

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

**Five-Year Plan to Reduce Intergenerational Poverty
And Promote Self-Sufficiency**

As Required by RCW 74.08A.505

December 1, 2019

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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. These basic needs include trusted relationships with parents, friends, and neighbors; a safe, affordable home; and nutritious food. Additional building blocks are needed 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 people need to thrive.

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.¹ For one in four of our neighbors, the foundation needed to support them reaching their full potential is unstable, 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 are Indigenous, Black, and Brown – the legacy of a social and economic system built on our history of colonialism, racism, oppression, and exclusion (see Figure 1 in **Appendix F**).

The research is 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** (see Figure 2 in **Appendix F**). This return is in the form of the increased earnings potential of children which benefit from poverty reduction efforts as well as savings from reduced state spending on homelessness, health care supports, and investment in the criminal justice system.

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. It is for this compelling reason that the legislature directed the development of this strategic plan to reduce intergenerational poverty and build financial stability and sufficiency.

¹ DSHS|ESA Economic Services Administration analysis of 2017 American Community Survey data

BACKGROUND

[Engrossed Third Substitute House Bill 1482](#), 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](#), 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 DSHS to update the plan as necessary.

The Task Force is also assisted by the Intergenerational Poverty Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) described in RCW [74.08A.510](#). 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. Because the duties of the existing [Governor’s Poverty Reduction Work Group](#) (hereafter referred to as the Task Force Advisory Committee or Advisory Committee) align closely with the requirements of the Advisory Committee, the Task Force appointed the PRWG as their Advisory Committee (see **Appendix G** for a comparison chart).

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 |

| Representation | Member |
|--|------------------|
| 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:

- 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](#) 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 DSHS, Economic Services Administration (Department). 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 mission to transform the lives of Washingtonians. Likewise, the Department acknowledges the partnership of Task Force member agencies in WorkFirst and, more broadly, poverty reduction planning and work.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

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 Advisory Committee took 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.

The Advisory Committee issued an [interim progress report](#) in October 2018, including several collectively identified root causes that need addressing in order to meaningfully reduce poverty and inequality. The Advisory Committee also studied and noted the complexity and inadequacy of existing definitions of poverty. *We uphold their recommendation that policymakers and stakeholders must broaden their view on poverty in decision-making – especially incorporating expertise and stories of those experiencing it – to build understanding and measure progress.*

The Advisory Committee’s dedication to elevating the expertise and influence of those most affected by poverty included 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. The steering committee did in depth looks into subjects impacting poverty including historic systematic racism, early learning, K-12, higher education, health, human services, housing, workforce development, business, juvenile and criminal justice, and the child welfare system.

Several strategic themes, and specific recommendations related to each, have emerged from the Advisory Committee, 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
- Ensuring an equitable future of work in a changing economy

The Department agrees 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 we serve.

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 and emerging best practices happening in communities in Washington state and throughout the country.

THE ALIGNMENT AND VARIATION BETWEEN THE FIVE-YEAR AND TEN-YEAR PLANS

The Department acknowledges the Advisory Committee's time and expertise compiling research and lifting up the voices of those living in poverty. Consistent with their role as the Task Force's advisory body, this plan draws extensively on their 10-year strategic plan for poverty reduction. For brevity, we do not include model examples used in that report.

The Task Force Strategic Plan is drawn from nearly all elements of the Advisory Committee's comprehensive poverty reduction strategy, though it differs in several ways:

- It has a shorter time horizon – the Advisory Committee was tasked by the Governor to develop a 10 year strategic plan while the Task Force directs the Department to develop a 5 year plan.
- It focuses specifically on intergenerational poverty reduction, with particular attention to programs that serve children and families.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 is briefer, with a focus on broad policy direction. More specific recommendations for implementing the broader strategy are included as options for consideration in **Appendix E**. This appendix also provides information on the source of each set of policy options, as well as timeline and requirements to implement. Many policies for consideration come from the Advisory Committee; however some are drawn from DSHS and other organizations' research and initiatives.
- Consistent with the goal of immediate action toward longer term change, **Appendix D** includes a list of policy options for the 2020 legislative session in support of the Plan.
- Minor wording changes to Advisory Committee recommendations were made consistent with Department plain talk standards and Task Force member preferences³.
- Task Force members, not all of whom serve on the Advisory Committee, recommended edits to the Departments draft of this report. The department incorporated many of the recommended changes, and found a middle ground where edits occasionally conflicted. These edits were made consistent with the requirement that the Task Force approve the plan prior to its submission to the legislature.

² Because they are so fundamental, our recommendations also encompass those from the Advisory Committee specifically related to equity, diversity and inclusion.

