the same education and professional experience.²⁵ The government should work with businesses and labor to define and enforce wage transparency guidelines for employers in Washington state.

Recommendation 3c. Expand access to no- or low-cost financial resources and education that empower, rather than prey upon, people experiencing poverty. A lack of access to affordable capital in low-income communities and communities of color, paired with a history of bank and mortgage redlining, has led to an extreme racial wealth gap. As these disparities in wealth and income have continued, households of color are less likely to have the safety net of home equity or cash on hand to handle unexpected expenses or a loss or reduction of income. As a result, communities of color are targeted by abusive and predatory lenders, putting households of color at great risk of debt. This debt burden has also opened the door to debt collectors buying old debt and using aggressive tactics, including the court system, to collect those debts. For people living on low incomes, debt is a significant barrier to escaping poverty. Consumers need strong protections that safeguard their crucial assets and their ability to meet their basic needs, especially in times of crisis. Specific recommendations include:

- Establish Individual Development Account programs for children and adults to encourage savings and investments in their future, like education and purchasing a home;
- Expand and subsidize financial institutions that lower the cost of banking, lending, and moving money for people with low incomes (**Bright Spot #4**);
- Maintain and expand protections on the payday lending industry to ensure that fringe financial services cannot take advantage of low-income consumers; and
- Regulate debt buying and debt collection practices so that: the process for collecting debt is transparent to consumers. This enables people to defend themselves in the face of alleged debt adequately and allows people to meet basic needs while paying back debt.

²⁵ Anderson, J., & Clark, J. (2018, March 28). *The Economic Status of Women in the United States: IWPR*. Retrieved from <https://iwpr.org/publications/status-of-women-fact-sheet-2018/>

Recommendation 3d. Enact changes to the state tax system that lower the effective tax rate for low-income households. Specific, evidence-based strategies include:

- Offer refundable state Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC) that extend to all households, including immigrants and refugees. State EITCs can amplify the effects of the federal EITC, the most effective anti-poverty tool in the U.S.
- Property tax “circuit breakers” that limit the amount of property taxes low- to moderate-income homeowners and renters of all ages pay as a share of their income; and
- Refundable child tax credits that support the stability of families with young children that gradually phase out as children enter school. Recent research suggests refundable child tax credits can be structured to have sizable anti-poverty effects.

Recommendation 3e. Work in partnership with local labor organizations and the government to modernize unions and the rights of workers. Increasing the rights of workers to organize and exercise power on their behalf has historically been an essential strategy to raise wages and reduce racial and gender disparities in income. Nationally, the share of workers belonging to unions is at its lowest point in history, a trend that is causally linked to stagnant wages. Workers of all ages, across all industries and occupations, strongly support the rights of workers to unionize.²⁶ Yet, there is widespread recognition that current laws overseeing unions are outdated given current employment conditions, and should be updated. Recent research suggests the top priorities for workers in a modernized union system are:²⁷

- Stronger collective bargaining models;
- Portable health and retirement benefits; and
- Job-search assistance.

MAKING COST-OF-LIVING MORE AFFORDABLE

Recommendation 3f. Adopt the Child Care Collaborative Taskforce recommendations to increase the availability of affordable, high quality* early care and education. The benefits of high-quality early care and education for children are well-established, especially for children from families with low incomes. Yet, nearly half of all families in Washington find it challenging to find, afford, or keep child care, which affects their ability to work and costs employers in Washington state over \$2 billion annually in employee turnover and missed work.²⁸ Washington state’s [Child Care Collaborative Taskforce](#) (CCC Taskforce) was created in 2018 to “achieve a goal of access to affordable, high-quality child care for all Washington families by 2025.”²⁹ The recent CCC Taskforce report makes 31 recommendations within the following four strategies to accomplish this goal:

- Stabilize, support and sustain the child care workforce, providers and industry;
- Increase employer supports for child care;

²⁶ Boushey, H. (2017, January 26). The challenging and continuing slide in U.S. unionization rates. Retrieved from <https://equitablegrowth.org/the-challenging-and-continuing-slide-in-u-s-unionization-rates/>

²⁷ Hertel-Fernandez, A. (2019, August 28). What kind of labor organizations do U.S. workers want? Retrieved from <https://equitablegrowth.org/what-kind-of-labor-organizations-do-u-s-workers-want/>

²⁸ Washington Child Care Collaborative Task Force. (2019, November). Retrieved from <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/about-us/boards-and-commissions/child-care-collaborative-task-force/>

²⁹ <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/about-us/boards-and-commissions/child-care-collaborative-task-force/>

- Streamline permitting and licensing to better support the construction, renovation and acquisition of child care facilities; and
- Reduce disparities and disproportionalities in child care service delivery and access.

**While PRWG supports the adoption of these recommendations, we urge the CCC Taskforce to ensure community-led definitions of quality are incorporated into the state's quality rating improvement system to respect the diversity of cultures in Washington state.*

Recommendation 3g. Increase and preserve affordable housing for renters and owners. Lack of affordable housing is the primary driver behind homelessness in Washington state (*see Section 7*). There are fewer than 30 units of housing available for every 100 low-income³⁰ families that need one, and vacancy rates in Washington are the lowest in the country at 2%.³¹

The lack of affordable housing also prevents people with lower incomes from owning a home; the primary way families build wealth and financial security over time. This is one of the primary drivers behind the racial wealth gap (**Figure 15**), a product of discrimination in housing policy and one of the most profound examples of how the root causes of poverty intersect to influence outcomes.³² Discriminatory practices (e.g., predatory lending) continue today, and gentrification – the process of displacement that occurs from unequal economic growth – is forcing people of color from the same neighborhood cities redlined them into.

Increasing the availability of affordable homes to rent and own will reduce homelessness and increase social and economic mobility for all Washingtonians. Also, targeting investments to communities historically excluded from wealth-building opportunities is essential for eliminating the racial wealth gap. Specifically:

- Increase the state's Housing Trust Fund to build 10,000 subsidized housing units in 2021, and an additional 90,000 subsidized units over the next decade;
- Increase state funding for weatherization and upgrades to preserve existing housing, reduce carbon emissions, and offset increased energy costs due to potential future carbon reduction initiatives; and
- Provide housing vouchers for homeownership in community land trusts³³ that build individual capital while preserving long-term affordability in a community, preventing displacement of future generations (**Bright Spot #5**).

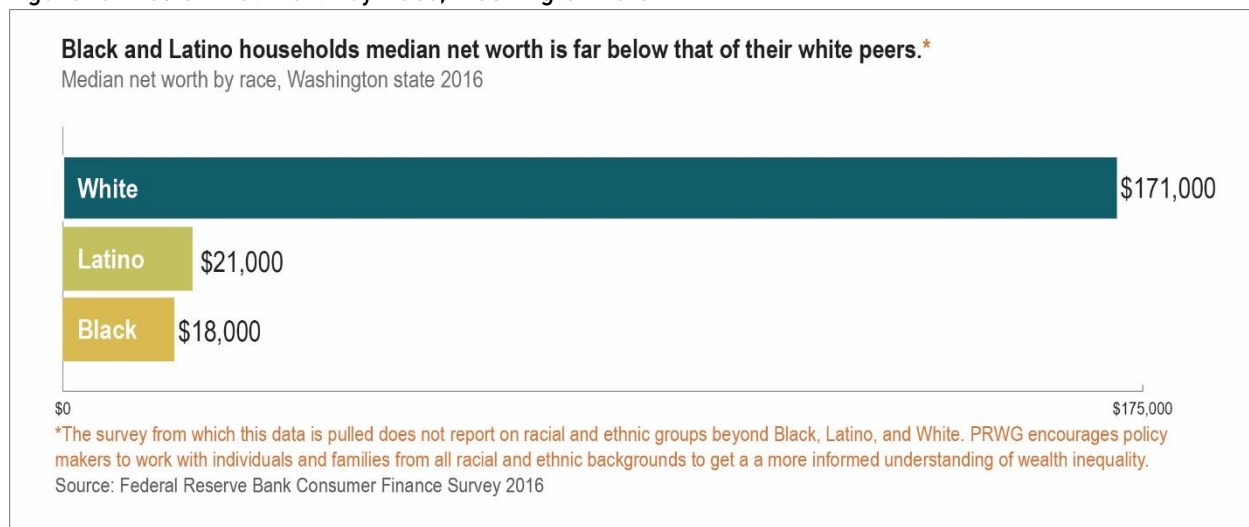
³⁰ Low income is defined here as below 80% area median income.

³¹ Washington State Department of Commerce (2019). *2018 Affordable Housing Update*. Retrieved from <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/COMMERCE-affordable-housing-update.pdf>

³² For example, people of color were systematically excluded from the GI Bill, one of the most significant wealth-building policies of the post-World War II era, and through the practice of “red-lining”, which heavily restricted the neighborhoods in which people of color could live.

³³ In a community land trust you own your home, but the land is leased. You receive a standard mortgage, own the home, and can gift the home to your children. If you sell the home it must be under the conditions of the land trust, which is usually something like you are allowed to sell it for no more than the purchase price plus 1.5%-3% per year in appreciation, and the family you sell it to must be income qualified. This prevents neighborhoods such as the Central District or International District turning from a diverse low income communities, to one only accessible to high-income people. Land Trust properties can also aid in integration or prevention of segregation, but instead of apartments they are home ownership opportunities.

Figure 15. Median Net Worth by Race, Washington 2016



Recommendation 3h. Enact changes to the tax system that support equitable economic growth.

Enacting reforms to Washington’s tax system – which taxes people with low incomes more than any other state – can provide the funding needed to invest in the income, education, and employment opportunities people need to thrive, as well as ensure more residents benefit from the state’s robust economic growth.³⁴ The most promising policies to ensure economic growth that is more widely shared include:

- Taxes on personal and corporate wealth above a specified threshold which are used to invest in opportunities critical to social and economic mobility for all Washingtonians, such as early care and education, higher education, rural economic development, affordable housing, and workforce development; and
- Tax incentives for businesses that are accountable to specific, anti-poverty outcomes³⁵ and promote equitable education, training, and job opportunities in rural areas, communities of color, and neighborhoods experiencing gentrification.

³⁴ Davis, A., & Hill, M. (2018, September 17). State Tax Codes as Poverty Fighting Tools: 2018 Update on Four Key Policies in All 50 States. Retrieved from <https://itep.org/state-tax-codes-as-poverty-fighting-tools-2018/>

³⁵ Layser, M. D. (2019). The Pro-Gentrification Origins of Place-Based Investment Tax Incentives and a Path Toward Community Oriented Reform. Retrieved from <https://lowellmilkeninstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Layser-The-Pro-Gentrification-Origins-WIP.pdf>

BRIGHT SPOT #4: Asset- and Wealth-Building Initiatives

Washington's [*Asset-Building Coalition*](#) (ABC) is a statewide association working to promote policies and programs in Washington that assist low-and-moderate income residents build, maintain & preserve assets through investments in education, homeownership, personal savings and entrepreneurship.

Sound Outreach in Tacoma, WA – part of the Pierce County ABC – connects unemployed and underemployed individuals to job training and employment opportunities, as well as resources and tools through their partnership with *Harborstone Credit Union* (a not-for-profit cooperative credit union). The partnership connects people who are engaged with a Sound Outreach financial counselor to the credit union's low-cost financial products and services. Through the partnership, individuals are able to refinance loans they would otherwise not be able to – due to low credit scores, debt-to-income, or loan-to-value issues – freeing up money in their monthly budget that can be used to further advance their financial empowerment.

