**REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE**

**\*DRAFT\***

**Five-Year Plan to**

**Reduce Intergenerational Poverty and Promote Self-Sufficiency**

As Required by RCW 74.08A.505

January 6, 2019

Economic Services Administration

Community Services Division

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# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

[Engrossed Third Substitute House Bill 1482](http://lawfilesext.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2017-18/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1482-S3.SL.pdf), passed in the 2018 legislative session, established the Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force (Task Force). This legislation also defined the membership and duties of the Task Force, which include directing the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to develop a five-year plan to reduce intergenerational poverty and promote self-sufficiency, subject to oversight and approval by the Task Force. This *Five-Year Plan to Reduce Intergenerational Poverty and Promote Self-Sufficiency* meets the requirement codified in RCW [74.08A.505](https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=74.08A.505), and is submitted to the Governor and the appropriate committees of the legislature upon approval by the Task Force. Additionally, the Task Force shall review this plan by December 1, 2024, and direct the Department to update the plan as necessary.

# **BACKGROUND**

The Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force is made up of diverse, statewide representation and its membership aims to reflect regional, racial, and cultural diversity to adequately represent the needs of all children and families in the state.

The Task Force is also assisted by the Intergenerational Poverty Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) described in RCW [74.08A.510](http://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=74.08A.510). Recognizing that the membership and duties of the existing [Governor’s Poverty Reduction Work Group](https://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/directive/17-12%20-%20Poverty%20Reduction.pdf) (Work Group) align closely with the requirements of the Advisory Committee, the Task Force appointed the Work Group as their Advisory Committee. See **Appendix A** for a roster of members.

Task Force membership and representation at the time of this report:

| Representation | Member |
| --- | --- |
| Senate – Republican Caucus | Hans Zeiger\* |
| Senate – Republican Caucus | Maureen Walsh |
| Senate – Democratic Caucus | Jeannie Darneille |
| Senate – Democratic Caucus | Manka Dhingra |
| House – Republican Caucus | Michelle Caldier |
| House – Republican Caucus | Gina Mosbrucker |
| House – Democratic Caucus | Christine Kilduff |
| House – Democratic Caucus | Mia Gregerson |
| Department of Social and Health Services | Cheryl Strange\* |
| Department of Children, Youth, and Families | Nicole Rose |
| Department of Commerce | Diane Klontz |
| Employment Security Department | Tim Probst |
| Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction | Haley Lowe |
| Department of Health | Daisye Orr |
| Department of Corrections | James Harms |
| State Board for Community and Technical Colleges | Erin Frasier |
| Commission on African American Affairs | Ed Prince |
| Commission on Hispanic Affairs | Maria Siguenza |
| Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs | Nam Nguyen |
| Governor's Office of Indian Affairs | Mystique Hurtado |
| Office of Financial Management | Rich Pannkuk |
| Office of the Governor | Jim Baumgart\*\* |

\*Co-chair

\*\* Liaison to the Task Force

The Task Force is responsible for the following (duties in **bold** most directly connect with the development of this plan):

* Overseeing the partner agencies' operation of the WorkFirst program and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program to ensure that the programs are achieving desired outcomes for their clients;
* Determining evidence-based outcome measures for the WorkFirst program, including measures related to equitably serving the needs of historically underrepresented populations, such as English language learners, immigrants, refugees, and other diverse communities;
* Developing accountability measures for WorkFirst recipients and the state agencies responsible for their progress toward self-sufficiency;
* **Collaborating with the advisory committee created in RCW** [**74.08A.510**](http://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=74.08A.510) **to develop and monitor strategies to prevent and address adverse childhood experiences and reduce intergenerational poverty;**
* **Seeking input on best practices for poverty reduction from service providers, community-based organizations, legislators, state agencies, stakeholders, the business community, and subject matter experts;**
* **Collaborating with partner agencies and the advisory committee to analyze available data and information regarding intergenerational poverty in the state, with a primary focus on data and information regarding children who are at risk of continuing the cycle of poverty and welfare dependency unless outside intervention occurs; and**
* **Recommending policy actions to the governor and the legislature to effectively reduce intergenerational poverty and promote and encourage self-sufficiency.**

Staff support for the Task Force is provided primarily by the Department’s Economic Services Administration (ESA). In 2016, the Department established its unifying goal of reducing poverty in half - in a way that eliminates disparities – by 2025. The Department is pleased to support the work of the Task Force, which so directly relates to the Department’s goals and its mission to transform the lives of Washingtonians.

# **Plan Development**

The Governor’s Poverty Reduction Work Group, which serves as the Advisory Committee to the Task Force, has diligently met each month since February 2018 to develop recommendations to meaningfully reduce poverty and inequality in Washington state. The group issued an [interim progress report](https://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/PRWG_2018InterimProgressReport_FINAL.pdf) in October 2018, including several collectively identified root causes that need addressing in order to meaningfully reduce poverty and inequality. The Work Group also studied and noted the complexity and inadequacy of existing definitions of poverty. We uphold their general recommendation that policymakers and stakeholders should broaden their view on poverty in decision-making – especially incorporating expertise and stories of those experiencing it – to build understanding and measure progress. The Work Group’s dedication to elevating the expertise and influence of those most affected by poverty includes creating a steering committee made up of 25 people, reflecting the demographic and geographic experience of poverty, to provide critical oversight in the development and prioritization of recommendations.

Several strategic themes, and specific recommendations related to each, have emerged from the Work Group, guided by the Steering Committee. These themes address root causes of poverty, including topics such as: structural racism and historical trauma; power and inequality; decriminalizing poverty; addressing crises and acute needs first; focusing on children and families; reforming systems and administration of public assistance; promoting income growth and wealth-building; and ensuring an equitable future of work in a changing economy. We agree that these themes represent a comprehensive framework for addressing poverty – including the deep and persistent poverty that characterizes many families receiving TANF as well as other families and individuals served by our agency. The recommendations attached to these themes are informed by data and research and must – especially because there is no clear recipe in the research – include the voice of people experiencing poverty and organizations working on their behalf, and innovations happening in ****communities in Washington state and throughout the country.

## **Structure of the Five-Year Plan**

The Department acknowledges the Work Group’s time and expertise compiling research and lifting up the voice of those living in poverty. Consistent with their role as the Task Force’s advisory body, we quote from their draft 10-year strategic plan for poverty reduction in this plan. For the sake of brevity, we do not repeat citations nor model examples used in that report.