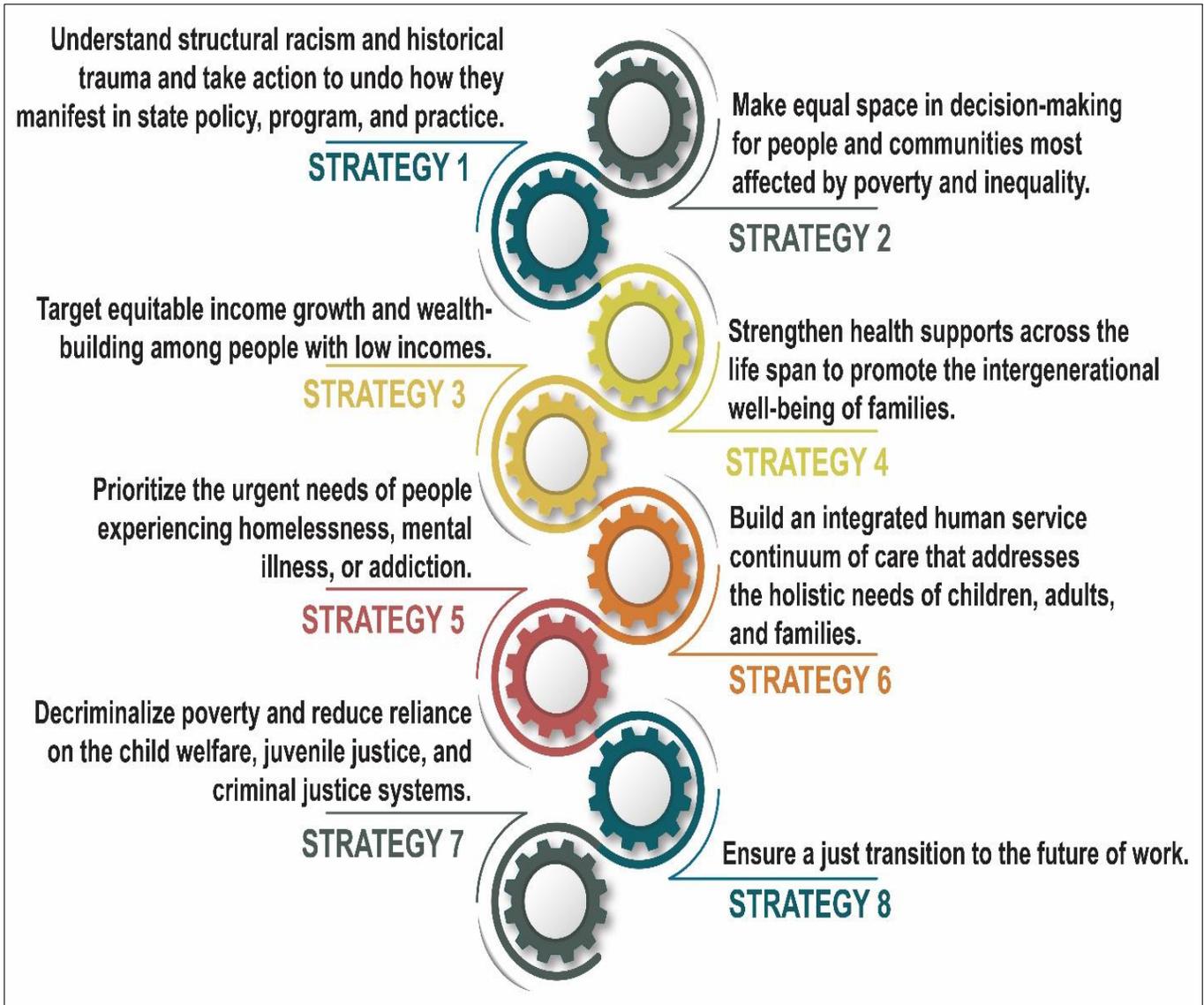
³ The following 13 recommendations had slightly different wording from the 10 year plan: 2a, 2b, 3aiii, 3avii, 3c, 3d, 4c, 4d, 4e, 6c, 6d, 7a, 7f and are marked as modified.

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.

It is important to note that while the Task Force is in consensus on the broad strategies outlined in the report, there may not be unanimous support for all of the options for implementing the recommendations.

STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department proposes the following strategies and recommendations to support the reduction of intergenerational poverty and increased self-sufficiency among the people it serves and other citizens of 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. 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.

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 people who work directly with those living in poverty, and also those working at a policy level, are informed on how people of color are disproportionately affected by poverty due to the effects of historical colonialism, oppression, and racism (see **Appendix C** for more information), and that they understand the implicit biases we all carry within us and how these affect our interactions.

“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

RECOMMENDATION 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 (e.g., health care providers, child care and early learning providers, educators, police, state patrol, caseworkers, judges, etc.)

(Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)

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.

(Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)

Example: 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](#) 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 THE POWER AND INFLUENCE OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES MOST AFFECTED BY POVERTY AND INEQUALITY IN DECISION-MAKING

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.

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 throughout Washington state necessitates stronger collaboration and sharing of resources at the local level.

“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.”

- Advisory Committee Steering Committee member

RECOMMENDATION 2a: Invest greater state resources in partnerships with communities of color and other groups most affected by poverty, so solutions are customized and sensitive to cultural and linguistic needs. *(Modified Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)*

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 the strategic plans for poverty reduction.

(Modified Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)

RECOMMENDATION 2c: Task the emerging Office of Equity to collaborate with Indigenous, Black, and Brown Washingtonians to develop a formal process for truth and reconciliation.

(Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)

STRATEGY 3: TARGET EQUITABLE 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.⁴ Washington has the eleventh highest income inequality in the nation,⁵ 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.⁶

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 require post-secondary 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 (see Figure 3 in **Appendix F**).
- Eliminating racial disparities in income and wealth would increase Washington state's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by \$38 billion annually⁷ (see Figure 4 in **Appendix F**).

Washington state can achieve greater income equality by 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.

⁴ <https://itep.org/whopays/>

⁵ <https://www.epi.org/multimedia/unequal-states-of-america/#/Washington>

⁶ Center on Budget & Policy Priorities (November 2018) Advancing Racial Equity with State Tax Policy available at <https://www.cbpp.org/research/state-budget-and-tax/advancing-racial-equity-with-state-tax-policy>

⁷ <https://nationalequityatlas.org/data-summaries/Washington>

Expanding Education Opportunities

(Task Force Advisory Committee recommendations)

RECOMMENDATION 3a: Adopt the Washington Kids for Washington Jobs recommendations, and bolster these 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).⁸

The effort has an overall goal of increasing the share of Washington students with a credential to 70%, and recommends 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. The Advisory Committee supports the following additional recommendations to increase the likelihood of the above WK4WJ strategies:

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.⁹ Citizenship is an essential stepping stone to education and employment opportunities and drastically reduces poverty; people born outside of the U.S. who obtain citizenship have poverty rates lower than those yet to obtain citizenship.¹⁰

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 education and employment barrier for immigrants and refugees. Ensuring all children and adults have access to culturally relevant literacy programs and services will improve education and employment outcomes.

⁸ <https://www.waroundtable.com/wa-kids-wa-jobs/>

⁹ 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>

¹⁰ DSHS analysis of 2018 American Community Survey data

RECOMMENDATION 3a-iii: Replace discipline practices in schools with culturally responsive social, emotional, and engagement supports. *(Modified version of Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)*

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, 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 rates¹¹ (see Figure 5 in **Appendix F**).

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 summer¹².

RECOMMENDATION 3a-v: Increase investments to improve high school graduation and post-secondary enrollment of children and youth experiencing foster care and/or homelessness.¹³

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 protections 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.

RECOMMENDATION 3a-vii: Remove residency barriers for college students with refugee status. *(Modified version of Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)*

RECOMMENDATION 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 post-secondary educational pathways.

Washington students enrolling in post-secondary education compete at rates above the national average.¹⁴ Yet, too few Washingtonians are pursuing education beyond high school. Nearly four

¹¹ <https://ra.nea.org/business-item/2016-pol-e01-2/>

¹² https://www.schoolsoutwashington.org/pages/the-facts-about-expanded-learning?_pos=1&_sid=3db0c5bcb&_ss=r

¹³ <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/reports/FosterHomelessEducation.pdf>

¹⁴ WSAC staff analysis of 8-year Outcome Measure data as reported by Integrated Post-secondary Education and Data System for entering cohort of 2008.

in 10 graduating high school seniors delay or forego college enrollment, placing the state 49th on this measure,¹⁵ and students of color have college completion rates 16% 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.

Increasing Wages & Compensation

(Task Force Advisory Committee recommendations)

RECOMMENDATION 3b: Enforce stronger salary and 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.¹⁶ The government should work with businesses and labor to define and enforce wage transparency guidelines for employers in Washington state.

RECOMMENDATION 3c: Incentivize, promote and expand access to no- or low-cost financial resources and education that empower, rather than prey upon, people experiencing poverty.

(Modified version of Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)

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.

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.

¹⁵ HigherEdInfo.Org: College-Going Rates of High School Graduates - Directly from High School. Higheredinfo.org, 2014. Accessed November 1, 2019. <http://www.higheredinfo.org/dbrowser/index.php?measure=32>.