Also in Tacoma, WA, *Goodwill of the Olympic and Rainier Region's* (GORR) provides financial education and coaching to help neighbors in reaching their fullest potential through education, job placement, and career pathway services. GORR operates the "Key to Change" Financial Literacy course in collaboration with Key Bank to help participants gain the knowledge necessary to achieve personal financial stability and independence (including how to set financial goals, create and maintain a budget, banking basics etc.). Recently, Goodwill collaborated with Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU) and the city of Tacoma to provide "Key to Change" and one on one personalized financial coaching sessions to low income TPU customers. If they qualify, customers can receive up to \$160 in credit toward their utility bill for participating in financial education at Goodwill.

BRIGHT SPOT #5: Community-Owned Housing Assets

Communities of Concern Commission member and Community Action Partner, [*El Centro de la Raza*](#), developed the nationally recognized, award winning *Plaza Maestas* in the Beacon Hill neighborhood of Seattle. El Centro de la Raza spearheaded Plaza Maestas when it learned light rail would be extended through the neighborhood, bringing opportunity for residents but also intensifying the threat of gentrification. The Plaza provides transit-oriented affordable housing for residents so they can remain in the neighborhood, prioritizes people of color- and women-owned businesses, and offers a beautiful public space for community members to celebrate and convene in.

STRATEGY 4: Strengthen health supports across the life span to promote the intergenerational well-being of families.

“I live with a disability and chronic illness. I have a master’s degree and am attending law school, but I live in my van because my insurance does not cover the basic medical care I need and I cannot afford rent. People ask me, ‘What does ‘being healthy’ look like to you?’, and I respond, ‘Being healthy basically looks like being rich.’ ~PRWG Steering Committee member

The individual and compounding effects of racism, poverty, and trauma follow people throughout their lives. Poverty increases the likelihood of traumatic experiences in childhood – known as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) – which can have a cumulative, lifelong impact on an individual’s physical and mental health. Examples of ACEs are experiencing violence or abuse or growing up in home with substance misuse. The more adverse experiences in childhood, the greater the likelihood of developmental delays and later health problems, including heart disease, diabetes, substance abuse, and depression.³⁶ In 2017-2018, 14% of children in Washington state experienced two or more ACEs.³⁷ State-level data by race and ethnicity is limited, but national data shows that indigenous, black, and brown children are twice as likely to have two or more ACEs compared to their peers.

Data also show that children are remarkably resilient in the face of adversity, making investments in early childhood especially effective. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has identified several strategies and approaches that can both prevent ACEs and mitigate its impacts, including strengthening economic supports in families, encouraging planned pregnancies, ensuring a healthy start for children, and prioritizing early interventions.³⁸

Beyond ACEs, families today experience several pressures that affect well-being. The high cost-of-living in communities throughout Washington state often requires that both parents work, making it stressful to keep up with the costs of child care and the daily demands of raising children. People are living longer, and adults in middle-age often find themselves caring for parents and young children. This can be a significant investment of time and resources that can cause a hefty physical and emotional toll. High-quality health care can be hard to find or afford, and out-of-pocket medical costs have increased to be a larger share of a family’s basic expenses, especially among seniors with fixed incomes.

Fortunately, Washington state is a national leader in passing policies that support the health and well-being of families across the life span, such as Medicaid expansion, paid family and medical

³⁶ Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (n.d.). Toxic Stress. Retrieved from <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/toxic-stress/>

³⁷ Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative. 2017-2018 National Survey of Children’s Health (NSCH) data query. Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health supported by Cooperative Agreement U59MC27866 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration’s Maternal and Child Health Bureau (HRSA MCHB). Retrieved [01/09/2020] from www.childhealthdata.org. CAHMI: www.cahmi.org.

³⁸ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019). *Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs): Leveraging the Best Available Evidence*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/preventingACES-508.pdf>

leave, and long-term care insurance. These are strong examples to build from to strengthen policies and programs to support the intergenerational well-being of families.

Recommendation 4a. Create a state funded supplemental Apple Health assistance benefit.

Follow the lead of Massachusetts – which has the highest rate of health insurance coverage in the country, as well as the best health outcomes for children – by subsidizing all medical premiums for people with incomes below 150%, and gradually phase out for people with incomes up to 300 percent FPL.

Recommendation 4b. Ensure funding and access to culturally and linguistically appropriate health care and support services before, during, and after pregnancy. Increase health care and support services – including pre- and postnatal care, doulas, behavioral health, screening, treatment, and monitoring – through all phases of pregnancy and the first year postpartum (**Bright Spot #6**).³⁹ The *Bree Collaborative* is one example of how care providers bundle services to provide comprehensive pre- and postnatal care while reducing disparities in infant and maternal mortality and saving taxpayer resources.⁴⁰

Recommendation 4c. Expand culturally and linguistically appropriate home visiting so all eligible families can receive it. Home visiting programs provide physical, social, and emotional health services and referrals to expectant mothers and families with young children to optimize early childhood development. Currently, just one in four eligible families receive home visiting, leaving more than 29,000 families unserved.⁴¹

Recommendation 4d. Ensure access to free and low-cost contraceptive options and counseling, including long-term acting reversible contraceptives (LARCS) for people who want it. Resources and services for quality reproductive care and contraceptives are not equally accessible to everyone statewide. The highest rate of unplanned pregnancies is among people under age 20,⁴² which can worsen circumstances that may already be causing stress and increase the likelihood that a child and family will experience poverty. LARCS help people plan better for pregnancy and dramatically decrease teen pregnancy and abortion rates when made widely available (**Bright Spot #7**).

Recommendation 4e. Increase administrative funding to support culturally appropriate outreach for WIC, the Farmers Market Nutrition Program, and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition program. Identify and reduce other barriers to participation and use of these programs (as a client or benefit redeemer) for people of color, immigrants and refugees.

³⁹ Washington State Department of Health. (2019). *Washington State Maternal Mortality Review Panel: Maternal Deaths 2014-2016*. Retrieved from <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/141-010-MMRPMaternalDeathReport2014-2016.pdf>

⁴⁰ Dr. Robert Bree Collective. (2019). *Maternity Bundled Payment Model*. Retrieved from <http://www.breecollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/Maternity-Bundle-DRAFT-19-1101.pdf>

⁴¹ Washington State Department of Children, Youth, & Families. (2019). *Home Visiting in Washington State*. Retrieved from <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/HomeVisitinginWashingtonState.pdf>

⁴² Washington State Department of Health (2019). *Washington State Maternal Mortality Review Panel: Maternal Deaths 2014-2016*. Retrieved from <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/141-010-MMRPMaternalDeathReport2014-2016.pdf>

Recommendation 4f. Increase in-home Medicaid funds for supported living for seniors so they can receive care in their home and avoid costly residential programs.

BRIGHT SPOT #6: Birth Justice Projects

The **Black Infant Health Program** (BIHP) is a public-private partnership between the Tacoma Health Department, Health Care Authority, state Department of Health, and churches, pastors, community groups, nurses and non-profit organizations in Tacoma, WA. BIHP links women and babies to needed resources, including: enrolling churches in the program; training health ministers on health messages for pregnant women and families with infants; and providing referrals to prenatal care, social services, resources, and support. Outcomes to date include an increase in healthy pregnancies and births and greater social capital and goodwill in the church community and beyond. The ultimate goal of the program is to eliminate disparities in birth outcomes for black infants.

The **Tt̕awax̕t Birth Justice Center** of Yakama Nation is an Indigenous birth justice movement that supports and strengthens systems and services that are cultural, community-driven, and that provide responsive and respectful care. Tt̕awax̕t believes that Indigenous birth justice is present when Indigenous people honor their ancestors by making the best decisions they can during pregnancy, labor, childbirth, and after the baby arrives to ensure the next generation continues. The ultimate outcome is to reduce infant and maternal mortality in tribal communities.

BRIGHT SPOT 7: Long-Acting Reverse Contraceptives (LARCS)

Investing in family planning can have a seismic impact on the health and wellbeing of women and their families and on state economies as well. In 2008, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment launched their family planning initiative to provide training, operational support, and expand access to LARCs for low income and uninsured women. As of 2019, this initiative drove a 50% reduction in teen birth and abortion rates and saved \$70 million in public assistance costs.

STRATEGY 5: Address the urgent needs of people experiencing homelessness, violence, mental illness, and/or addiction.

“Never underestimate the power of giving someone a second chance.”

~Resident of Washington Women’s Correctional Center

People experiencing poverty often face significant obstacles that prevent them from achieving economic stability, the most common of which are homelessness, violence, mental illness, and addiction. The relationship between poverty and these conditions works in both directions – people in poverty are at heightened risk of experiencing one or more of them, and any one of these conditions can increase a person’s likelihood of entering poverty.

Homelessness, violence, mental illness, and addiction have reached the point of crisis in Washington state. Consider the following statistics:

- Over 40,000 students in Washington’s public schools are currently homeless, a disproportionate share of them Indigenous, Black, and Brown (**Figure 16**), and nearly double the number when the state started collecting data in 2008;
- In the nation’s largest assessment of basic needs security for college students, seven in 10 community college students reported experiencing food insecurity, housing insecurity, or homelessness during the past year;⁴³
- In the latest 24-hour count on domestic violence in Washington state, nearly 2,000 victims were provided services;⁴⁴
- In a landmark study on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls (MMIWG), Seattle had the highest number of MMIWG among 71 urban cities;⁴⁵
- Drug treatment admissions for opioids rose 257% statewide since 2002, with increases in 38 of 39 counties.⁴⁶
- Depression has increased among youth over the last decade, and 43% of adolescents age 12-17 are seeking mental health counseling annually.⁴⁷

Homelessness, violence, mental illness, and addiction are often co-occurring and contribute to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), toxic stress, and lifelong trauma, increasing the likelihood that a child, adult, or family will experience intergenerational poverty. Unless they have close, trusting relationships to family and friends with ample resources, a child, adult, or family experiencing

⁴³ Goldrick-Rab, S., Baker-Smith, C., Coca, V., Looker, E., Williams, T. (2018, April). College and University Basic Needs Insecurity: A National #RealCollege Survey Report. Retrieved from https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/HOPE_realcollege_National_report_digital.pdf

⁴⁴ The National Network to End Domestic Violence (2018). *Domestic Violence Counts: Washington Summary*. Retrieved from https://nnedv.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Library_Census_2018_Washington.pdf