The Task Force Strategic Plan supports all elements of the Work Group’s comprehensive poverty reduction strategy, though, this plan differs in several ways:

* It has a shorter time horizon – the Governor’s Poverty Reduction Work Group is tasked to develop a 10 year strategic plan while the Task Force plan is 5 years.
* It focuses specifically on intergenerational poverty reduction, with particular attention to programs that serve children and families[[1]](#footnote-2).
* It hones in on policy and operation of public assistance programs, with a focus on TANF and WorkFirst, to help those we serve to become financially stable and move toward self-sufficiency.
* It provides additional detail on planned and recommended actions regarding strengthening public assistance policy and practice and child and family supports over the coming five years.
* Consistent with the goal of immediate action toward longer term change, **Appendix C** includes a list of policy options for the 2020 legislative session in support of the Plan.

These differences between the two plans should not be seen as in conflict with any aspect of the Work Group’s comprehensive poverty reduction strategy, nor do we necessarily consider those elements of the 10-year plan included in the following pages as higher priority than those that are omitted. Our goal is to maximize the momentum of the poverty reduction efforts of each group, aligning the work of the two groups so that they support one another in meeting each of their specific set of goals.

This plan reflects a body of work that is supported in statute, with ongoing oversight by the legislative and state agency membership that makes up the Task Force.

# **Strategies and Recommendations**

We propose the following strategies and recommendations supporting reduction of intergenerational poverty and increased self-sufficiency among the people we serve and other citizens of Washington state.

## ***STRATEGY 1****: Acknowledge, understand, and take action to undo structural racism and the effects of historical trauma in state policy, programs, and practice.*

Why: 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. 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.

**1.1. Develop, require, and appropriately resource trainings and learning opportunities that focus on historical trauma, institutional racism, and implicit bias for all 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, caseworkers, judges, etc.). The curriculum should be developed by the state in collaboration with Indigenous- and people of color-led organizations throughout Washington state, through the Governor’s Office of Equity, state-funded and free of charge to organizations working in partnership with Washington state.

Simply put, poverty cannot be understood apart from the history of racism and discrimination in our institutions and structures. Centering race in discussions of poverty reduction, therefore, is foundational to any effort if it is to succeed. It is particularly important that the above mentioned providers and employees are informed on how people of color are disproportionately affected by poverty due to the effects of historical colonialism, oppression, and racism (see **Appendix B** for more information), and that they understand the implicit biases we all carry within us and how these affect our interactions. In support of this recommendation the Department should:

* Incorporate foundational staff training in this area, collaborating with organizations led by people of color in doing so.
* Work with WorkFirst partner agencies and member agencies of the Governor’s Health and Human Services subcabinet to foster cross-agency efforts in this area and to make training available to community partners via WorkFirst local planning area (LPA) groups and other local collaborations.

**1.2. Increase visible diversity of professionals in all areas of public service.**

Agencies should work to have all levels of our workforce closely align with the racial and ethnic diversity of the state population as a whole. Training and hiring practices for management positions should be included in this effort, addressing implicit biases within recruiting and hiring processes.

As we work to help families and individuals move toward self-sufficiency, employment in the public and non-profit sectors is a part of the picture. The Department and partner agencies and organizations should use outreach, hiring and recruitment policies to increasingly form and retain a workforce that reflects the diversity of those we serve. These efforts connect with the mission of the Office of Minority and Women’s Business Enterprises, to promote equity and increase participation in public contracting and procurement for small businesses owned by minorities, women and disadvantaged persons through education and certification.

**1.3. Require government entities to incorporate racial equity outcomes and measures into performance-based programs, projects, contracts, and sub-contracting opportunities.**

Agencies should continue to expand efforts to incorporate these measures into public assistance performance-based contracts. Outcome measures that are disaggregated by race and ethnicity will allow for better understanding of who our services are helping, and for whom they are not effective.

Agencies should also review their policies and practices in light of outcome and impact data that is disaggregated by race. One example of how doing so can foster change: In early 2019, DSHS published data showing that the state’s Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) time limit extension policy disproportionately impacted black and native American families; as evidenced by being denied an extension to the TANF five year limit relative to their representation among all TANF leavers. Spotlighting this data led to:

* Additional research and auditing to understand the policy, the steps staff take to review eligibility for a time limit extension, adherence to these procedures, and the possible role of conscious or unconscious bias;
* A practice change to require a supervisory review prior to denial of a time limit extension request -- an extra set of eyes; and
* Increased focus on equity, diversity and inclusion topics in staff training offerings and in the Transforming Case Management initiative.

The disproportionality data was also a factor in a policy change (2SHB 1603 of the 2019 legislative session) that broadened the narrow criteria for time limit extensions to include families experiencing homelessness.

The Department is pursuing agency request legislation to broaden the focus of local planning areas under RCW [74.08A.280](https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=74.08A.280) from WorkFirst specifically to poverty reduction. In doing so, it includes findings about the disparate impact of chronic and intergenerational poverty by racial and ethnic group.

## ***STRATEGY 2****: Make equal space for decision making for people and communities most affected by poverty and inequality.*

Why: People experiencing poverty are the foremost experts on their lives and the systems intended to help them. Those with lived experience are best able to tell their story. The inclusion of people most affected by poverty should be recognized as valuable in yielding the most robust understanding of poverty in Washington state, and informing the best solutions. Incorporating the knowledge and expertise of those most affected by poverty, as well as sharing power and resources with them, is essential to a person centered design of policies, programs, and practices that will increase intergenerational social and economic mobility for all Washingtonians.

**2.1. Institutionalize the practice of including people most affected by poverty in decision making by establishing a state-level Board** to collaborate with executive and legislative branch stakeholders on the implementation of the 10-year strategic plan. The Board should be demographically and geographically representative of people experiencing poverty and be compensated as state employees.

**2.2. Develop a Truth and Reconciliation Council. Utilize Governor Inslee’s emerging Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Council to** **collaborate with Indigenous Washingtonians on a process for truth and reconciliation** that educates the public about past injustices and promotes healing from the effects of historical trauma and how it manifests in the present.

Agencies should support and participate as requested by the Governor and tribal governments.

**2.3. Invest greater state resources in partnerships with communities of color and other groups most affected by poverty so they can customize solutions for building prosperity and well-being.** There is no one-size fits all solution for reducing poverty. The variation in the root causes of poverty and inequality among people and communities necessitate stronger collaboration and sharing of resources at the local level.

**2.3.a.** To spotlight the commitment to elevate the voices of communities and individuals impacted by poverty, and to formally mark the start of work on carrying out the two strategic plans, agencies should convene a statewide poverty summit.

**2.3.b.** Agencies should collaborate with people experiencing poverty, including any board created, on all aspects of both the 10- and five- year strategic plans, and seek to increase partnerships with communities of color and others furthest from opportunity.