¹⁶ Institute for Women's Policy Research Status of Women in the States 2018

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. Policies and programs that work with low-income populations to build assets and support entrepreneurship can help them develop cushions needed to weather storms and get ahead. Community organizations like [asset building coalitions](#) work with community banks and credit unions to promote asset-and wealth building for rural communities and communities with low income residents.

RECOMMENDATION 3d: Enact changes to the state tax system that lower the effective tax rate for low- and moderate-income households (bottom two quintiles). *(Modified version of Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)*

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.¹⁷

Making Cost-of-Living More Affordable

(Task Force Advisory Committee recommendations)

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.¹⁸

For families with young children, child care, also known as early care and education, is often the highest single monthly household expense. Affordable and high quality child care bridges this strategy and Strategy 4 in this report; it both enables families to work and provide financially for their families, and also helps children grow and learn to reach their potential.

The [Child Care Collaborative Task Force](#) created under HB 2367 (2018 legislative session) to achieve a goal of access to affordable, high-quality child care for all Washington families by 2025. Its initial report 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*

¹⁷ <https://equitablegrowth.org/the-challenging-and-continuing-slide-in-u-s-unionization-rates/>

¹⁸ http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/MountingCostsReport_FINAL.pdf

children. Studies have shown that racial and ethnic groups have disparate access to child care, preschool, health and other early childhood services” (page 28). Specific recommendations are described in **Appendix E**.

RECOMMENDATION 3g: Increase and preserve affordable housing for renters and owners.

Lack of affordable housing is the primary driver behind homelessness in Washington state. There are fewer than 30 units of housing available for every 100 low-income¹⁹ families that need one, and vacancy rates in Washington are the lowest in the country at 2%.²⁰

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, 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.²¹

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.²²

¹⁹ Low income is defined here as below 80% area median income

²⁰ <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/COMMERCE-affordable-housing-update.pdf>

²¹ 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.

²² <https://itep.org/state-tax-codes-as-poverty-fighting-tools-2018/>

STRATEGY 4: STRENGTHEN HEALTH SUPPORTS ACROSS THE LIFE SPAN TO PROMOTE THE INTERGENERATIONAL WELL-BEING OF FAMILIES

The 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, 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.²³ In 2017-2018, 14% of children in Washington state experienced two or more ACEs.²⁴

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.²⁵

Beyond ACEs, families today experience several pressures that affect well-being. The high cost-of-living 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 their parents and young children. 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.

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 leave, and long-term care insurance. These are strong examples to build from to strengthen policies and programs to reduce health outcome disparities and support the intergenerational well-being of families. The philanthropic and faith-based sectors also play an important role in efforts in this area.

“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.’” - Advisory Committee Steering Committee member

²³ <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/toxic-stress/>

²⁴ 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.

²⁵ <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/preventingACES-508.pdf>

RECOMMENDATION 4a: Create a state funded supplemental Apple Health assistance benefit.
(Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)

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% of the federal poverty level (FPL), and gradually phase out for people with incomes up to 300% FPL.

RECOMMENDATION 4b: Ensure funding and access to culturally and linguistically appropriate health care and support services before, during, and after pregnancy.
(Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)

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.²⁶

Pregnancy and infancy are times of great vulnerability and opportunity for both parent and child. Deep poverty is associated with profoundly negative outcomes – as seen in a 2019 study by the Department’s Research and Data Analytics (RDA) division entitled [The Maternal Well-Being of Washington State’s TANF Population](#). 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, and 52% had childhood involvement with the child welfare system, of which 12% were removed from their homes. Specific recommendations based on the RDA study are included in **Appendix E**.

RECOMMENDATION 4c: Expand culturally and linguistically appropriate voluntary home visiting so all families who are eligible can receive it.
(Modified Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)

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.²⁷ 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](#) policy brief.

²⁶ <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/141-010-MMRPMaternalDeathReport2014-2016.pdf>

²⁷ <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/HomeVisitinginWashingtonState.pdf>

RECOMMENDATION 4d: Ensure access to free and low-cost counseling and contraceptive options. *(Modified Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)*

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 20,²⁸ which can worsen circumstances that may already be causing stress and increase the likelihood that a child and family will experience poverty.

RECOMMENDATION 4e: Increase funding to support culturally appropriate outreach for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), the Farmers Market Nutrition Program and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition program. *(Modified Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)*

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.

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. *(Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)*

²⁸ <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/141-010-MMRPMaternalDeathReport2014-2016.pdf>

STRATEGY 5: PRIORITIZE THE URGENT NEEDS OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS, VIOLENCE, MENTAL HEALTH, ILLNESS, OR ADDICTION

People experiencing poverty often face significant obstacles that prevent them from achieving economic stability, the most common of which are homelessness, family and community 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. The support of a whole community – family, friends, neighbors, employers, faith communities, cultural organizations, schools and other governmental resources – is needed for those facing these challenges.