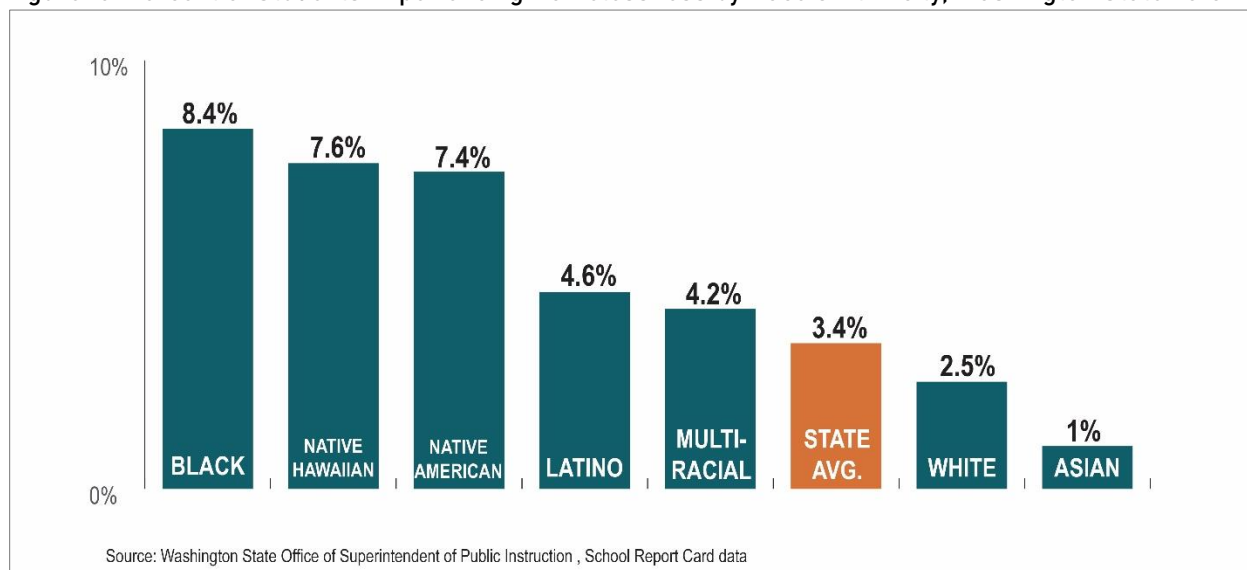
⁴⁵ Urban Indian Health Institute (2019). *Our Bodies, Our Stories*. Retrieved from <https://www.uihi.org/projects/our-bodies-our-stories/>

⁴⁶ Alcohol & Drug Abuse Institute (2019, November). *Opioid Trends across Washington State*. Retrieved from https://adai.washington.edu/WAdata/opiate_home.htm

⁴⁷ Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (2015). *Behavioral Health Barometer: Washington*. Retrieved from https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/2015_Washington_BHBarometer.pdf

homelessness, violence, mental illness, and/or addiction will inevitably need financial assistance and other services to support their safety, stability, and long-term well-being.

Figure 16: Percent of Students Experiencing Homelessness by Race & Ethnicity, Washington State 2018



Numerous groups are working on the homelessness, violence, and behavioral health crises in Washington state, including the [*Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence*](#), [*Urban Indian Health Institute*](#), [*Office of Youth Homelessness*](#), [*Building Changes*](#), [*A Way Home Washington*](#), [*Low Income Housing Alliance*](#), [*Catholic Community Services*](#), [*Community Action Partnership*](#), and the [*Children's Mental Health Workgroup*](#), to name a few. PRWG respects the work of these existing efforts and does not wish to be duplicative, but feels it is important to recognize significant strategies stemming from their work to ensure the importance of addressing the urgency of homelessness, violence, mental illness, and addiction for reducing poverty and inequality is made clear.

Recommendation 5a. Provide greater resources for community-led data collection. Data for children, adults, and families experiencing homelessness, violence, or a behavioral health issue is improving, but remains an obstacle to fully understanding the size and extent of these crises and their relationship to poverty. Investing in community-led quantitative and qualitative data collections efforts, such as the Urban Indian Health Board's [*Our Bodies, Our Stories Report*](#) (**Bright Spot #8**), is a necessity to gain a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of poverty and its relationship to homelessness, violence, and behavioral health, and to inform the most promising solutions.

Recommendation 5b. Increase state and local rental assistance and diversion programs that allow children, youth, adults, and families to avoid homelessness. Diversion programs help families obtain temporary housing outside of the homeless assistance system while connecting them to the services and resources they need to secure stable, permanent housing. Successful diversion programs improve the ability of the homeless assistance system to target shelter

resources effectively and, most importantly, help families safely avoid a traumatic and stressful homeless episode.⁴⁸

Recommendation 5c. Increase the number of emergency, transitional, and permanent supportive housing options. Increasing the number of affordable housing units across Washington state is the most preventive approach to the homelessness crisis, but it is a long-term strategy (see Section 4). To address the urgency of the current crisis, public and private partners at the state and local levels should increase investment in the availability of housing options across the spectrum of need and ensure human service supports are embedded at every stage of the process.

Recommendation 5d. Develop stronger public-private partnerships to increase opportunities for supported education, job training, and employment. Children, adults, and families experiencing homelessness, violence, or a behavioral health issue often require significant time to stabilize their situation, connect with support services, and heal from trauma. Embedding supportive services in education and employment settings provide a continuum of ongoing supports that can meet a wide range of needs (Bright Spot #9).⁴⁹

Recommendation 5e. Create a Medical-Financial Partnership model for Washington state.⁵⁰ Financial stress has been shown to impact health outcomes among low-income children and their families. Medical-Financial Partnerships (MFP) models are showcasing positive impacts on the social determinants of health via this cross-sector collaboration in which health care systems and financial service organizations are co-located (in the same area in the medical building) to improve health and reduce patient financial stress.⁵¹

Recommendation 5f. Improve access to prevention, treatment, and recovery support services.⁵²

Expand efforts to enhance Washington state's behavioral health prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery programs. These efforts should continue to promote solutions that reduce harm to children, adults, and families with deadly, preventable diseases such as depression, substance abuse, and addiction.

- Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates to incentivize more medical providers to accept Apple Health;

⁴⁸ National Alliance to End Homelessness (2011). *Creating a Successful Diversion Program for Homeless Families*. Retrieved from <http://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/creating-a-successful-diversion-program.pdf>

⁴⁹ Taylor Danielson, PhD & David Mancuso, PhD & Barbara E.M. Felver, MES, MPA (forthcoming) The Foundational Community Supports Program: Preliminary Evaluation Findings

⁵⁰ Bell, O. N., Hole, M. K., Johnson, K., Marcil, L. E., Solomon, B. S., & Schickedanz, A. (2019). *Medical-Financial Partnerships: Cross-Sector Collaborations Between Medical and Financial Services to Improve Health*. Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1876285919304279>

⁵¹ National Nurse-Led Care Consortium (2018, August). *Integrating Medical and Financial Health*. Retrieved from <https://nurseledcare.phmc.org/images/pdf/technical-assistance/MFP-Webinar-Resource.pdf>

⁵² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2018, September). *Strategy to Combat Opioid Abuse, Misuse, and Overdose*. Retrieved from <https://www.hhs.gov/opioids/sites/default/files/2018-09/opioid-fivepoint-strategy-20180917-508compliant.pdf>

- Incentivize insurers to provide a broader range of inpatient/outpatient services, including stabilization, counselling, diversion, and respite care;
- Integrate and co-locate services across housing, social, health, education, and workforce development systems and bolster community-led programs;
- Use human-centered design and other person-centered practices to define a reimagined, modernized continuum of care across jurisdictions (*see Section 6*).

Recommendation 5g. Improve integration of behavioral health treatment in early learning settings and K-12.

Children struggling with a behavioral health issue are not adequately or accurately screened or cared for at school, which can negatively affect their learning, social relationships, and physical well-being. However, early learning settings and schools are often trusted family-centered spaces which should be leveraged. Services can be improved by:

- Improving training for teachers and school health providers to support screening and early recognition/intervention, particularly for ACEs;
- Improving the Individual Education Plan (IEP) system to increase flexibility and minimize the removal of kids to special education classrooms or out-of-school placements;
- Increase peer counseling and mindfulness programs in schools;
- Increase educational programming to decrease cultural stigma around mental health conditions; and improve access to appropriate after-school care and programming.

BRIGHT SPOT #8: Our Bodies, Our Stories

[Our Bodies, Our Stories](#) is a series of reports produced by the Urban Indian Health Institute (Seattle, WA) that details the scope of violence against Native women and girls across the nation. Data for Indigenous people is historically lacking, inaccurate, and misleading, often leaving them invisible in public policy and program discussions. Our Bodies, Our Stories is an Indigenous-led effort to provide a baseline understanding of the sexual violence Indigenous women face, as well as document for the first time the number of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls (MMIWG) in the country. The reports are a powerful example of why community-led data collection is needed to better understand and prioritize solutions for issues affecting the well-being of Indigenous people.

BRIGHT SPOT #9: Supported Housing & Employment

The *[Foundational Community Supports](#)* program provides statewide supportive housing and employment services to people with complex physical or behavioral health care needs. The primary goal of these services is to help people with a significant behavioral health need or disability obtain and maintain stable housing or competitive employment. The program is administered by Health Care Authority, and preliminary results show significant gains in housing stability, employment, and earnings for participants.

STRATEGY 6: Build an integrated human service continuum of care that addresses the holistic needs of children, adults, and families.

“As soon as I take a breath and have a second to just sit and play with my kids on the floor and not worry about how I am going to get dinner on the table tonight or how to pay the rent...the rug gets pulled out from underneath me. It’s like a game of Chutes & Ladders...I climb up, just to fall back down repeatedly, and getting to the top seems dependent on a lucky roll of the dice.”

~PRWG Steering Committee member

Programs serving children, adults, and families experiencing poverty in Washington state are spread out across a multitude of agencies and sectors that work in partnership to deliver cash and food & housing assistance; health care and services; early care and education; and education, training, and employment opportunities. Feedback from people being served by these agencies overwhelmingly points to the inadequate, onerous, and fragmented nature of programs, which are like “a full-time job to navigate”.⁵³ Too often, people fall through the cracks within and between systems, increasing their likelihood of becoming involved with other systems that can compound and perpetuate poverty, such as juvenile justice, criminal justice, child welfare, and homeless systems.

The current state of our human service systems worsens what brain science refers to as a “scarcity mindset.”⁵⁴ People with low incomes incur significant financial, temporal, and cognitive costs⁵⁵ that tax a person’s mental bandwidth to such a great extent it affects their ability to problem solve and plan.⁵⁶ Cutting these costs for people experiencing poverty by easing access to services, allowing time to “take a breath,” and removing punitive measures would alleviate the toxic stress poverty can impose and better support children, adults, and families in achieving long-term economic success and well-being.

Notable examples of human service transformations exist in Colorado⁵⁷ and Tennessee⁵⁸ and are afoot in other states as well. Lessons from these efforts suggest that, at a minimum, a human service continuum of care should:

- Support diversion when appropriate; address urgent needs first; empower and build resilience; customize pathways; and continue to support until a child, adult, or family is set up to thrive **(Figure 17)**;

⁵³ DSHS, SPAN, NW Harvest Listening Sessions

⁵⁴ Ideas 42 (2015, May). *Poverty Interrupted: Applying Behavioral Science to the Context of Chronic Scarcity*. Retrieved from http://www.ideas42.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/I42_PovertyWhitePaper_Digital_FINAL-1.pdf; Crittenton Women’s Union (2014). *Using Brain Science to Design New Pathways Out of Poverty*. Retrieved from <http://s3.amazonaws.com/empath-website/pdf/Research-UsingBrainScienceDesignPathwaysPoverty-0114.pdf>

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Sendhil Mullainathan & Eldar Shafir (2015) *Scarcity: Why Having Too Little Means So Much*. Time Books: New York, NY

⁵⁷ Ascend at the Aspen Institute (2017, June). *Colorado Guide to 2Gen*. Retrieved from <https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/resources/colorado-guide-to-2gen/>

⁵⁸ Ascend at the Aspen Institute (2018, June). *Building a Thriving Tennessee: A 2Gen Approach*. Retrieved from <https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/resources/building-a-thriving-tennessee-a-2gen-approach/>

- Integrate and co-locate services across housing, social, health, education, and workforce development systems and bolster community-led programs;
- Use human-centered design and other person-centered practices to define a reimagined, modernized continuum of care across jurisdictions;
- Offer culturally relevant care by building a more racially and ethnically representative workforce and offering services in the preferred language of the person or family served;
- Serve the holistic needs of families by providing services to children and adults simultaneously to support healthy families;
- Incorporate race- and trauma-informed policies, programs, and practices;⁵⁹ and
- Use behavioral economics and “plain talk” to clearly and effectively communicate information to people served.