The Community Services Division (CSD) of ESA is supporting this concept by taking steps to get meaningful, actionable input from those we serve in the following ways:

* Initiating a new customer survey process, with multiple options for responding, that will make customer surveys a continuous and systemic part of our business operations. We will use the feedback from the surveys to improve the delivery of public assistance programs in the most beneficial way.
* Forming an advisory group composed of people who currently receive or recently received public assistance benefits. In developing this group we will draw on lessons from the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) Parents Advisory Group, Head Start and ECEAP parent ambassadors, and the [Colorado Department of Human Services Family Voice Council](https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdhs/family-voice-council).
* Clarifying, in proposed 2020 agency request legislation regarding local planning areas under RCW [74.08A.280](https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=74.08A.280), that public assistance recipients are to be part of these local advisory and collaboration boards.

## ***STRATEGY 3****: Address income inequality by investing in equitable income growth and wealth-building among people with low incomes.*

Why: 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. Washington has the eleventh highest income inequality in the nation, which contributes to poverty by: stagnating wage- and income-growth of low income households; limiting revenue that the state can invest in policies and programs that promote widespread social and economic mobility; and exacerbating the racial and gender wealth gaps.

Governor Inslee has stated that “Washington is a great place but not for everyone”. State policies focused on more equitable income growth and wealth-building can change that disparity and are essential for reducing the disproportionate experience of poverty on Indigenous people and people of color, and expanding overall economic growth. Should racial disparities in income and wealth be eliminated, Washington state’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) would grow by $38 billion annually.

Policies can achieve more equitable income growth and wealth-building in two main ways: increasing income and making cost-of-living more affordable.

**3.1. Expand access to no- or low-cost financial resources thatempower – not prey upon – people experiencing poverty.**

Working families and individuals living in poverty struggle to get by on meager and unstable earnings, sometimes supplemented with medical, food and child care assistance. Those who are unable to work or cannot find work, may rely on disability assistance, or other temporary forms of cash assistance such as Unemployment or TANF benefits. When income does not cover basic needs, it is near impossible to accumulate necessary savings to get by when the inevitable crises of life arise. This makes families and individuals vulnerable to situations in which a quick solution to an urgent issue has high and compounding longer term costs. Financial capability building, budgeting know-how, avoiding predatory lending and other traps, and, most fundamentally, access to banking and capital are key to getting ahead. Washington should:

**3.1.a.** Embed financial capabilities training in life-skills and workforce development offerings for youth and adult learners. For example, through the WorkFirst program, the Employment Security Department offers financial skill building as part of a more general life skills program called Strategies for Success. In some locations, the agency is also testing modified versions of this program: One is aimed at families facing mental health, substance use, physical health or other challenges. Another focuses entirely on financial literacy and skills.

**3.1.b.** Expand and promote financial institutions that lower the cost of banking, lending, and moving money for people with low incomes.

**3.1.c.** Subsidize and incentivize community banks and credit unions that promote asset- and wealth building for people and communities with low incomes.

**3.2. 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 difficult 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.

For families with young children, child care is often the highest single monthly household expense. Affordable and high quality child care (also known as early care and education) bridges this strategy and the following strategy: it both enables families to work and provide financially for their families, and also helps children grow and learn to reach their potential.

The initial [report](https://app.leg.wa.gov/ReportsToTheLegislature/Home/GetPDF?fileName=Report-Child-Care-Collaborative-Task-Force-2019-Final_30d59cef-5cf7-41a1-8e6c-f36a035c3e2c.pdf) of the Child Care Collaborative Task Force created under HB 2367 (2018 legislative session) notes disparate impact in children’s school readiness, highly predictive of future educational outcomes, and access to early childhood services. The report notes: “In the 2018-19 school year, only 40% of children of color arrived ready for kindergarten…compared to 51% white children. Studies have shown that racial and ethnic groups have disparate access to child care, preschool, health and other early childhood services” (page 28).

The following recommendations to increase the availability of high quality care are aligned with those of the Child Care Collaborative Task Force’s initial report.

**3.2.a**. Increase child care subsidy rates and transition to a monthly rate – like what private pay families are charged. Subsidy rates should be based on the full cost of providing quality care.

**3.2.b.** Change the structure of subsidy co-pays so that the amount families pay does not increase so rapidly with income (mitigating the cliff effect).

**3.2.c.** Increase the income eligibility cap for child care subsidies so that low and moderate income families can be served (again, reducing the cliff effect).

**3.2.d.** Continue and enhance efforts to recruit and retain providers caring for infants and toddlers and those who can accommodate families who work non-standard hours.

**3.2.e.** Implement a better career path for those who want to work in the early care and education field, especially those who increase the racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity of these early teachers and role models. The state workforce development system should prioritize this high-demand field, so important for the well-being of families, and support commensurate wage levels.

**3.2.f.** Strengthen and expand programs that serve and support school age children before and after school hours and during holiday and summer breaks. Like early care and education programs, these programs provide supervision so parents are able to work and also help children in kindergarten through middle school develop academic and social-emotional skills needed for success in school and life. [Expanded Learning Opportunities Network](https://www.schoolsoutwashington.org/pages/waelonetwork) is working to increase access to high quality programs for school-age children and youth.

**3.2.g.** Align with December 2020 recommendations to the legislature from the Child Care Collaborative Task Force that address, among other things, recommendations for prioritizing access to ECEAP, childcare and other early childhood services for racial, ethnic, linguistic and geographic populations furthest from opportunity, and increasing access to trauma informed/healing centered early childhood services.

**3.2.h.** Examine upcoming recommendations from a study, commissioned by DCYF and Commerce per legislative direction in [2SHB 1344](http://lawfilesext.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2019-20/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1344-S2.SL.pdf), of funding models, employer support, regulatory issues and other fundamental factors impacting the child care market.

**3.3. Increase and preserve affordable housing for renters and owners.**

Having safe, stable housing that doesn’t require more than 30% of your income is the bedrock for moving towards economic mobility. Administrative data shows many families and individuals receiving public assistance struggle with meeting this basic need. Housing instability negatively impacts both children and adults increasing stress and uncertainty on already insecure families. Department of Commerce analysis provides compelling evidence that the divergence between wages and housing costs is the primary cause of the increase in homelessness. To address this we recommend Washington:

**3.3.a.** Provide tax incentives to builders to increase stock of low income housing in urban centers, especially in neighborhoods at risk of gentrification.

**3.3.b.** Increase the Housing Trust Fund to build housing stock needed to drive down costs.

**3.3.c.** Give communities most affected by poverty greater control over how public resources are spent so they can build and retain wealth.

**3.3.d.** Provide housing vouchers for homeownership in community land trusts that build individual capital while preserving long-term affordability in a community, preventing displacement of future generations.