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, disproportionately children of color, are currently homeless, nearly double the number in 2008²⁹ (see Figure 6 in **Appendix F**);
- Seven in 10 community college students reported experiencing food insecurity, housing insecurity, or homelessness during the past year;³⁰
- In the latest 24-hour count on domestic violence in Washington state, nearly 2,000 victims were provided services;³¹
- In a study on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls (MMIWG), Seattle had the highest number of MMIWG among 71 urban cities;³²
- Drug treatment admissions for opioids rose 257% statewide since 2002³³
- Depression has increased among youth over the last decade, and 43% of adolescents age 12-17 are seeking mental health counseling annually.³⁴

Homelessness, violence, mental illness, and addiction are often co-occurring and contribute to 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 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.

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

²⁹ Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, School Report Card data.

³⁰ Goldrick-Rab, S., Baker-Smith, C., Coca, V., Looker, E., Williams, T. College and University Basic Needs Insecurity: A National #RealCollege Survey Report. The Hope Center. April 2018. https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/HOPE_realcollege_National_report_digital.pdf

³¹ https://nnedv.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Library_Census_2018_Washington.pdf

³² <https://www.uihi.org/projects/our-bodies-our-stories/>

³³ https://adai.washington.edu/WAdata/opiate_home.htm

³⁴ https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/2015_Washington_BHBBarometer.pdf

sleep, complete homework and get to school on time. For instance, only 24.7% of homeless students entered kindergarten ready in all six areas of development and learning compared to 46.2% of non-homeless students³⁵.

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 illness³⁶, and 6% 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 7% of adults on WorkFirst to the point that they cannot participate in work-related activities, hurts the whole family.

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. The following significant strategies stemming from their work are highlighted to recognize that addressing homelessness, family and community violence, mental illness, and addiction are central to reducing poverty and inequality.

RECOMMENDATION 5a: Provide greater resources for community-led data collection.

(Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)

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 collection efforts, such as the Urban Indian Health Board's [Our Bodies, Our Stories Report](#) 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.

³⁵ Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington State Report Card: State Total - Diversity Report, Kindergarten Readiness by Student Program and Characteristic, 2018-2019.

³⁶ 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.

RECOMMENDATION 5b: Increase state and local rental assistance and diversion programs that allow children, youth, adults, and families to avoid homelessness.

(Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)

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.³⁷ Families facing domestic violence face particular challenges in finding and keeping safe and affordable housing.

RECOMMENDATION 5c: Increase the number of emergency, transitional, and permanent supportive housing options. *(Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)*

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. 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.

(Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)

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.

RECOMMENDATION 5e: Create a Medical-Financial Partnership model for Washington state.³⁸

(Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)

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 to improve health and reduce patient financial stress.³⁹

³⁷ <http://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/creating-a-successful-diversion-program.pdf>

³⁸ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1876285919304279>

³⁹ <https://nurseledcare.phmc.org/images/pdf/technical-assistance/MFP-Webinar-Resource.pdf>

RECOMMENDATION 5f: Improve access to prevention, treatment, and recovery support services.⁴⁰ *(Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)*

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 illness⁴¹, 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.

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 and addiction.

RECOMMENDATION 5g: Improve integration of behavioral health treatment in early learning settings and K-12. *(Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)*

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.⁴²

*"Never underestimate the power of giving someone a second chance."
- Resident of Washington Correctional Center for Women*

STRATEGY 6: BUILD AN INTEGRATED HUMAN SERVICE CONTINUUM OF CARE THAT ADDRESSES THE HOLISTIC NEEDS OF CHILDREN, ADULTS, AND FAMILIES

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,

⁴⁰ <https://www.hhs.gov/opioids/sites/default/files/2018-09/opioid-fivepoint-strategy-20180917-508compliant.pdf>

⁴¹ 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.

⁴² Recommendation provided by Steering Committee of the PRWG

food and 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”.⁴³ 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.”⁴⁴ People with low incomes incur significant financial, temporal, and cognitive costs⁴⁵ that tax a person’s mental bandwidth to such a great extent it affects their ability to problem solve and plan.⁴⁶ 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 Colorado⁴⁷ and Tennessee⁴⁸ 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;
- 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;⁴⁹ and

⁴³ Listening sessions, client engagement, etc.

⁴⁴ Ideas 42, Poverty Interrupted; http://www.ideas42.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/I42_PovertyWhitePaper_Digital_FINAL-1.pdf and EMPATH;

⁴⁵ Ideas 42: Poverty Interrupted

⁴⁶ Ideas 42: Poverty Interrupted

⁴⁷ <https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/resources/colorado-guide-to-2gen/>

⁴⁸ <https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/resources/building-a-thriving-tennessee-a-2gen-approach/>

⁴⁹ 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.