Figure 17: Key Elements of a Reimagined Continuum of Care



Key recommendations for a continuum of care include:

Recommendation 6a. Develop a shared set of outcomes for individual, child, and family well-being, in partnership with communities most affected by structural racism and poverty that each agency is collectively held accountable to achieve. Selected outcomes should focus on improving multiple dimensions of poverty essential for optimal well-being, including ensuring individuals, children, and families have the tools and resources they need to be economically successful (defined using 200% FPL at a minimum, and ideally using ALICE or another cost-of-living measure); the dignity of having power and autonomy over their lives; and being engaged and valued in their community (*see Defining and Measuring Poverty in Washington State on page 8*).⁶⁰ Baseline data for identified outcomes should be disaggregated by key demographic and geographic dimensions, which at a minimum should include: age, race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation, LGBTQ, disability status, immigration status, zip code, and family type.

⁵⁹ From Babcock, Elisabeth (March 2018) *Using Brain Science to Transform Human Services and Increase Mobility from Poverty*: “Trauma-informed care can be defined as “a strengths-based framework that is grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both providers and survivors, and that creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.” The following six core principles are the basis of TIC: (1) safety; (2) trustworthiness and transparency; (3) peer support; (4) collaboration and mutuality; (5) empowerment, voice, and choice; and (6) cultural, historical, and gender issues.

⁶⁰ Ellwood, D. T., & Patel, N. G. (2018, June 1). Restoring the American Dream. Retrieved from <https://www.mobilitypartnership.org/restoring-american-dream>

“Programs do not communicate with one another. I have to tell my story 20 times, each time reliving the trauma of it. It’s exhausting.” ~PRWG Steering Committee member

Recommendation 6b. Update “Standard of Need,” assistance levels, and eligibility to reflect the real costs of what it takes for individuals and families to make ends meet. Specifically:

- Develop a “Standard of Need”⁶¹ that accounts for what individuals and families need to be healthy and thrive when getting support from anti-poverty programs. The standard should account for variations in costs by geographic region, family size and composition, and age of children. The standard should be updated annually, and public benefit levels across all programs should be tied to this standard.
- Base eligibility for programs on a decent standard of living for the community in which one resides. Tools such as the *Self-Sufficiency Standard*⁶² and *United Way’s ALICE* (Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed)⁶³ measure adjust for geography, family size, and composition, and can be used to set targets to expand eligibility for assistance programs.

Recommendation 6c. Develop a universal intake, data sharing, and technology platform so that we can share *essential* information on people across agencies, systems, and sectors. In this intake process, clear information should be offered about what would be shared and how, giving those with safety concerns the ability to opt out. Sharing information across systems will ease the burden of sharing one’s story repeatedly, save time and resources, and help break down silos across different systems. However, this may be dangerous for some children, adults, and families – particularly survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking – who worry about who is able to access their information with intention to cause harm.

Recommendation 6d. Increase cash assistance and make it unconditional upon work. Evidence suggests that unrestrictive cash assistance is an effective strategy for poverty reduction.⁶⁴ Furthermore, the majority of literature shows that work requirements are just as likely to increase poverty as decrease it and that employment-focused poverty reduction strategies do not result in meaningful poverty reduction.^{65,66} Specifically:

- Update existing cash grants in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Aged, Blind, or Disabled (ABD), and Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) programs to align with cost-of-living and adjust annually for inflation;
- Pass through 100% of child support to children and their custodial parent for anyone on assistance; and

⁶¹ Specifically the need standard for cash assistance as outlined by RCW 74.04.770 should be updated (from the original 1990 market basket study) and should be reconfigured to reflect regional variations in cost. Actual assistance levels should be linked to a percentage of this standard.

⁶² University of Washington (n.d.). Self Sufficiency Standard: Washington. Retrieved from <http://www.selfsufficiencystandard.org/node/86>

⁶³ United Ways of the Pacific Northwest (n.d.) ALICE in the PNW. Retrieved from https://www.uwpnw.org/alice_in_pnw

⁶⁴ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2019). *A Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty*. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.17226/25246>

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ideas42 (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.ideas42.org/>

- Pilot a state program that provides unrestricted cash assistance to individuals and families and evaluate its effect on key elements of well-being and return on investment compared to current programs (**Bright Spot #10**).

Recommendation 6e. Smooth on-ramps and off-ramps for programs. Individuals or families applying for assistance are often under significant stress, especially if they are experiencing homelessness, mental illness, addiction, or violence. Many programs impose immediate, onerous requirements (e.g., requiring orientation as a condition of eligibility, threat of sanction) or intake processes (identifying career goals before stably housed, etc.), which can exacerbate stress and undermine well-being. Eligibility levels vary widely across programs (**Figure 18**), leaving significant gaps depending on an individual's income and personal circumstance (e.g., single vs. married, disabled, with or without shelter). Similarly, assistance can abruptly end before an individual or family is ready, or if a person begins earning just \$1 over a given eligibility threshold (which is called a financial cliff), hindering economic mobility. On-ramps and off-ramps can be smoothed by:

- Giving children, adults, and families time to “take a breath” by addressing urgent needs and stability before making onerous program requirements;
- Removing asset limits to qualify for public assistance programs;
- Easing harsh sanction and time limit policies in the TANF program;
- Eliminating the cash, child care, and medical “cliff effects”;
- Allow for categorical eligibility when possible and appropriate; and
- Align eligibility across programs to ensure people can meet foundational needs as they work along the continuum of care.

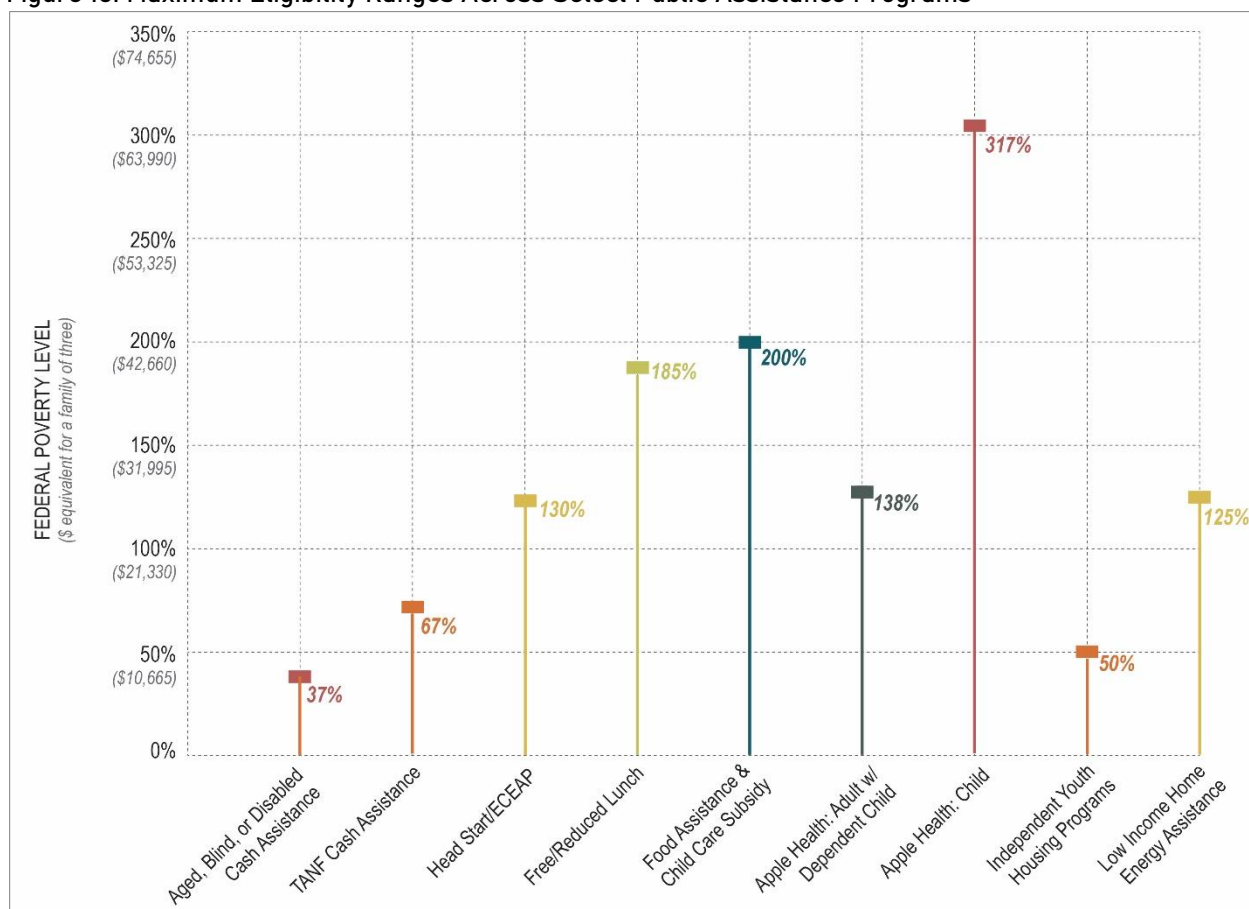
Recommendation 6f. Revamp policies, programs, and practices to inspire hope and build resilience. The emerging science of hope and resilience suggests that it is one of the most essential elements of well-being and success. Specifically:

- Develop and train coaching and navigator care teams to support people as they navigate state and local resources and services; and
- Invest in community-based peer-to-peer support models for individuals, children, and adults experiencing poverty.

“Most of the time I am like, what’s the secret handshake? How do I navigate this to get what I need? The burden of figuring out the system is on the people being served...it’s a full-time job.”

~PRWG Steering Committee member

Figure 18: Maximum Eligibility Ranges Across Select Public Assistance Programs



BRIGHT SPOT #10: Unrestricted Cash Assistance

Providing cash assistance to children, adults, and families with no strings attached is gaining traction in the United States. Unrestricted cash assistance can alleviate the “scarcity mindset” that people in poverty experience, freeing up resources and time to plan for the future. [Research](#) shows giving people money with no restrictions does not deter employment, and is a more effective poverty reduction tool than programs that require work to receive cash.

[Many pilots](#) are underway testing unrestricted cash assistance programs in the U.S. One of these studies – [Baby’s First Years](#) – will be the first study in the country to assess the impact of unrestricted cash assistance on family life and infant and toddlers’ cognitive, emotional, and brain development.

STRATEGY 7: Decriminalize poverty and reduce reliance on the criminal justice, juvenile justice, and child welfare systems.

“Because I am poor and have multiple children, the assumption is I must be a bad parent and have addiction issues. CPS just assumes they need to intervene and look for reasons to take away my children.” ~PRWG Steering Committee Member

Families in poverty, especially deep poverty, are at greater risk of experiencing high levels of stress compared to economically stable families. This can result in higher ACEs and potentially toxic levels of stress to home environments. Such conditions can negatively affect a child’s health and well-being, performance in school, and their relationships, increasing their chances of becoming involved with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems when they are young, as well as the criminal justice system when they are an adult.