## ***STRATEGY 4****: Invest in the multigenerational well-being of families, especially those with young children, and ensure funding and access to culturally and linguistically appropriate care and support before, during and through the first year after the end of pregnancy.*

Why: Infancy is a critical time for both parent and child, and deep poverty is associated with profoundly negative outcomes – as seen in a 2019 study by the Department’s Research and Data Analytics (RDA) division on [the maternal well-being of families receiving TANF](https://www.dshs.wa.gov/node/31167/). Measures include housing instability, physical and behavioral health diagnoses, emergency room use, and child welfare system involvement. The intergenerational connections were profound: of mothers 25 years or younger who gave birth while receiving TANF, 54% had received TANF as a child, 52% had childhood involvement with the child welfare system, through which 12% were removed from their homes. It is time to break the cycle through investing in young families, and helping them build a successful future.

**4.1. Give babies the best possible start in life by supporting the whole family**. The following recommendations are aligned with the DSHS/RDA findings:

* Provide universal health care coverage of prenatal and postpartum care.
* Invest in universal maternal depression screening and access to behavioral health services.
* Consider piloting an opt-out universal home visit for all families (an idea that was explored in the 2019 legislative session through SB 5683/HB 1771).
* Provide access to a wide range of group-based parenting education and support groups – to build social capital and break down isolation (an example of how this can be done in a public assistance setting: DSHS is partnering with community organizations and DCYF to offer facilitated play groups for families seeking public assistance, in five Community Services Office lobbies.)
* Ensure families receiving TANF and using the infant and toddler exemption are connected to behavioral health, home visiting and other parenting support services.
* Support high quality child care for infants and toddlers and prioritize families with young children in homelessness services.

**4.2. Invest in culturally and linguistically appropriate home visiting so all families who are eligible can receive it.**

Beginning in 2014, DSHS and DCYF have worked in partnership to build strong referral pathways to home visiting for families who are pregnant or have young children and are participating in WorkFirst. The effort is described as a cross-system collaboration model in a 2019 [Zero to Three](https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/2599-cross-system-collaboration-to-better-support-babies-in-washington-strengthening-partnerships-between-temporary-assistance-for-needy-families-and-home) policy brief.

Culturally appropriate home visiting programs are effective strategies for:

* Providing resources and social capital for families to thrive.
* Supporting parents as the first teachers to their children’s lives.
* Supporting development of children’s executive functioning skills.
* Preventing child abuse and neglect.
* Supporting children towards school readiness.
* Supporting parents towards their employment readiness goals.
* Linking families to other supports and services

Currently there are formal referral pathways to home visiting programs for families on WorkFirst in about half of the state. Most home visiting providers in these communities share access to the DSHS case management system (eJAS). This enables improved communication between case managers and providers, supporting a wrap-around, client-centered case management approach.

Though it depends on additional investment to increase availability of research-based and culturally appropriate home visiting services, CSD should expand this successful collaboration statewide in the coming five years, working to link all families with young children who are receiving assistance to home visiting services. It is a multi-generational approach to strengthening families, eliminating disparities, and providing wrap-around community-connected services to support young families.

**4.3. Establish a child savings account program for low-income children, including immigrants and refugees, so they have assets to invest in their future as they transition to adulthood.**

**4.4. Increase 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.

WIC provides eligible families with nutrient-rich foods to supplement their diets. The program is for pregnant women, new and breastfeeding moms, and children under five. About 275,000 participants use the program, which means almost half of all babies in Washington are on the WIC program, though many Washingtonians who are eligible for the program are currently not enrolled.[[2]](#footnote-3)Food assistance is designed to help meet basic needs. Families need both access to the benefit and accessible places to purchase nourishing food.

**4.5. Reduce unwanted pregnancies through access to free and low-cost contraceptive options and counseling, including long-term acting reversible contraceptives (LARCS), for people who want it, and ensure all providers have knowledge and training about LARC.** Resources and services such as affordable health insurance, quality reproductive care, and contraceptives are not equally accessible to everyone statewide. The highest rate of unintended pregnancies is in people under age 20. Unintended pregnancies also disproportionately affect people of color and people experiencing poverty. An unintended pregnancy can exacerbate circumstances that may already be causing stress for an individual or family such as poverty, unemployment, or relationship violence resulting in poorer health for mother and baby.

## ***STRATEGY 5:*** *Address the urgent needs of people experiencing homelessness, a behavioral health issue, a violent situation, and addiction.*

Why: People experiencing poverty are more likely to experience compounding barriers that must be addressed prior to determining appropriate career and support pathways. Several of these barriers are at the point of crisis in Washington state, and must be addressed for any progress on poverty to be made.

**5.1. Create affordable, long-term housing options for single individuals and families with access to schools, employment, health and social service resources and public transportation.**

Of the almost 26,000 families on TANF more than 4,000 (15%) report being homeless.Without stable housing, it’s extremely difficult for anyone to keep appointments, address other challenges and find or keep work. When children are homeless they face hardship in trying to get adequate sleep, complete homework and get to school on time. For instance, only 24.7 percent of homeless students entered kindergarten ready in all six areas of development and learning compared to 46.2 percent of non-homeless students[[3]](#footnote-4).

Shelters provide temporary relief, but affordable long term housing provides the foundation families need to start building their future. However, affordable long term housing is very difficult to find and wait lists for subsidized housing can take years. Those with low incomes, past credit issues or a history with the justice system face even more challenges.

**5.2.** **Invest in access to a broad range of inpatient and outpatient services including stabilization, diversion, peer respite, etc.**

Behavioral health conditions affect many parents participating in WorkFirst; 14.6% of adults are deferred from participation in job-related activities in order to address mental illness[[4]](#footnote-5), and six percent to address chemical dependency. Others struggle with these issues as they work to prepare for or find work. Families with mental health or substance use treatment needs can’t always access the services and support they need.

One challenge to accessing behavioral health care is the limited number of providers that accept Medicaid (Apple Health). Limited access may require families to travel further for care, posing a challenge for those without reliable transportation. Families may also experience harsh provider policies around missed appointments that can further limit their ability to get the help they need. If a parent is suffering from behavioral health issues, children are also affected, and at risk for lifelong adverse impacts. Likewise, exposure to family violence, which impacts seven percent of adults on WorkFirst - to the point that they cannot participate in work related activities, also has detrimental impacts on children.

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

Why: 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; health care; early care and education; and vocational and basic 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”. Too often people fall through the cracks within and between systems, increasing their likelihood of becoming involved with other systems that can exacerbate and perpetuate poverty, such as the juvenile justice, criminal justice, child welfare, and homeless systems.

The current state of our human service systems exacerbates what brain science and behavioral economics refers to as a “scarcity mindset.” People with low incomes incur significant financial, temporal, and cognitive costs that tax a person’s mental bandwidth to such a great extent it affects their ability to problem solve and plan ahead. 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 while creating space for families to build resiliency.

Notable examples of human service transformations exist in Colorado and Tennessee 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, and family is set up to thrive.
* 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; and
* Use behavioral economics and “plain talk” to clearly and effectively communicate information to people served.