- Use behavioral economics and “plain talk” to clearly and effectively communicate information to people served.

This strategy is 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, and chronic stress. Importantly, these efforts also help staff see and acknowledge the strengths families and individuals bring to the table despite or even as a result of their struggles. Finally, and, importantly, these efforts strive to help staff modify practices to avoid inflicting additional trauma and to build resilience. One such effort already underway is the [Trauma-Informed Approach](#) learning initiative involving the Health Care Authority, DCYF, DSHS, the Department of Health (DOH) and Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

“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.”
- Advisory Committee Steering Committee member

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.

(Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)

We should focus selected outcomes 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) see Figure 7 in **Appendix F**; the dignity of having power and autonomy over their lives; and being engaged and valued in their community.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ <https://www.mobilitypartnership.org/restoring-american-dream>

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.

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.

(Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)

“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.” - Advisory Committee Steering Committee member

RECOMMENDATION 6c: Develop a universal intake, data sharing, and technology platform so that *essential* information on people served can be shared across agencies, systems, and sectors. *(Modified Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)*

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.

- Washington state government information technology system procurements and development projects over the coming five years are moving 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](#), along with plans for integrated systems and cross-system information exchange, supporting individuals who receive services from multiple programs and organizations.

RECOMMENDATION 6d: Increase cash assistance and test the impact of making it unconditional upon work.

(DSHS modified version of Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)

Evidence suggests that unrestrictive cash assistance is an effective strategy for poverty reduction.⁵¹ 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.^{52,53}

“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.”
- Advisory Committee Steering Committee member

RECOMMENDATION 6e: Smooth on-ramps and off-ramps for programs.

(Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)

Individuals and 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, leaving significant gaps depending on an individual’s income and personal circumstance (e.g., single vs. married, disabled, with or without shelter) - see Figure 8 in **Appendix F**. 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.

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 important elements of well-being and success.

RECOMMENDATION 6g: Implement WorkFirst and TANF Program Improvements.

(DSHS Recommendation)

TANF/WorkFirst is the state’s primary cash assistance program for families with children. It serves parents and children in deep poverty. TANF also provides financial assistance for children who are living with non-parental caregivers, often grandparents, or parents who are disabled or

⁵¹ NAS article <https://www.nap.edu/read/25246/chapter/2>

⁵² NAS article <https://www.nap.edu/read/25246/chapter/2>

⁵³ Ideas 42: Poverty Interrupted.⁵⁴ https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/tanf_trends_wa.pdf

undocumented. The TANF and WorkFirst programs must change to serve more families in need and to better assist them.

From 2008 to 2011 Washington was navigating through the worst economy since the Great Depression and federal TANF funding remained stagnant and unresponsive to the national recession. Subsequently, several state policy changes were made from 2010 to 2017 to the TANF/WorkFirst program that restricted access and eligibility for the program and contributed to a significant reduction in the TANF caseload. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Washington state is reaching a smaller portion of families living in deep poverty than at any point in the program's history. In 2015-2016, only 26 out of every 100 Washington families with children living in poverty, received TANF. This is a drastic decline from 1995-1996 when the TANF-to-poverty ratio for this population was 76 out of every 100, representing a 50 percentage point decline in the programs reach in a single decade.⁵⁴

RECOMMENDATION 6h: Transform Case Management. *(DSHS Recommendation)*

The DSHS initiative “Transforming Case Management” should be completed in the coming five years. Transforming Case Management aims to reduce public assistance program silos and assist families and individuals in navigating a path out of poverty. This initiative is driven by data on the pervasiveness of intergenerational poverty (See Figure 9 in **Appendix F**).

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

DSHS/CSD has identified efficiencies and fine-tuning of systems that hold the potential to free up staff capacity to do this work.

⁵⁴ https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/tanf_trends_wa.pdf

STRATEGY 7: DECRIMINALIZE POVERTY AND REDUCE RELIANCE ON THE CHILD WELFARE, JUVENILE JUSTICE, AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEMS THAT EXACERBATE ITS INTERGENERATIONAL EFFECT

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,⁵⁵ 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.

The Advisory Committee 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. The Advisory Committee recognizes the work of these existing efforts and urges stakeholders to consult with them on the systemic reforms needed. The recommendations below are narrowed in scope to services children, adults, and families need when at risk of entering these systems, while involved, and when they exit from them, specifically to mitigate their effects on poverty.

“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.” - Advisory Committee Steering Committee Member

The recommendations below include those of the Advisory Committee and relevant DCYF agency recommendations from the Governor's 2020 proposed supplemental budget.

Before & Upon Entry

(Task Force Advisory Committee recommendations)

⁵⁵ Partners for Our Children (January 2016) Research Brief: Poverty & Involvement in the Child Welfare System

RECOMMENDATION 7a: Decriminalize and destigmatize poverty by shifting resources toward diversion, treatment, and support services.⁵⁶ *(Modified version of Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)*

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.