The child welfare, juvenile justice, and criminal justice systems have deep, overlapping intersections with structural racism, inequality, and poverty. The majority of neglect cases, for example, occur in families with incomes below 50% FPL,⁶⁷ and a large share of children, youth, and adults in both the juvenile and criminal justice systems are from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Once involved in these systems, children and adults often lack the support needed to successfully exit them and face numerous barriers in acquiring the education and employment opportunities they need to achieve economic stability. As a result, child welfare- and justice-involved families have a high rate of recidivism and are at high risk of experiencing discrimination, unemployment, homelessness, and other factors that perpetuate the cycle of poverty in families. Indigenous, Black, and Brown children, adults, and families are over-represented in the child welfare, juvenile, and criminal justice systems, exacerbating the burden of poverty in communities of color.

PRWG recognizes the significant degree to which these systems intensify and perpetuate poverty. Indeed, each of them needs comprehensive systemic reform, and there are numerous efforts dedicated to this cause, including the [*Washington State Re-entry Council*](#), [*Community Partners for Transition Solutions*](#), and the [*Black Prisoners Caucus*](#), to name a few. PRWG recognizes the work of these existing efforts and urges stakeholders to consult with them on the systemic reforms needed. We narrowed the recommendations below in scope to services children, adults, and families need when at risk of entering or exiting these systems, and what changes are needed to mitigate their effects on poverty.

⁶⁷ Partners for Our Children (2016, January) Research Brief: Poverty & Involvement in the Child Welfare System. Retrieved from <https://partnersforourchildren.org/sites/default/files/Poverty%20and%20Child%20Welfare%20Involvement%205-3-16.pdf>

BEFORE & UPON ENTRY

Recommendation 7a. Decriminalize and destigmatize poverty by shifting resources toward diversion, healing, and support services.⁶⁸ Shifting resources away from arrest and detention toward services that prevent entry into the juvenile and criminal justice systems get children and adults the health care they need, while simultaneously reducing the likelihood of future arrest, reducing racial and ethnic disparities, and breaking the cycle of poverty in families. Specifically:

- Reduce resources spent on detention, and redirect them to diversion, treatment, and support services;
- Increase law enforcement training on trauma-informed interventions and de-escalation training, especially for lower-level, non-violent street crimes; and
- Expand access to treatment for mental health, substance abuse, and addiction for children and adults at risk of being detained.

Recommendation 7b. Rapidly engage families and connect them to support services when a child or adult is at risk of entering the juvenile or criminal justice systems. Families also experience significant trauma when a child or adult family member is at-risk of being arrested and/or detained. Assessing the needs of a whole family and connecting them to assistance and support services early can stabilize family environments.

Recommendation 7c. Increase in-home assistance and support services to keep children in the care of people and environments that make them feel the most stable and safe. Keeping children in friend and family networks, communities, and schools they feel most connected to can mitigate trauma and build resilience. Specifically:

- Create clearer, culturally-informed standards for what constitutes “high quality” parenting to reduce stigma of parents with low incomes;
- Create age-appropriate opportunities for children and youth to voice their opinions and be an active participant in case decisions;
- Establish a transportation fund for students to reduce school changes for children becoming involved with the child welfare system;
- Increase financial assistance to children and their kinship caregivers by ensuring payments are at parity with foster parents and create a child-only benefit within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; and
- Pilot school-based recruitment for foster homes so children can stay in their school systems and friendship networks.

⁶⁸ In some rural communities, people depend on the jobs created by the prison system. Support economic investments in rural communities while increasing thriving wage job opportunities outside the prison system in rural communities to mitigate the shift away from funding incarceration. Consider applying the “Just Transition” framework from [Front and Centered](#) to the disinvestment of over-incarceration.

WHILE INVOLVED

Recommendation 7d. Provide robust, trauma-informed case management to children, adults, and families involved in child welfare, juvenile, and criminal justice systems. Specifically:

- Increase the number of providers - including mental health professionals, case managers, and social workers – with expertise in trauma and rehabilitative care to expand high quality services for children, youth, and adults involved in these systems; and
- Create an early detection system to quickly identify children and families with a criminal justice-involved family member so they can be connected to case managers, assistance, and support services if needed.

Recommendation 7e. Expand education, job training, and employment opportunities for children and adults while they are in the care of the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

Specifically:

- Initiate re-entry planning and case management early in an individual's sentence to address trauma, build resilience, and set long-term goals;
- Provide youth in juvenile justice settings the same school services as youth in mainstream schools, including special education services, mentoring, and career counseling;⁶⁹
- Allow youth and adults in justice settings to obtain a meaningful post-secondary credential or degree that prepares them for re-entry; and
- Expand mentoring and apprenticeship opportunities for justice involved youth and adults while in detention.

Recommendation 7f. Eliminate Legal Financial Obligations (LFOs). Strengthen and enforce LFO reform laws. Specifically:

- Limit "pay to pay" and "pay to stay" fees while individuals are incarcerated;
- Limit incentives for defendants to take two-year probation plea deals; and
- Suspend child support payment responsibilities while a non-custodial parent is incarcerated.

Recommendation 7g. Provide adequate funding to increase the availability of safe, culturally responsive foster homes and permanent living options for children and youth involved with the child welfare system. Specifically:

- Increase safety regulations and oversight of group and family homes that foster numerous children;
- Eliminate the practice of sending children and youth to sleep in hotels or be located out of state; and
- Provide more permanent supportive housing options for extended care youth and youth exiting the child welfare system.

⁶⁹ Washington State Department of Children, Youth & Families (2018). *Workshop Recommended Programs Services for JR Young Adults Ages 18-25*. Retrieved from <https://dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/reports/JR-6160WorkshopRecommendations2018.pdf>

UPON RELEASE & RE-ENTRY

Recommendation 7h. Connect children, adults, and families to public assistance and support services *at least* three months before they exit a system. Specifically:

- Allow children, youth, and adults to apply and receive public assistance before exiting a system to help them quickly stabilize upon re-entry;
- Prepare individuals for exit or re-entry through the provision of wrap-around navigation services, connection to employee mentors with lived experiences, career exploration, and advice on useful community organizations regarding access to housing, healthcare, education, and job opportunities before release; and
- Ensure compliance with the Fair Chance Housing ordinance and urge public and private housing providers to limit the use of criminal history when screening tenants so that non-violent arrests do not exclude individuals experiencing homelessness from city- and county-controlled housing placement lists.

Recommendation 7i. Eliminate education and employment barriers, and invest in stronger, better-coordinated exit and re-entry policies, services, and programs. Specifically:

- Evaluate the efficacy of the recently created Certificate of Restoration Program (CROP) for former offenders and strengthen if needed;
- Increase incentives for employers to hire and support formerly incarcerated people of color as leaders, caseworkers, and managerial staff to help people exiting the criminal justice system; and
- Strengthen K-12 school re-engagement for youth exiting the juvenile justice system.

Recommendation 7j. Expand and strengthen post-release family and peer support services. Specifically:

- Fund aftercare support and case managers for all youth released from residential commitment;
- Expand the number of programs that support peer-to-peer training and mentoring opportunities for children, youth, and adults exiting systems; and
- Provide public assistance and support services after exit or re-entry until individuals and families self-determine they have social and economic safety, stability, and security.

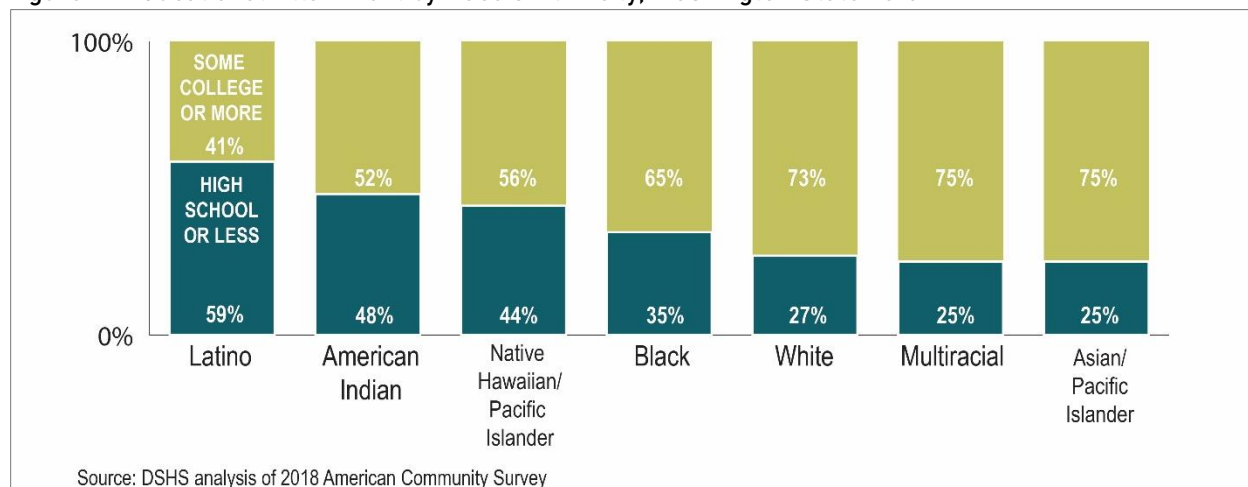
STRATEGY 8: Ensure a just transition to the future of work.

Washington state's economy is continuously undergoing significant and rapid change. Emerging technology (e.g. automation, artificial intelligence) is, and will continue to, disrupt both the type of work available and the workforce needed for a thriving economy and communities. The economic cycle will also continue to produce periods of downturn, which always hit people with lower incomes the hardest. Without updated policies that adapt to economic changes, too many children, families, and communities are at risk of being left behind.

People experiencing poverty are especially susceptible to the changing economy and future of work. As the recent report from the [Future of Work Taskforce](#) (FOW Taskforce) notes, by 2025 an estimated 70% of projected job openings in Washington state will require some postsecondary education, yet some 758,000 Washingtonians under age 45 lack education beyond high school,⁷⁰ a disproportionate share of which are people of color (**Figure 19**). Moreover, the FOW Taskforce notes that full-time employment is no longer a guarantee in the emerging economy, and people will increasingly rely on a patchwork of part-time "gigs" to make ends meet. If our public assistance programs do not modernize to adapt to the future of work, many workers will experience longer periods of financial instability, "wreaking havoc" on family and community well-being.

Protecting Washingtonians from anticipated disruptions in employment, while simultaneously investing in the education and skills they need for the jobs of the future, can ensure a just and equitable transition to the future of work.

Figure 19: Educational Attainment by Race & Ethnicity, Washington State 2018



⁷⁰ DSHS|ESA analysis of 2018 American Community Survey data; data is restricted to the population age 25 to 44

Recommendation 8a. Adopt the recommendations detailed in the FOW Taskforce report,⁷¹ and bolster it with more specific, intentional strategies to achieve equity for workers of color, women, immigrants and refugees, and rural Washingtonians. The FOW recommends 13 actions within the following five strategies:

- Provide comprehensive worker upskilling and lifelong learning opportunities;
- Prepare for use and adoption of advancing technology in the workplace;
- Improve labor market data and credentialing transparency;
- Modernize worker support systems; and
- Ensure equal access to economic development resources across Washington.