This strategy is the most directly relevant for WorkFirst and for public assistance agencies. It is aligned with work underway within DSHS, to build on efficiency gains in quickly connecting people with food, cash and medical assistance to transform interactions with families – to transform case-management – to be more effective in helping build their strengths to move out of poverty.

A continuum of care moves people toward economic stability and gives them the resources to get ahead. It incorporates what brain science tells us about the impacts of poverty, behavioral economics, two-generation and whole-family approaches and what we know about the importance of addressing equity and incorporating anti-bias efforts.

This strategy can accelerate cross-agency efforts already underway through the recently created Governor’s Health subcabinet. It can also foster partnerships among state agencies and non-profit sector partners to increase staff awareness of the impacts of adversity-related trauma, chronic stress, and, importantly, ways systems and practice can be modified to avoid additional trauma and build resilience. One such effort already underway is the [Trauma-Informed Approach](https://www.hca.wa.gov/about-hca/trauma-informed-approach-tia) learning initiative involving the Health Care Authority, DCYF, DSHS, the Department of Health (DOH) and Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

Key recommendations for a continuum of care include:

**6.1. Develop a shared set of outcomes for individual, child, and family well-being in partnership with communities most affected by poverty that each agency is collectively held accountable to achieving.** Selected outcomes should be focused 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; the dignity of having power and autonomy over their lives; and being engaged and valued in their community. 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, disability status, immigration status, zip code, and family type.

WorkFirst partner agencies, and other agencies that are members of the Governor’s Health subcabinet, should be charged with doing this work. The current [WorkFirst Performance Chartbook](https://workfirst.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/Workfirst%20Counts%20and%20Measures%20Jul2019.pdf#1576557257458) measures and other agency-specific performance targets should be merged into this effort. Washington should advocate for alignment of TANF, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and other federal performance measures with the new outcomes.

In the coming five years, a working group should develop overarching metrics for Results Washington related to outcomes for families and children. Each accountable agency should be given responsibility for achieving results that feed into the statewide goals.

**6.2. Develop “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” that accounts for what individuals and families’ basic needs are 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. In order to be effective, 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 and United Way’s ALICE (Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed) measure adjust for geography, family size, and composition, and can be used to set targets to expand eligibility for assistance programs.

**6.3. Develop a universal intake, data sharing, and technology platform so that essential information on people served can be shared across agencies, systems, and sectors.** 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.

Washington state government information technology system procurements and development projects over the coming five years should be required to move toward this goal. The Washington Health and Human Services Enterprise Coalition (HHS Coalition) is an existing collaborative that provides strategic direction, cross-organizational information technology (IT) project support and federal funding guidance across Washington’s HHS organizations. This includes DCYF, DOH, DSHS, Health Benefit Exchange (HBE), and HCA. The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) and the Office of Financial Management (OFM) are ex-officio members that advise on issues around compliance with statewide IT policies and state financial budget and legislative processes.

Over the past year, the HHS Coalition developed a strong foundation for providing ongoing strategic direction for managing cross-organizational IT projects and their associated federal funding requests. The HHS Coalition will continue to develop and implement processes that support shared decision-making and public stewardship for IT projects. Current projects overseen by the HHS Coalition are highlighted in this report on [IT Investment Coordination](https://app.leg.wa.gov/ReportsToTheLegislature/Home/GetPDF?fileName=HCA%20Report%20-%20Health%20and%20Human%20Services%20Enterprise%20Coalition_a967f0a2-dbab-42fd-ba5b-123f5a066414.pdf), along with plans for integrated systems and cross-system information exchange, supporting individuals who receive services from multiple programs and organizations.

**6.4. Increase cash assistance and make it unconditional upon work.** The weight of the 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. Evidence suggests that unrestrictive cash assistance is a more effective strategy for poverty reduction – both for the autonomy it provides and the recognition that the dignity of having foundational needs met should not be conditional on whether an individual or family is working. Specifically:

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

Grant levels and eligibility caps for cash, food, medical, housing and child care assistance should meet these criteria. Washington should both advocate for higher federal standards and increases in funding to meet them, and be prepared to supplement with state dollars if additional federal support is not available. Washington should, likewise, advocate for federal cash assistance that does not mandate work, and pilot such a program using state, local or private funds.

As an initial step, if federal TANF policies are not modified to reduce the focus on work participation rates, Washington state should take action: to ensure there is no need to push families prematurely into work activities in which they are unlikely to be able to succeed, benefits for families unlikely to meet federal participation requirements should be provided using state funds.

**6.5. Remove barriers to accessing assistance programs and reduce benefit cliffs.** Individuals or families applying for assistance are often under significant stress, especially if they are experiencing homelessness, addiction, family violence, or a behavioral health problems. 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. 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, hindering economic mobility. This can be accomplished by:

* Removing asset limits to qualify for public assistance programs;
* Easing harsh sanction and time limit policies in the TANF program;
* Eliminating the child care cliff effect; and
* Providing tapering transitional assistance for families and individuals exiting TANF and Basic Food; gradually phasing out benefits, support services, and case management.

**6.6. Revamp policies, programs, and practices to cultivate hope and build resilience**. The emerging science of hope and resilience suggests that it is one of the most important 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.
* Invest in community-based peer-to-peer support models for individuals, children, and adults experiencing poverty.

**6.7. Implement WorkFirst and TANF Program Improvements**

The cross agency WorkFirst program should implement these recommendations over the coming five years by:

* Developing and advocating for alternatives to work participation rate as the sole federal performance measure for the program. Exits to employment, wage progression, credential achievement and reduced rates of return to TANF are among the measures that should be considered. These measures align with standards used in other parts of the workforce development system. There is movement at the federal level to work in partnership with states to develop such measures.
* Better tailoring WorkFirst offerings to needs and goals the families that make up the caseload in the current strong economy. The Department of Commerce is engaged in an effort to redesign its paid and unpaid work experience services that exemplifies this effort.
* Implementing statewide warm referrals to home-visiting and other parenting support programs.
* Connecting earlier with families at risk of hitting the five-year TANF time limit. This provides an opportunity offer assistance, like supported employment available through Medicaid for those with behavioral health challenges. It also provides families that may qualify for a time limit extension additional time to collect necessary documentation and for staff to assist in this effort.
* Expanding statewide the policy of providing support services to fully meet transportation needs required to participate in WorkFirst.
* Providing post-TANF supports to minimize benefit cliffs and assist those who are newly employed to weather the storms that can derail a family transitioning from cash assistance to wages.
* Providing a tapering TANF grant for four months after a family begins work to help ease the transition to employment.
* Reducing the severity of sanction policies and increasing the criteria for time-limit extensions.
* Offering services and supports to families in which only the child receives a TANF grant.