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.

While Involved

(Task Force Advisory Committee recommendations)

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

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.

RECOMMENDATION 7f: Review and reform Legal Financial Obligations (LFOs). *(Modified version of Task Force Advisory Committee recommendation)*

Strengthen and enforce LFO reform laws.

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.

⁵⁶ 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.

Upon Release & Re-Entry

(Task Force Advisory Committee recommendations)

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

RECOMMENDATION 7i:

Eliminate education and employment barriers, and invest in stronger, better-coordinated exit and re-entry policies, services, and programs.

RECOMMENDATION 7j:

Expand and strengthen post-release family and peer support services.

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.

This strategy and the recommendation within represent areas where Advisory Committee initiatives and the recommendations coming out of the [Future of Work Task Force](#) 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.

RECOMMENDATION 8a: Adopt the recommendations detailed in the FOW Taskforce report,⁵⁷ and bolster it with more specific, intentional strategies to achieve equity for workers of color, women, immigrants and refugees, and rural Washingtonians.

The Task Force Advisory Group recommends the following 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

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.

RECOMMENDATION 8a-iii: Create tax structures for employers that offer full-time employment with living wages and robust benefit packages.

RECOMMENDATION 8a-iv: Protect Washingtonians from economic downturns by developing an economic “trigger” to provide countercyclical funding in human services, education, and job training.

RECOMMENDATION 8a-v: 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.

⁵⁷ <https://www.wtb.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Future-of-Work-2019-Final-Report.pdf>

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS: MOVE TO ACTION

Upon approval of this Five-Year Plan by the Task Force, the Department and other state agency members of the Task Force should jointly develop an action plan for implementation of recommendations. The action plan should, at a minimum, include:

- Priority and sequencing of recommendations for implementation.
- Outcome goals, performance metrics and a scorecard for policymakers to assess progress toward goals.
- A robust performance measurement and evaluation system that includes methods for both: 1) measuring the impact on outcomes of not-yet-proven strategies; and 2) measuring the fidelity with which evidence-based services are being implemented.
- Methods for institutionalizing multiple means to collect and to use in policy design and evaluation the perspectives of those with lived experience of poverty.
- Cost estimates and changes to statute needed to carry out the recommendations.
- Inventory of data sharing agreements and IT system changes needed to carry out strategies and recommendations. Privacy concerns with additional data sharing should be addressed.
- Plan for gathering and addressing additional feedback from community based organizations and stakeholders.

The format of the options in Appendix E could form the basis for a “scorecard” to track action planning and results.

The Department respectfully requests the Legislative Executive WorkFirst Poverty Reduction Work Group approve this strategic five-year plan for reducing intergenerational poverty and inequality and promoting family financial stability and success. Further, the Department recommends that following its submission to the Legislature, the cross-agency action planning as described above begin and that the Task Force monitor that work through its regularly scheduled meetings.

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 | | | Not provided | | |
| House / Republican Caucus | | | Not provided | | |
| Economic Development | | | | | |
| Pac Mountain Workforce Development Council | | 1 | Cheryl Fambles | | |

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 |
|---|------------------|---------------|------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| 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 |

GOVERNOR'S POVERTY REDUCTION WORK GROUP MEMBERSHIP

The Intergenerational Poverty Advisory Committee to the Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force