PRWG supports the following additional recommendations to increase the likelihood of the FOW Taskforce strategies achieving equity:

Recommendation 8a-i. Dramatically expand mentorship and career-connected learning for people of color, refugees and immigrants, people with disabilities, and rural communities (Bright Spot #11). In the ever-changing economy, there is an even higher premium on social capital, connections to employers, and direct workplace experience. Yet, these experiences are hardest to acquire for people furthest away from opportunity. To increase mentorship and career-connected learning programs for people of color, immigrants and refugees; rural communities, and people with disabilities:

- Require mentorship from employers, community members, or other caring adults for youth and adults in career-connected learning programs;
- Create a 1:1 state-employer matching fund for programs that combine mentorship, career planning, and career-connected learning with helping people move out of poverty; and
- Work in partnership with the business community to ensure appropriate supports are in place to address trauma and the wrap-around services needed for staff from low-income backgrounds to succeed in the workplace (Bright Spot #12).

Recommendation 8a-ii. Accelerate pathways for immigrants and refugees with advanced degrees and/or training from their home country to become accredited in the U.S. Many immigrants and refugees bring considerable education, training, and professional experience from their home countries, but face obstacles to employment in the U.S. because states fail to recognize their education and employment credentials obtained outside the U.S. Accelerating accreditation for immigrants and refugees with advanced training and degrees will increase the economic security of their families and provide Washington with the talent needed to fill shortages in high-demand occupations, such as medicine, education, science, and engineering (Bright Spot #13). Specific to medical graduates, the state can:

- Create a Limited License for International Medical Graduates (LLIMG) who have passed all the United States Medical License Examinations to practice under the supervision of a Board Certified Physician;

⁷¹ Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (2019, December). Future of Work Task Force 2019 Policy Report. Retrieved from <https://www.wtb.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Future-of-Work-2019-Final-Report.pdf>

- Ensure Managed Care Organizations that serve Medicaid clients provide credentialing and reimburse international medical graduates who hold a Limited License to practice medicine (LLIMG);
- Ensure 10% of Washington funded ACGME accredited residency positions are dedicated to immigrant and refugee doctors living in Washington; and
- Create a committee that oversees state funded residency positions and assures that residency programs are actively integrating immigrant and refugee doctors into our health care system.

Recommendation 8b. Create tax structures for employers that offer full-time employment with living wages and robust benefit packages. Specifically:

- Increase incentives to employers that hire, mentor, and train workers who are most at risk of skills becoming irrelevant in the new world of work into higher wage, in-demand jobs; and
- Increase incentives to employers that offer medical and dental insurance, long-term care, and retirement plans for all workers.

Recommendation 8c. Protect Washingtonians from economic downturns by developing an economic “trigger” to provide countercyclical funding in human services, education, and job training. Economic downturns inevitably occur and planning for them can mitigate the effects on people most affected. Specifically:

- Develop a state budget protocol to prepare for economic downturns; and
- Identify policy and program changes (e.g., extending or expanding human service benefits, easing job search requirements, income supports) that can be automatically implemented in the event of a downturn.

Recommendation 8d. Develop and pilot a portable benefits model and a guaranteed basic income program. In an economy that does not guarantee full-time work, benefit models must be updated to prevent worsening poverty rates and crises related to it, such as homelessness, mental illness, and addiction. Specifically,

- Develop and pilot a portable employee benefits model that stays with a worker when they switch jobs; and
- Develop and test a guaranteed basic income program to protect people from anticipated disruptions to employment due to technological advancements.

BRIGHT SPOT #11: Economic Security for All Initiative & Si Se Puede

Connell, in southeastern Washington, is small town America at its best. But like so many rural towns, jobs have passed Connell by and over half of Connell's residents live in deep poverty or working poverty. Via Governor Inslee's Economic Security for All initiative (EcSA), four local communities are testing ways to minimize barriers, simplify intake, improve information sharing, and work as a unified team - with the singular goal of helping 895 families who are currently receiving SNAP benefits move permanently above 200% of FPL. Connell is one of those communities.

Local leaders in Connell are focusing on helping single Latina mothers move out of poverty and into secure middle class careers. Their initiative, Si Se Puede, won funding from the state's Economic Security for All Initiative, which provides local teams of community leaders, employers and service organizations resources to improve economic self-sufficiency in their region. A young woman named Jessica heard about Si Se Puede. This was personal for Jessica, who was raised by a single Latina mother in a small rural town. She moved out of poverty to become a successful young professional and teacher. Jessica joined the Si Se Puede team to help more people move up and live the American dream, like she did.

BRIGHT SPOT #12: Moses Lake Rural Economic Development

In Grant County, the average annual unemployment rate dipped from 6.3% in 2017 to 6.2% in 2018, which is the lowest percentage since 1990. In this timeframe, they added over 1,300 jobs for a 4.7% increase compared to the State's 2.5% increase for the same time period. One of the sectors seeing an increase in jobs is manufacturing and the county is working with their Economic Development Council and their Workforce Development Council to partner with K-12 schools, colleges and the business sector to create a pipeline of trained youth and adults to invest in the skills needed locally to retain talent in the region. This cross-sector partnership is boosting rural Washington's economic pipeline through innovative partnerships with public- and private-sector support.

BRIGHT SPOT #13: Washington Academy for International Medical Graduates

[Washington Academy for International Medical Graduates](#) is working to break down the barriers that prevent Washington international medical graduates from accomplishing their professional and medical career goals. Such doctors face a steep path towards licensure and often come across many obstacles. As a result of WAIMG's efforts, in 2019 Governor Inslee signed [legislation](#) establishing a workgroup to recommend strategies for international medical graduates to gain access to residency programs necessary for licensing in Washington. In doing so, the group hopes to improve the economic prospects of immigrants and refugees and also fill the large and growing doctor shortage in Washington state.

IMPLEMENTATION & ACCOUNTABILITY

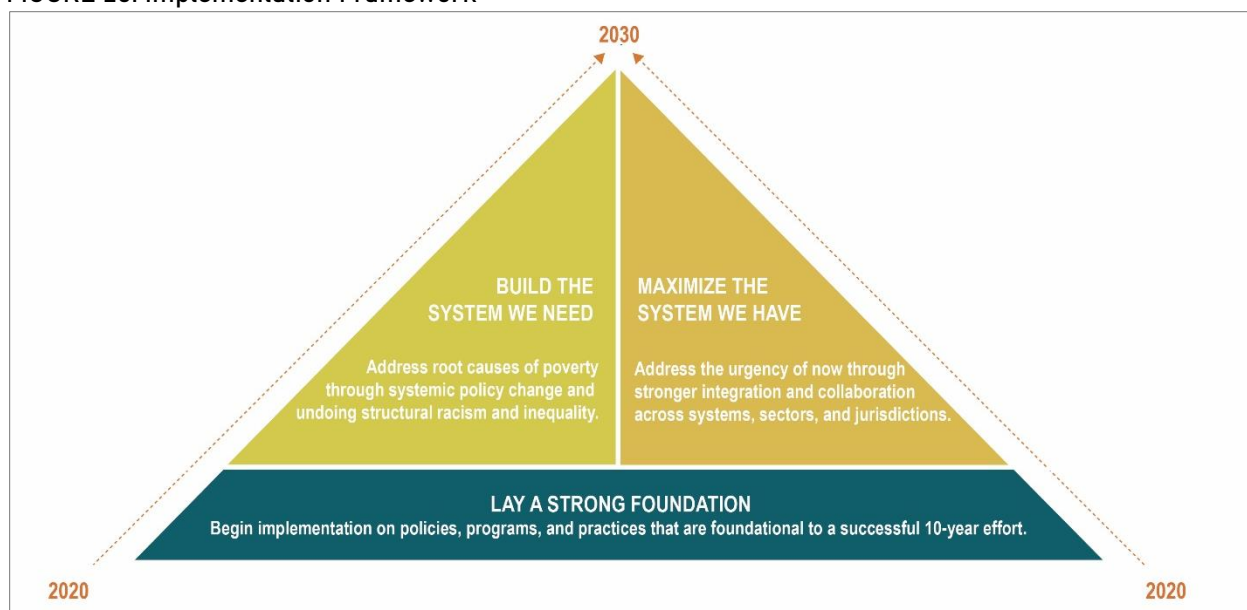
There is no silver-bullet policy, program, or practice for reducing poverty and inequality. There is no one-size fits all solution. As this *Plan for the Future* shows, it will take a coordinated set of strategies by a diverse group of stakeholders in the government, for-profit, non-profit, and philanthropic sectors to become a reality. A plan is just the beginning of the work – now it must be put into action.

Implementation of the strategies and recommendations can be organized over the next ten years as follows (Figure 20):

- **Lay a strong foundation.** Begin by implementing strategies and recommendations that lay a strong foundation for implementation over the next ten years.
- **Maximize the system we have.** Address the urgent needs of people currently experiencing poverty by working in partnership across systems, sectors, and jurisdictions to make the most of the system we have.
- **Build the system we need.** Work in partnership to make the systemic changes needed to equitably reduce the incidence and experience of poverty and promote social and economic mobility for all Washingtonians.

Table 2 provides a draft guide to implementation using these categories, as well as a rough estimate of timing and anticipated costs. **This guide is meant to provide initial direction, and is intended to be a point of departure for discussion during implementation.**

FIGURE 20: Implementation Framework



Accountability

Strong accountability needs to accompany implementation. PRWG requests the following actions take place to ensure actions related to *A Plan for the Future* maintain the integrity and intention of the strategies and recommendations:

- **2020 stakeholder engagement.** A 22-member Steering Committee and 45-member work group with considerable diversity in experience, representation, and world views proved to be an asset in the development of *A Plan for the Future*. While this is a lot of people, it is also not enough to reflect the full experience of what it is like to live in poverty in Washington state. To ensure these strategies and recommendations meet the needs of all Washingtonians experiencing poverty, PRWG will be hosting a series of briefings with stakeholders throughout the state to highlight the plan and request feedback. We plan to submit the final plan to Governor Inslee by July 31, 2020.
- **Agency action plans.** To fulfill our commitment to the PRWG Steering Committee, the co-lead agencies respectfully request that Governor Inslee direct state agencies to review the strategies and recommendations and draft action plans for how to implement them.
- **Legislative-Executive WorkFirst and Poverty Reduction Taskforce (“Taskforce”).** PRWG acts as the Advisory Committee to the Taskforce, which was created under HB 1482 in 2018. The Taskforce has a similar focus to PRWG, with special emphasis on intergenerational poverty. The legislation creating the Taskforce required a 5-year plan to reduce intergenerational poverty, which has been submitted and is strongly aligned to *A Plan for the Future*. PRWG respectfully requests that the Taskforce continue to be a space for the executive and legislative branches, as well as all stakeholders with a vested interest in reducing poverty and inequality, to discuss implementation of their respective plans.
- **Stakeholder action plans.** Government, for-profit, non-profit, and philanthropic organizations in the fields of early learning, K-12, higher education, workforce development, health, child welfare, finance, housing, human services, and juvenile and criminal justice all have a role to play in bringing the strategies and recommendations contained in this plan to action. PRWG will be actively reaching out to stakeholders to hear how they would like to support the plan.