**6.8. Transforming Case Management**

The DSHS initiative to transform case management will play a key role in implementing these recommendations and should be completed in the coming five years. Transforming Case Management aims to reduce program silos and assist families and individuals in navigating a path out of poverty. Key values include:

* Be customer focused and customer driven
* Serve the whole family
* Create meaningful partnerships and referrals
* Use coaching and goal setting
* Focus on respect, equity, diversity and inclusion (REDI)
* Measure and innovate
* Develop staff skills in these areas

The agency has identified efficiencies and fine-tuning of systems that hold the potential to free up staff capacity to do this work. Workgroups are underway to implement specific changes in the following areas:

* **Assessments** to use tools and processes that are strengths-based and customer-driven to understand the needs and wants of customers.
* **Coaching case-management** to help those with complex needs set goals and navigate systems.
* **Partnerships and referrals** to help connect all those seeking public assistance with other services and supports they need.

Workgroups are also working to make foundational changes needed to support this work:

* **Physical environment** modifications to make public assistance offices welcoming, inclusive, safe and positive for customers and staff.
* **Communication** to increase the effectiveness of communication with customers and improve the language used to frame our work to ensure that it is consistent with our REDI values and the use of a strengths-based, customer driven approach.
* **Training,** including monitoring and feedback,to equip staff with the skills and knowledge needed to implement a strength-based and customer-driven approach and to do coaching case-management.
* **Standardization** of case-management processes and procedures to increase consistency and provide baseline data for evaluating the effectiveness of these transformed practices.
* **Performance Measurement** to measure adherence to fidelity of case management procedures and be regularly calibrated and evaluated to establish supervisor/management access to accurate and consistent procedures and performance metrics to foster accountability and provide effective coaching for staff at implementation.

Finally, because making a transformation is complex and can be disruptive, there is a change management initiative underway to ensure maximum staff involvement and communication.

Piloting some of the first aspects of the Transforming Case Management project is currently underway:

* Implementing a shorter, yet more individualized orientation for the WorkFirst program. This covers key information, and is built with knowledge that families in crisis need their basic needs addressed before they can absorb detailed information about career-building opportunities, which will come post crisis stabilization.
* Warm hand-off referrals and follow-up support for customers. These referrals will be offered when customers ask for additional resources or when staff pick up on a cue that they may be helpful. Staff will go beyond providing information about community resources by offering to walk the customer over to a co-located resource, or make a call to the resource with the customer. Two weeks later, staff will get an automated reminder and check back with the customer to see if the referral was helpful and, if needed, help make a connection to additional resources.

Using the same evaluation approaches that helped DSHS achieve efficiency gains in public assistance eligibility determination, DSHS will adjust as needed during the pilot and complete an effectiveness review after 90 days, before making a decision about scaling statewide. It is important to note that DSHS is managing this change within existing resources, leveraging capacity created by efficiencies developed over the last decade. It will be necessary to maintain those resources to fully implement the promise of Transforming Case Management.

## ***STRATEGY 7****: Decriminalize poverty and reduce reliance on the systems that exacerbate its intergenerational effects.*

Why: Poverty increases the likelihood of becoming involved with the juvenile justice, criminal justice, and the child welfare systems. Predatory enforcement of minor misdemeanors and compounding fines can trap low-income people in a never-ending cycle of debt, poverty, and jail. Children in poverty, especially Indigenous, Black, and Brown children, are over-disciplined in school, contributing to school-to-prison pipeline. The experience of deep poverty and scarcity can result in toxic stress for both parents and children, increasing the likelihood of involvement with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

The Poverty Reduction Work Group (PRWG) recognizes the significant degree to which these systems exacerbate and perpetuate poverty – each of them is in need of comprehensive systemic reform. PRWG also recognizes there are existing efforts dedicated to these reforms.

Our recommendations are narrowed in scope to services children, adults, and families need when entering or exiting these systems, and how involvement exacerbates poverty.

7.1. CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

The recommendations below include those of the PRWG and relevant DCYF agency recommendations from the Governor’s 2020 proposed supplemental budget.

**7.1.a.** Increase trauma-informed care (see recommendation 1.1), adding training for court staff, judges, mandatory reporters, school staff (teachers and school health providers), and police in order to:

* Understand how biases around race, sexual orientation and gender identity, class, and disability heighten the potential for increased CPS referrals from the community.
* Increase opportunities for Peer-to-Peer counseling and support models for parents engaging in the system.

**7.1.b.** Prevent out-of-home placement of children by increasing in-home services to families. Current DCYF efforts related to the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) support this recommendation.

**7.1.c.** Create an adolescent unit within DCYF to focus on cross-system challenges impacting youth, including homelessness and the need for supportive out-of-home placements for LGBTQ youth.

**7.1.d.** Provide funding for youth in out-of-home placements to participate in extracurricular actives such as art, sports, summer camp and clubs to ensure these youth have the same opportunities for recreational experiences as their peers.

**7.1.e.** Increase the basic foster care maintenance rates to cover estimated costs of providing a child with food, clothing, personal incidentals, and shelter.

**7.1.f.** Protect kids from trauma and listen to kids, specifically:

* Pilot the Family Connections program to develop skilled foster parents and parent allies into mentors who will provide child-focused networks of support for families with children in out-of-home placements. Stronger parent/caregiver relationships not only reduce trauma; they improve reunification rates, reduce re-entry into the child welfare system, and retain quality foster parents.
* Create age-appropriate opportunities for children and youth to be engaged in their case plans.
* Increase opportunities for feedback from youth at all levels of DCYF by including authentic youth voice in work groups, advisory groups, etc.

**7.1.g.** Add emergent and long-term placement beds to reduce the length of stay for youth in hospital inpatient and emergency room settings, hotels and out-of-state placements. This will better meet the acute needs of youth with significant mental, behavioral or developmental health needs. These placements will provide enhanced therapeutic services, increased staff-to-child ratios or individually-tailored services that support placement stabilization.

**7.1.h.** Provide funding to help relatives become licensed foster parents. Children in out-of-home placements often live with a relative caregiver. Many of these kinship caregivers want to become licensed foster parents and need support to navigate the application process, complete the home study, and comply with rules and regulations for licensing.

**7.1.i.**  Expand educational, housing, counseling, and mentorship, programs and supports to those kids who are aging out of foster care, specifically:

* Partner with a community organization to provide intensive case management services using the YVLifeSet clinical consultation model. Young people within foster care, juvenile justice and mental health systems face significant challenges in successfully transitioning to adulthood. This model shows significant improvements in housing and economic stability, improvements in health and safety outcomes, and reductions in recidivism rates.
* Support independent living housing for extended care youth and youth aging out of the child welfare system.

