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Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Poverty Reduction Oversight (LEWPRO) Task Force

May 19, 2022

9:00 am – 12:00 pm



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A

- **Welcome and Introduction (15 min)**
- **Review and Approval of Agenda and Minutes (5 min)**

G

- **Public Comment Period 1 of 2 (10 min)**
- **Request Legislation Update – Membership (5 min)**

E

- **Enhancing and Modernizing LEWPRO Work (40 min)**

N

- **2022 Legislative Session Review (45 min)**
- **Poverty Reduction Workgroup (PRWG) Update (30 min)**

D

- **TANF WorkFirst Updates (15 min)**
- **Public Comment Period 2 of 2 (10 min)**

A

- **Closing (5 min)**

Public Comment



Request Legislation Update – Membership

Enhancing and Modernizing LEWPRO Work

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Moving to Action:

- Work Plan
- Facilitation



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2022 Legislative Session Review



 Washington State
Department of Social
& Health Services

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Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

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Poverty Reduction Workgroup (PRWG) Update



Equitable Poverty Reduction

Potential Next Steps

Identified by LEWPRO's advisory committee,
the Poverty Reduction Workgroup (PRWG)

Presented by

Juanita Maestas, Tim Probst, Emily Grossman

Refresher

- LEWPRO adopted the Poverty Reduction Workgroup (PRWG) as its statutorily-required advisory committee
- The PRWG includes stakeholders, poverty advocates, service providers, employers, and agencies
- It is led by a Steering Committee of people with lived experience of poverty.
- Reducing poverty grows the economy, increases school performance, and saves taxpayers money.

“The existence of poverty in the US should not be accepted as a necessary evil or insoluble problem, but should be considered a crisis requiring emergency measures. It is a matter of will and priorities, not a matter of resources.”
-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

“We must do better to help fellow Washingtonians impacted by the root causes of poverty. These are our neighbors, our families, our communities.”
-Gov. Jay Inslee

What are the most pressing issues for the 2023-5 biennium?*

*PRWG Meeting, March 15, 2022

- In small break-out groups, the PRWG identified priority topics and potential actions to address them, and then reconvened to hear report-outs and discuss ideas as a whole body.
- The raw data on topics identified is shown below, followed by potential action items for next legislative session that address these priorities holistically.
- The PRWG offers this as advisory feedback for LEWPRO's consideration, in their role as LEWPRO's advisory committee.



Many Topics Raised*

*PRWG Meeting, March 15, 2022

- Navigators and mentors, especially ones who have experienced poverty, because relationships are key; human dignity project
- Equitable funding for BIPOC efforts and digital equity
- Agencies are working in silos; incentivize work across agencies to build a new system
- Duplication of work; harness new capacity from work that is done in silos
- Codify Economic Security for All (a pro-equity anti-poverty model across agencies) through SB 5241
- National demonstration project for universal eligibility and elimination of fiscal cliffs
- Data equity, and language accessibility
- Affordable housing access and addressing shortage of units
- Supporting students and teachers, addressing gaps that widened during the pandemic
- Accessibility; 30% of people with disabilities in poverty
- Intersectionality with health and environmental justice
- Consumer product safety education and consumer protection
- Leveling the playing field for immigrants or undocumented
- Single point access, trauma informed services
- Sufficient staffing to address the compassion fatigue, support front line workers
- Aligning with new poverty reduction subcabinet and Office of Equity
- Increasing customer voice in policy development and agency implementation
- TANF time limits
- Creation of an app to help people know what is available
- “Eligibility wallet” app so customer has their data themselves and can share it for next eligibility process
- Students in higher ed and mental health challenges



Several Themes Emerged*

* PRWG Meeting, March 15, 2022

1. Easier/more dignified access to service for customers
2. Eligibility coordination/consolidation across programs
3. Fiscal cliffs/smooth reduction in benefits as income increases
4. Need for a single, unified, and modern system (not silos)
5. BIPOC and other targeted demographics
6. Trauma informed care
7. Voice of lived experience



Potential Action Items*

*Based on Draft PRWG Minutes, March 15, 2022

Interim Steps to Coordinate the Existing System

1. Write a bill to create and fund peer navigators—people with lived experience of poverty who are trained to help others navigate the system—and pay them, potentially as new offering through AmeriCorps or another funding stream or program. Recent grants addressing the opioid crisis have used a similar model. Include the Human Dignity Project in the design and implementation, and include digital equity training for each peer navigator.
2. Make SB 5241 Governor’s request legislation on behalf of the 7 HCPR agencies, or agency request legislation, to codify the local partnerships that are coordinating access to benefits and elevating the voice of lived experience through EcSA.
3. Write a state bill and propose a federal bill to create a small pilot for universal eligibility and elimination of fiscal cliffs, by making the small EcSA population categorically eligible for all benefits they need in order to stabilize, up to a cap, and making the cap taper evenly as employment income increases. Require a focus on BIPOC, houseless, rural, immigrants, and people with disabilities.



Potential Action Items*

*Based on Draft PRWG Minutes, March 15, 2022

Larger Steps to Work Toward a New System

4. Write a state bill and propose a federal bill to create a major system overhaul for universal eligibility and elimination of fiscal cliffs, by making the SNAP and/or Medicaid population categorically eligible for all benefits they need in order to stabilize, up to a cap, and making the cap taper evenly as employment income increases. Require a focus on BIPOC, houseless, rural, immigrants, and people with disabilities.
5. Develop legislation to further increase funding for housing, integrate it into the universal eligibility approach shown in items above, and require development of an adequate supply of affordable housing.
6. Write a bill officially adopting the goal of supporting equitable economic growth and developing strategies to increase the supply of good-paying jobs in rural and urban areas.



Potential Action Items*

*Based on Draft PRWG Minutes, March 15, 2022

Other Steps Addressing **Key Single Issues** in a Coordinated Way

7. Develop legislation or proviso to increase grants for BIPOC organizations and CBOs to work on poverty reduction.
8. Develop a bill to create trauma-informed care training for all customer-facing staff at agencies that serve people experiencing poverty—the same training with the same language for all staff of all relevant agencies. Include the voice of lived experience in design and implementation.
9. Write a bill addressing COVID's impact on students, to make all students experiencing poverty automatically eligible for the Washington College Grant and a housing and living stipend to pay living expenses while they pursue their education, including students in remedial education, I-BEST, and other models that can help students catch up after the pandemic.





Thank you!

Questions, Discussion, and Next Steps

TANF WorkFirst Updates

Public Comment



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Good of the Order

Next Meeting: Thursday, August 18, 2022