Table 2: Suggested Timing & Cost for Implementation **Draft – Work in Progress**

STRATEGIES/RECOMMENDATION	IMPLEMENTATION			ESTIMATED TIME TO IMPLEMENT			ESTIMATED COST RANGE*
	Maximize the System We Have			5+ Years			
	Build the System We Need			3-5 Years			
	Lay a Strong Foundation			1-2 Years			
STRATEGY 1: Understand structural racism and historical trauma, and take action to undo their harmful effects in state policy, programs, and practice.							
1a. Require state entities to collaborate with the emerging Office of Equity to develop trainings on historical trauma, institutional racism, and implicit bias that are required of all public employees in systems that touch upon the lives of people experiencing poverty.	●			●			\$
1b. Require state entities to collaborate with the emerging Office of Equity to develop data, processes, and tools that prioritize racial equity in state government policies, programs, practices, and partnerships.	●			●			\$
STRATEGY 2: Make equal space for the power and influence of people and communities most affected by poverty and inequality in decision-making.							
2a. Task the emerging Office of Equity to collaborate with Indigenous, Black, and Brown Washingtonians to develop a formal process for truth and reconciliation.	●			●			\$
2b. Institutionalize the practice of including people most affected by poverty in decision making by establishing a state-level entity to collaborate with stakeholders on the implementation of this 10-Year Plan for the Future.	●			●			\$\$
2c. Invest state resources to increase ownership capacity in communities most affected by poverty.	●			●			\$\$\$
STRATEGY 3: Target equitable education, income growth, and wealth-building opportunities for people with low incomes.							
3a. Adopt the Washington Kids for Washington Jobs recommendations, but bolster with more specific, intentional strategies to achieve equity.			●				\$\$\$

3a-i. Increase funding to accelerate the process of naturalization for immigrants, refugees, and asylees.		●		●			\$\$
3a-ii. Strengthen literacy programs and services for children and adults across the entire education and workforce-development pipeline.		●			●		\$\$
3a-iii. Eliminate harsh discipline practices in schools and replace them with culturally responsive social, emotional, and engagement supports.		●			●		\$\$
3a-iv. Increase investment in Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) statewide.			●		●		\$\$
3a-v. Increase investments to improve high school graduation and post-secondary enrollment of children and youth experiencing foster care and/or homelessness.			●		●		\$\$\$
3a-vi. Increase the availability of affordable child care and housing for student parents on or near college campuses.		●				●	\$\$\$\$
3a-vii. Remove residency barriers for college students with refugee status.		●		●			\$
3a- viii. Increase opportunities for Washington students and adults who are disconnected from the educational system to prepare for and access affordable and high quality postsecondary educational pathways.			●		●		\$\$\$
3b. Enforce stronger salary/wage transparency and fair labor practices among employers to ensure pay equity for women and people of color.			●	●			\$\$\$
3c. Expand access to no- or low-cost financial resources and education that empower, rather than prey upon, people experiencing poverty.			●		●		\$\$
3d. Enact changes to the state tax system that lower the effective tax rate for low- and moderate-income households (bottom two quintiles).		●			●		\$\$\$\$
3e. Work in partnership with local labor organizations and the government to modernize unions and the rights of workers.		●				●	\$
3f. Adopt the Child Care Collaborative Taskforce recommendations to increase the availability of affordable, high quality* early care and education.		●			●		\$\$\$\$
3g. Increase and preserve affordable housing for renters and owners.		●		●			\$\$\$\$
3h. Enact changes to the tax system that support equitable economic growth.		●				●	\$\$\$\$
STRATEGY 4: Strengthen health supports across the life span to promote the intergenerational well-being of families.							
4a. Create a state funded supplemental Apple Health assistance benefit.			●		●		\$\$\$
4b. Ensure funding and access to culturally and linguistically appropriate health care and support services before, during, and after pregnancy.			●		●		\$\$\$\$

4c. Expand culturally and linguistically appropriate home visiting so all eligible families can receive it.			●		●		\$\$\$
4d. Ensure access to free and low-cost contraceptive options and counseling, including long-term acting reversible contraceptives (LARCS) for people who want it.			●		●		\$\$\$
4e. Increase administrative funding to support culturally appropriate outreach for WIC, the Farmers Market Nutrition Program, and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition program.			●	●			\$\$\$
4f. Increase in-home Medicaid funds for supported living for seniors so they can receive care in their home and avoid costly residential programs.			●			●	\$\$\$\$

STRATEGY 5: Address the urgent needs of people experiencing homelessness, violence, mental illness, and/or addiction.

5a. Provide greater resources for community-led data collection.	●			●			\$\$\$
5b. Increase state and local rental assistance and diversion programs that allow children, youth, adults, and families to avoid homelessness.		●			●		\$\$\$
5c. Increase the number of emergency, transitional, and permanent supportive housing options.			●	●			\$\$\$\$
5d. Develop stronger public-private partnerships to increase opportunities for supported education, job training, and employment.		●		●			\$\$\$
5e. Create a Medical-Financial Partnership model for Washington state.			●		●		\$\$
5f. Improve access to prevention, treatment, and recovery support services.			●		●		\$\$\$\$
5g. Improve integration of behavioral health treatment in early learning settings and K-12.		●			●		\$\$\$\$

STRATEGY 6: Build an integrated human service continuum of care that addresses the holistic needs of children, adults, and families.

6a. Develop a shared set of outcomes for individual, child, and family well-being, in partnership with communities most affected by structural racism and poverty that each agency is collectively held accountable to achieve.	●			●			\$
6b. Update “Standard of Need,” assistance levels, and eligibility to reflect the real costs of what it takes for individuals and families to make ends meet.		●			●		\$\$\$\$
6c. Develop a universal intake, data sharing, and technology platform so that we can share <i>essential</i> information on people across agencies, systems, and sectors.		●				●	\$\$\$\$
6d. Increase cash assistance and make it unconditional upon work.		●			●		\$\$\$

6e. Smooth on-ramps and off-ramps for programs.								\$\$\$\$
6f. Revamp policies, programs, and practices to inspire hope and build resilience.								\$\$\$\$
STRATEGY 7: Decriminalize poverty and reduce reliance on the criminal justice, juvenile justice, and child welfare systems.								
7a. Decriminalize and destigmatize poverty by shifting resources toward diversion, treatment, and support services.								\$
7b. Rapidly engage families and connect them to support services when a child or adult is at risk of entering the juvenile or criminal justice systems.								\$\$\$
7c. Increase in-home assistance and support services to keep children in the care of people and environments that make them feel the safest.								\$\$\$
7d. Provide robust, trauma-informed case management to children, adults, and families involved in child welfare, juvenile, and criminal justice systems.								\$\$\$\$
7e. Expand education, job training, and employment opportunities for children and adults while they are in the care of the juvenile and criminal justice systems.								\$\$\$
7f. Eliminate Legal Financial Obligations (LFOs).								\$
7g. Provide adequate funding to increase the availability of safe, culturally responsive foster homes and permanent living options for children and youth involved with the child welfare system.								\$\$\$
7h. Connect children, adults, and families to public assistance and support services <i>at least</i> three months before they exit a system.								\$\$\$
7i. Eliminate education and employment barriers, and invest in stronger, better-coordinated exit and re-entry policies, services, and programs.								\$\$
7j. Expand and strengthen post-release family and peer support services.								\$\$\$
STRATEGY 8: Ensure a just transition to the future of work.								
8a. Adopt the recommendations detailed in the FOW Taskforce report, and bolster it with more specific, intentional strategies to achieve equity for workers of color, women, immigrants and refugees, and rural Washingtonians.								\$\$\$\$
8a-i. Dramatically expand mentorship and career-connected learning for people of color, refugees and immigrants, people with disabilities, and rural communities								\$\$\$\$

8a-ii. Accelerate pathways for immigrants and refugees with advanced degrees and/or training from their home country to become accredited in the U.S.									\$\$
8b. Create tax structures for employers that offer full-time employment with living wages and robust benefit packages.									\$\$\$\$
8c. Protect Washingtonians from economic downturns by developing an economic “trigger” to provide countercyclical funding in human services, education, and job training.									\$\$
8d. Develop and pilot a portable benefits model and a guaranteed basic income program.									\$\$\$

*\$ = No/Low Cost (\$0 - \$1 million); \$\$ = Low Cost \$1 million - \$5 million); \$\$\$ = Moderate Cost (\$5 million - \$50 million); \$\$\$\$ = High Cost (\$50 million+)

STRATEGIES/RECOMMENDATION	IMPLEMENTATION			ESTIMATED TIME TO IMPLEMENT			ESTIMATED COST RANGE*
	Maximize the System We Have			5+ Years			
	Build the System We Need			3-5 Years			
	Lay a Strong Foundation			1-2 Years			
STRATEGY 1: Understand structural racism and historical trauma, and take action to undo their harmful effects in state policy, programs, and practice.							
1a. Require state entities to collaborate with the emerging Office of Equity to develop trainings on historical trauma, institutional racism, and implicit bias that are required of all public employees in systems that touch upon the lives of people experiencing poverty.	●			●			\$
1b. Require state entities to collaborate with the emerging Office of Equity to develop data, processes, and tools that prioritize racial equity in state government policies, programs, practices, and partnerships.	●			●			\$
STRATEGY 2: Make equal space for the power and influence of people and communities most affected by poverty and inequality in decision-making.							
2a. Task the emerging Office of Equity to collaborate with Indigenous, Black, and Brown Washingtonians to develop a formal process for truth and reconciliation.	●			●			\$

2b. Institutionalize the practice of including people most affected by poverty in decision making by establishing a state-level entity to collaborate with stakeholders on the implementation of this <i>10-Year Plan for the Future</i> .	●			●			●●
2c. Invest state resources to increase ownership capacity in communities most affected by poverty.	●			●			\$\$\$
STRATEGY 3: Target equitable education, income growth, and wealth-building opportunities for people with low incomes.							
3a. Adopt the <i>Washington Kids for Washington Jobs</i> recommendations, but bolster with more specific, intentional strategies to achieve equity.			●				\$\$\$
3a-i. Increase funding to accelerate the process of naturalization for immigrants, refugees, and asylees.	●			●			●●
3a-ii. Strengthen literacy programs and services for children and adults across the entire education and workforce-development pipeline.	●				●		●●
3a-iii. Eliminate harsh discipline practices in schools and replace them with culturally responsive social, emotional, and engagement supports.	●				●		●●
3a-iv. Increase investment in Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) statewide.			●		●		●●
3a-v. Increase investments to improve high school graduation and post-secondary enrollment of children and youth experiencing foster care and/or homelessness.			●		●		\$\$\$
3a-vi. Increase the availability of affordable child care and housing for student parents on or near college campuses.	●					●	\$\$\$\$
3a-vii. Remove residency barriers for college students with refugee status.	●			●			\$
3a- viii. Increase opportunities for Washington students and adults who are disconnected from the educational system to prepare for and access affordable and high quality postsecondary educational pathways.			●		●		\$\$\$
3b. Enforce stronger salary/wage transparency and fair labor practices among employers to ensure pay equity for women and people of color.			●	●			\$\$\$
3c. Expand access to no- or low-cost financial resources and education that empower, rather than prey upon, people experiencing poverty.			●		●		●●
3d. Enact changes to the state tax system that lower the effective tax rate for low- and moderate-income households (bottom two quintiles).	●				●		\$\$\$\$
3e. Work in partnership with local labor organizations and the government to modernize unions and the rights of workers.	●					●	\$

3f. Adopt the Child Care Collaborative Taskforce recommendations to increase the availability of affordable, high quality* early care and education.		●			●		\$\$\$\$
3g. Increase and preserve affordable housing for renters and owners.		●		●			\$\$\$\$
3h. Enact changes to the tax system that support equitable economic growth.		●				●	\$\$\$\$
STRATEGY 4: Strengthen health supports across the life span to promote the intergenerational well-being of families.							
4a. Create a state funded supplemental Apple Health assistance benefit.			●		●		\$\$\$
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5b. Increase state and local rental assistance and diversion programs that allow children, youth, adults, and families to avoid homelessness.		●			●		\$\$\$
5c. Increase the number of emergency, transitional, and permanent supportive housing options.			●	●			\$\$\$\$
5d. Develop stronger public-private partnerships to increase opportunities for supported education, job training, and employment.		●		●			\$\$\$
5e. Create a Medical-Financial Partnership model for Washington state.			●		●		\$\$
5f. Improve access to prevention, treatment, and recovery support services.			●		●		\$\$\$\$
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STRATEGY 6: Build an integrated human service continuum of care that addresses the holistic needs of children, adults, and families.