**7.1.j.** Expand opportunities for benefits available through Housing Authorities and state agencies, specifically:

* Ensure housing and benefits available to families continue after their children enter out-of-home care and the family is working on reunification.
* Increase the TANF “child only” grant for kinship caregivers to align with foster care maintenance payments paid to licensed foster parents.
* Create a “child only” Basic Food benefit to help kinship caregivers meet the basic needs of children in their care.

7.2. JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

**7.2.a.** Provide adequate funding to meet all mental health and substance use disorder treatment needs of incarcerated adults and youth.

**7.2.b.** Provide youth in juvenile justice setting with equal access to school services as youth in mainstream schools, including special education services and psychological and career counseling.

**7.2.c.** Strengthen K-12 school reengagement for youth exiting the juvenile justice system. (Currently just 25% of those eligible to reenroll after release do so).

**7.2.d** Fund aftercare supports for youth releasing from residential commitment. Among those served by DCYF Juvenile Rehabilitation, only half of youth released currently receive parole aftercare services with support from the parole case manager.

**7.2.e** Adequately resource expansion of Juvenile Rehabilitation education and housing to serve youth up to age 25.

7.3. CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

**7.3.a.** Divert poverty-related arrests to services rather than to jail.Specifically:

• Expand and fully fund diversion programs across various jurisdictions in Washington State to decrease the link between mental illness and incarceration.

• Assign case managers to families of incarcerated people to assist in accessing health, social and economic support services, with family unification as a central priority.

**7.3.b.** Reduce legal financial obligations (LFOs).Specifically:

• Eliminate cash bail and expand and enforce LFO reform laws.

• Limit “pay to pay” and “pay to stay” fees while individuals are incarcerated.

**7.3.c.** Improve re-entry policies, services and programs.

• Expand the number of providers with expertise in rehabilitative incarceration and re-entry, including mental health professionals, case managers, and social workers.

• Prepare individuals for re-entry through provision of wrap-around navigation services, connection to employee mentors with lived experiences, and referral to useful community organizations and job opportunities prior to release.

**7.3.d.** Empower community-led re-entry programs.

• Focus funding on re-entry programs that hire and support formerly incarcerated people of color and indigenous individuals as leaders, caseworkers, and managerial staff to support other formerly incarcerated people.

**7.3.e.** Continue and support cross agency partnerships.

* The Department should continue to expand its current efforts to provide courts with access to its Benefits Verification System (BVS), providing a no-cost, quick and reliable way for courts to determine indigence. Matching user input with DSHS databases, BVS affirmatively verifies whether a defendant is receiving public assistance from the State of Washington. This information can establish a defendant’s need for a court-appointed public defender or inability to pay legal financial obligations (LFOs). As of November 2019, 20 court systems are using BVS to improve upon the paper or self-attestation processes they used before, but there is opportunity for many more courts to participate.
* The Department should expand partnership between CSD and the Department of Corrections to connect reentering individuals with food, cash, or medical assistance upon release. A process to determine financial eligibility for those transitioning out of Stafford Creek Correctional Facility within 30 days of the planned or earned release date has been piloted, with plans to replicate in 11 other Washington state correctional facilities. This service helps support the reentry process by meeting the basic needs of individuals upon release.
* Continue to pursue agency request legislation for the 2020 legislative session to allow abatement (reduction) of child support to $10 per month when parents are incarcerated for six months or more, if the parent has no income or assets available. This proposal benefits families with an incarcerated parent by limiting the accumulation of child support debt during incarceration. Incarcerated parents owe more than $52,000,000 in child support debt, averaging $14,500 per individual. By decreasing the amount of uncollectible debt, formerly incarcerated parents will have an increased likelihood of successful reentry and sustained and consistent child support payments upon release. This supports parents reentering the community in seeking employment without fear of a large withholding order for child support.

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

Why: This strategy and the recommendation within represent areas where poverty reduction initiatives and the recommendations coming out of the [Future of Work Task Force](https://www.wtb.wa.gov/planning-programs/future-of-work/future-of-work-task-force-members/) align. The Future of Work Task Force was created by legislation passed in the 2018 Legislative session (SSB 6544). Made up of legislators, business and labor leaders, the 16-member Future of Work Task Force was charged with developing a set of policy recommendations that help Washington businesses and workers prosper together. The following recommendations are informed by the work of this body:

**8.1. Set an “economic floor” policy, so that the combination of wages, employee benefits, social assistance benefits, taxes, and tax credits ensures foundational needs are met.** A culture shift around livable wages being the right of everyone, particularly after leaving programs designed to equip individuals entering the workforce is needed to:

**8.1.a.** Ensure that living-wage workforce development programs and employment training programs are adequately funded, accessible to people living in poverty and/or experiencing homelessness (e.g., proximate locations, transportation and childcare assistance, low-barrier eligibility requirements, compensated through stipends, etc.).

**8.1.b.** Offer services specifically tailored to those most impacted by poverty, including youth. Program development should include a broad range of opportunities, including entrepreneurial and small business opportunities.

**8.2. Accelerate pathways for immigrants and refugees with advanced degrees and/or training from their home country to become accredited in the U.S.** This could include promoting Integrated Basic Education Skills and Training (IBEST) and Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) programs in the community and with employers.

**8.3. Invest in upskilling and training for incumbent, low skill workers.** This can include:

* Building additional incumbent worker programs designed to promote workers out of entry level positions, opening up those entry level slots for new employees. Programs like these can reduce barriers to advancement.
* Developing career pathway informational sessions on specific career paths and include training options and funding sources.
* Expanding and improving high-quality educational opportunities and job training in a safe and healthy environment.
* Building partnerships and systems for on the job training opportunities with private/public employers.
* Using educational funding sources/options for on-the-job training.

# **APPENDIX A**

| **GOVERNOR’S POVERTY REDUCTION WORK GROUP MEMBERSHIP**  The Intergenerational Poverty Advisory Committee to the Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Representative Sector/Agency** | **Region ID** | **Filled** | **Member** | **Acting as Proxy At meetings** | **Sector/Population/Representation** |
| **Executive Branch Agency Members** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Department of Social and Health Services |  | 1 | David Stillman |  |  |
| Department of Commerce |  | 1 | Diane Klontz |  |  |
| Employment Security Department |  | 1 | Tim Probst |  |  |
| Health Care Authority |  | 1 | Sue Birch | James Brackett |  |
| WorkForce Training & Coordinating Board |  | 1 | Nova Gattman |  |  |
| Department of Health |  | 1 | Daisye Orr |  |  |
| Washington Student Achievement Council |  | 1 | Ami Magisos |  |  |
| Department of Children, Youth & Families |  | 1 | Nicole Rose |  |  |
| Department of Corrections |  | 1 | Jim Harms |  |  |
| State Board for Community & Technical Colleges |  | 1 | Erin Frasier |  |  |
| Office of the Governor |  | 1 | Jim Baumgart |  |  |
| **Separately Elected Agencies** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction |  | 1 | Mona Johnson | Haley Lowe |  |
| Office of the Insurance Commissioner |  | 1 | Lonnie Johns-Brown |  |  |
| Attorney General's Office |  | 1 | Ellen Austin Hall |  |  |
| **Legislative Branch Members** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Senate / Democratic Caucus |  | 1 | Sen. Manka Dhingra |  |  |
| Senate / Republican Caucus |  | 1 | Sen. Hans Zeiger |  |  |
| House / Democratic Caucus |  |  |  |  |  |
| House / Republican Caucus |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Economic Development:** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Pac Mountain Workforce Development Council |  | 1 | Cheryl Fambles |  |  |
| Workforce Snohomish |  | 1 | Erin Monroe |  |  |
| **Tribal Representation:** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Chief Seattle Club | King Co | 1 | Colleen EchoHawk |  |  |
| Lummi Nation | Whatcom Co | 1 | Nickolaus Lewis |  | Tribal Government |
| **Race/Ethnicity** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Commission on Hispanic Affairs | Statewide | 1 | Maria Sigüenza | Nancy Aguilar | Latino |
| Commission on African American Affairs | Statewide | 1 | Ed Prince |  | African American |
| Commission on Asian Pacific (Islander) American Affairs | Statewide | 1 | Nam Nguyen |  | Asian Pacific Islander |
| **Employers** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Association of WA Business |  | 1 | Gary Chandler |  |  |
| Costco Wholesale | King Co | 1 | Claude Green |  | Workforce/POC/Central District #37 |
| Washington Roundtable | Statewide | 1 | Neil Strege |  | Business |
| Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation | Western WA | 1 | Sarah Buhayar |  | Philanthropy, Education, Housing |
| Washington Hospitality Assn Education Foundation | Statewide | 1 | Sandra Miller |  | Hospitality |
| **Academia/ Research:** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Washington State Budget & Policy Center |  | 1 | Julie Lynn Watts |  | State budget and anti-poverty policy |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Populations living in Poverty** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Northwest Harvest |  | 1 | Christina Wong | Andrew Schlosser |  |
| Statewide Poverty Action |  | 1 | Juanita Maestas | Drayton Jackson |  |
| Partners in Careers | SW WA | 1 | Sharon Pesut |  | Working with families in poverty |
| Catholic Community Services of Western WA | Western WA | 1 | Michael Reichert | Josephine Tamayo Murray | Native and Poor |
| **Disability / differently abled populations** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Goodwill of the Olympics & Rainier Region | Statewide | 1 | Eu-wanda Eagans |  | Workforce Dev/Multi Cult/Low Income |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Immigrant/Refugee Communities** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Puget Sound Training Center |  | 1 | Marisol Tapia Gonzales |  |  |
| Partner in Employment |  | 1 | Hien Kieu |  | Refugees and Immigrants |
| **Gender** |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Housing** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Vancouver Housing Authority | Clark Co | 1 | Roy Johnson |  | Low Income Families |
| **Other Representation** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Department of Health |  | 1 | Dan Torres |  | Infant Child Mental Health |
| United Ways of Pacific Northwest | Statewide | 1 | Jim Cooper |  |  |
| Washington State Community Action Partnership |  | 1 | Larry Eyer |  |  |
| United Way of Pierce County |  | 1 | Dona Ponepinto |  |  |
| Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence |  | 1 | Traci Underwood |  |  |

# **APPENDIX B**

****Examples of Significant U.S. Policies Affecting Poverty Outcomes by Race and Ethnicity

# **APPENDIX C**

Policy Options for the 2020 Legislative Session

**Bills Introduced in the 2019-20 Session:**

**HB 1136/SB 5144 - *Implementing child support pass-through payments.*** This policy supports Strategy 6: *Build an integrated human service continuum of care that addresses the holistic needs of children, adults, and families* by increasing the amount of financial assistance potentially available to children and their custodial parent while receiving TANF.

**HB 1603/SB 5684** **- *Revising economic assistance programs by updating standards of need, revising outcome measures and data collected, and reducing barriers to participation****.* While the second substitute version of HB 1603 passed in the 2019 legislative session, it was significantly scaled back from the bill as introduced. The original version contains several TANF program improvements to consider which connect with Strategy 4: *Invest in the multigenerational well-being of families, especially those with young children* by improving the support families receive as participants of the TANF program.

**HB 1771/SB 5683 - *Establishing the welcome to Washington baby act to create family supports through universal home visiting programs and a statewide family linkage program for resources and referrals.*** This policy also supports Strategy 4: *Invest in the multigenerational well-being of families, especially those with young children* by expanding family-focused home visiting services, providing physical, social and emotional health services and referrals to expectant mothers and families with young children, to optimize early childhood development.

**DSHS 2020 Agency Request Legislation:**

**Abatement of Child Support Orders of Incarcerated Parents –** Modifies RCW 26.09 and 26.23 to allow abatement (reduction) of child support to $10 per month when parents are incarcerated for six months or more if the parent has no income or assets available. Includes rights for a parent or the Division of Child Support to request a hearing on whether abatement should be allowed because, in rare cases, some incarcerated parents may have income or assets available to pay child support. This policy supports Strategy 7: *Decriminalize poverty and reduce reliance on the systems that exacerbate its intergenerational effects* by easing barriers to reentry.

**Convening Local Communities to Reduce Intergenerational Poverty** – Modifies RCW 74.08A.280 to leverage the existing partner network of Local Planning Areas (LPAs) by expanding their membership and scope to focus more broadly on poverty reduction efforts in local communities. This policy supports *Strategy 2: Make equal space for the power and influence of people and communities most affected by poverty and inequality in decision-making* by including public assistance recipients and a diverse group of partners and stakeholders in local poverty reduction advisory and collaboration boards.

*The Department of Children Youth and Families’ agency request legislation seeking improvements to juvenile justice, child welfare and access to childcare and early learning services provide additional options for consideration in the 2020 legislative session.*

1. Because they are so fundamental, our recommendations also encompass those from the Work Group specifically related to equity, diversity and inclusion. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. <https://medium.com/wagovernor/new-food-benefit-debit-cards-work-to-reduce-stigma-and-improve-efficiency-9c1baf14191b> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. [Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Washington State Report Card: State Total*](https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/ReportCard/ViewSchoolOrDistrict/103300) - *Diversity Report, Kindergarten Readiness by Student Program and Characteristic, 2018-2019*. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. The percentages in this section come from EMAPS for the period December 2018-December 2019. They are not unduplicated – family violence, mental illness and/or substance use may impact ability to prepare for or find work. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)