6a. Develop a shared set of outcomes for individual, child, and family well-being, in partnership with communities most affected by structural racism and poverty that each agency is collectively held accountable to achieve.	●			●			\$
6b. Update “Standard of Need,” assistance levels, and eligibility to reflect the real costs of what it takes for individuals and families to make ends meet.		●			●		\$\$\$\$
6c. Develop a universal intake, data sharing, and technology platform so that we can share <i>essential</i> information on people across agencies, systems, and sectors.		●				●	\$\$\$\$
6d. Increase cash assistance and make it unconditional upon work.		●			●		\$\$\$
6e. Smooth on-ramps and off-ramps for programs.			●		●		\$\$\$\$
6f. Revamp policies, programs, and practices to inspire hope and build resilience.		●			●		\$\$\$\$

STRATEGY 7: Decriminalize poverty and reduce reliance on the criminal justice, juvenile justice, and child welfare systems.

7a. Decriminalize and destigmatize poverty by shifting resources toward diversion, treatment, and support services.		●				●	\$
7b. Rapidly engage families and connect them to support services when a child or adult is at risk of entering the juvenile or criminal justice systems.			●		●		\$\$\$
7c. Increase in-home assistance and support services to keep children in the care of people and environments that make them feel the safest.			●	●			\$\$\$
7d. Provide robust, trauma-informed case management to children, adults, and families involved in child welfare, juvenile, and criminal justice systems.		●			●		\$\$\$\$
7e. Expand education, job training, and employment opportunities for children and adults while they are in the care of the juvenile and criminal justice systems.			●		●		\$\$\$
7f. Eliminate Legal Financial Obligations (LFOs).		●			●		\$
7g. Provide adequate funding to increase the availability of safe, culturally responsive foster homes and permanent living options for children and youth involved with the child welfare system.		●				●	\$\$\$
7h. Connect children, adults, and families to public assistance and support services <i>at least</i> three months before they exit a system.		●		●			\$\$\$

7i. Eliminate education and employment barriers, and invest in stronger, better-coordinated exit and re-entry policies, services, and programs.			●			●		\$\$
7j. Expand and strengthen post-release family and peer support services.			●			●		\$\$\$
STRATEGY 8: Ensure a just transition to the future of work.								
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8a-i. Dramatically expand mentorship and career-connected learning for people of color, refugees and immigrants, people with disabilities, and rural communities			●		●			\$\$\$\$
8a-ii. Accelerate pathways for immigrants and refugees with advanced degrees and/or training from their home country to become accredited in the U.S.			●		●			\$\$
8b. Create tax structures for employers that offer full-time employment with living wages and robust benefit packages.		●					●	\$\$\$\$
8c. Protect Washingtonians from economic downturns by developing an economic “trigger” to provide countercyclical funding in human services, education, and job training.		●					●	\$\$
8d. Develop and pilot a portable benefits model and a guaranteed basic income program.		●					●	\$\$\$

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CONCLUSION

We have begun 2020 with the submission of this bold, 10-year strategic plan that intentionally addresses the intersectional root causes of poverty through an honest recognition of the history of racism and discrimination in our institutions and structures. The recommendations reflected in this report are a call to action by the 1.8 million Washingtonians experiencing poverty who are ready to realize their vision of economic prosperity and independence.

These recommendations were created in conjunction with the Steering Committee in an attempt to elevate the experience and influence of people experiencing poverty. Together, we blended evidence and innovation, and created trust through collaboration. We embarked on a journey that brought forward real solutions to poverty reduction and inequality in Washington state. This plan is now on your hands to make this vision a reality – a place where all Washingtonians live with dignity and have access to opportunities for reaching their fullest potential in life.

The bold solutions presented in this report will require fearless leaders willing to champion the urgency of now and a strong commitment to elevate the expertise and influence of people experiencing poverty and to center race and intersectionality in all aspects of policy development and systems change. Through this process we built trust where it didn't exist before, with individuals who have been let down before – we cannot let them down.

We hope you will join us.

APPENDIX

Appendix A – Racial Equity Toolkit

The Racial Equity Toolkit (as shown below) was created in 2008 by the Seattle Office for Civil Rights' Race and Social Justice Team. The purpose of the Toolkit is to "center race" with the goal of eliminating racial disparities and advancing racial equity. The Racial Equity Toolkit is a process and set of guiding questions the Committee implemented to inform and assess how the homeless service delivery system's policies, programs, and budgetary decisions benefitted and/or burdened Black people experiencing homelessness. More information can be found here: <http://www.seattle.gov/civilrights/programs/race-and-social-justice-initiative/racial-equity-toolkit>.

Step 1. Set Outcomes

Leadership communicates key community outcomes for racial equity to guide analysis.

Step 2. Involve Stakeholders + Analyze Data

Gather information from community and staff on how the issue benefits or burdens community in terms of racial equity.

Step 3. Determine Benefit and/or Burden

Analyze issue for impacts and alignment with racial equity outcomes.

Step 4. Advance Opportunity or Minimize Harm

Develop strategies to create greater racial equity or minimize unintended consequences.

Step 5. Evaluate. Raise Awareness. Be Accountable.

Track impacts on community of color overtime. Continue to communicate with and involve stakeholders. Document unresolved issues.

Step 6. Report-Back.

Share information learned from analysis and unresolved issues with Department leadership and change team.



Washington Community Development Authority DBA Communities of Concern Commission PDA Legislation

Who we represent: The Communities of Concern Commission is a coalition of leaders from communities of color and poor rural communities that are disproportionately affected by poverty and have yet to fully benefit from the economic growth that is so apparent in many areas of Washington State.

Our request: The Communities of Concern Commission is seeking recognition status as a statewide public development authority to work with poor communities of color and rural communities to build the capacity to meet the needs of their communities.

Rationale: Community organizations strongly rooted in poor communities of color and rural communities have the cultural understanding, imagination and vision to create capital assets that will help reduce poverty and build stronger and more sustainable communities. These capital assets would be self-determined, managed and owned by the communities they serve. The Communities of Concern Commission doing business as the Washington Community Development Authority seeks to change structural barriers by partnering with the state to build the capacity of communities to conceive, design, finance, construct and manage the types of assets that are essential to reducing poverty.

Why a statewide public development authority: Many of our communities are not geographically defined, and our members have not been included in local government planning processes. As a public development authority, the Washington Community Development Authority (WCDA) could better facilitate ongoing state investment to a dedicated fund to accelerate the creation of affordable housing and other essential facilities in the communities we represent. The WCDA would work with communities to create community growth plans to identify capital projects, and help selected capital projects. State funding would also be sought for the development of the WCDA.

Partnerships: The Washington Community Development Authority will work with the Department of Commerce to develop criteria and evaluate proposed capital projects. The WCDA will also work with Commerce and the Washington State Housing Finance Commission to identify appropriate project funding allocations.

Our Results: The 2018 Capital Budget funded the Communities of Concern at \$1 million. Working with the Department of Commerce, the Commission funded ten community projects including pre-development and community planning work – Billy Frank Jr. Heritage Center (Nisqually), Equity Alliance of Washington (Seattle), Community to Community (Whatcom County), Ethiopian Community Affordable Senior Housing (Seattle), El Centro de la Raza (Seattle), Lummi Stepping Stones Emergency Repairs, Seattle Indian Services Commission, Latino Civic Alliance (south King County), Partners for Rural Washington (Methow Valley/Stevens County Fire District/Ritzville), and United Indians of All Tribes (Seattle). A report was provided to the Legislature in December 2018 of the projects' outcomes. A final report will be provided July 2020.

For further information contact:

Josephine Tamayo Murray, Vice-President for Public Policy

Catholic Community Services/Catholic Housing Services of Western Washington - (206) 328-5701

Washington Community Development Authority dba Communities of Concern Commission

Certificate of Incorporation 05/16/2017 from WA State Secretary of State: UBI# 604-127-812

Commission Board of Directors: Asian Pacific Cultural Center (Tacoma); Bethel Christian Church (Seattle); Catholic Community Services of Western WA; Catholic Housing Services of Western WA; Chief Seattle Club; Community to Community (Bellingham); El Centro de la Raza (Seattle); Ethiopian Community in Seattle; FilAm Resources for Educational Advancement for Culture & Technology (statewide); First AME Church (Seattle); Latino Civic Alliance (statewide); Lummi Stepping Stones; Native Action Network (statewide); Partners for Rural WA (statewide); SeaMar Community Health Centers (statewide); Seattle Indian Services Commission; St. Charles Parish (Burlington); Survival of American Indians Association (Nisqually); Tibetan Association of Washington (statewide), United Indians of All Tribes (Seattle); Washington Housing Equity Alliance (Seattle); and, the Washington State Catholic Conference.

Executive Committee: President-Bishop Thomas Davis (Bethel Christian Church, Seattle), Vice-President-Jesus Sanchez (SeaMar Community Health Centers), Secretary-Josephine Tamayo Murray (Catholic Community Services of Western WA), Treasurer-Claudia Kauffman (Seattle Indian Services Commission).

Loaned Executive Director: Josephine Tamayo Murray.

Fiscal Agent: SeaMar Community Health Centers.

Commission Operations:

- **Meetings:** Monthly with Executive Committee meetings as needed.
- **How Decisions Are Made:** By consensus of the Director organizations present at a meeting. Each Director is entitled to only one vote. Directors with more than one representative designate a voting member to cast the vote of that Director.
- **Board of Director Criteria:** Currently, a non-profit organization serving poor communities of color and/or poor rural communities in Washington state who have an idea for a self-determined, community owned and operated capital asset.
- **How New Directors Are Appointed:** Currently, interested organizations submit a letter of interest and description of their capital asset idea to the Executive Director who will vet the request with affiliated Commission members. If the affiliated Commission members agree, an interview with the interested organization will be scheduled. After the interview the affiliated Commission members will recommend to the Commission as a whole as to whether an interview will be scheduled between the interested organization and the whole Commission. The Commission will then determine whether the interested organization is appointed as a Director. As a public development authority, there will be no membership requirement.
- **How Funding Awards Are Determined:** An application form has been developed that includes descriptions of the applicant organization, project/community growth plan, organization staff and board, financial statements, project team, project status and budget. The applications are reviewed and rated by an ad-hoc committee. The Executive Director recommends to the Commission the project amounts to be funded. The Commission meets with Commerce who affirms the project funding awards. As a public development authority, the Initial Board will be composed of community of color and poor rural community organizations' representatives who do not have a capital project to be funded by the PDA.