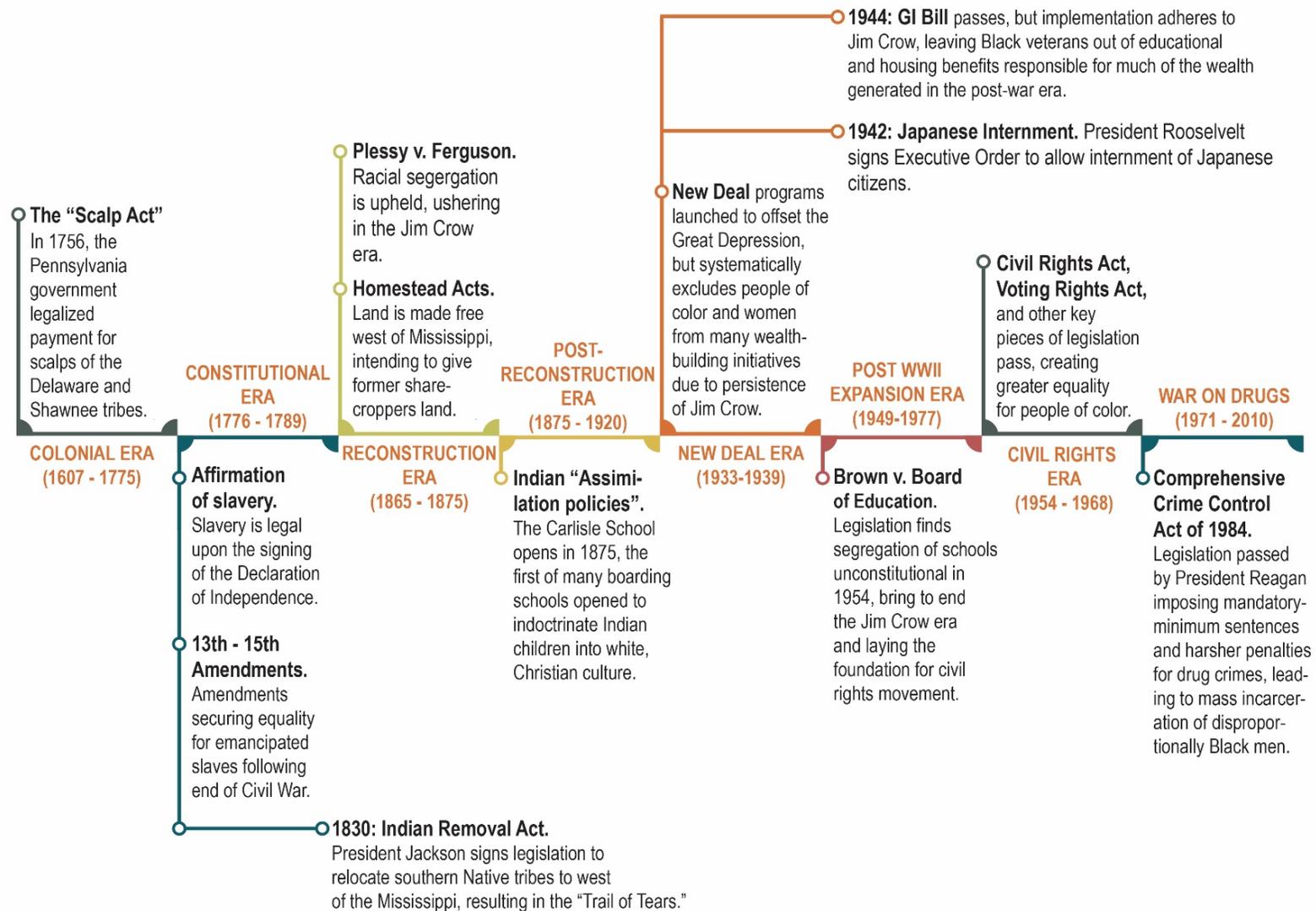
| Representative Sector/Agency | Region ID | Filled | Member | Acting as Proxy At meetings | Sector/Population/Representation |
|--|------------------|---------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Disability / differently abled populations | | | | | |
| Goodwill 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

| GOVERNOR'S POVERTY REDUCTION STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP | |
|---|--|
| The Intergenerational Poverty Advisory Committee to the Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force | |
| Members and staff | |
| 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 | |
| Tracy Lang'at | |
| Dante Pollard | |
| Shereese Rhodes | |
| Amy Roark | |
| Kristina Sawyckyj | |
| Carla Smith | |
| Alina Swart | |
| Omar Cuevas Vega | |
| Steering Committee Co-Chairs & Agency Co-Leads | |
| Drayton Jackson | Co-Chair |
| Diane Klontz | Department of Commerce |
| Juanita Maestas | Co-Chair |
| Tim Probst | Employment Security Department |
| David Stillman | Department of Social and Health Services |

APPENDIX C

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)

APPENDIX D

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 1783/SB 5776 – *Creating the Washington state office of equity.*

This policy proposal supports Strategy 1: Understand structural racism and historical trauma, and take action to undo their harmful effects in state policy, programs, and practice by setting up an Office of Equity within the Governor’s Office tasked with helping state agencies identify practices that perpetuate systemic inequities, recommending best practices and providing implementation and training assistance.

House Bill 1783 was introduced during the 2019 legislative session. While the bill was not passed last session, a proviso in the 2019 – 2020 operating budget ([House Bill 1109](#)) founded the [Office of Equity Task Force](#). Throughout the interim, the task force held public meetings across the state.

SB 6478 - *Revising economic assistance programs by updating standards of need, revising outcome measures and data collected, and reducing barriers to participation;* and **HB2441 - *Improving access to temporary assistance for needy families.***

These proposed policy changes supports Strategy 6: Build an integrated human service continuum of care that addresses the holistic needs of children, adults, and families by improving access to the TANF program.

HB 2388 - *Standardizing definitions of homelessness to improve access to services.*

This proposed policy change supports Strategy 5: Prioritize the urgent needs of people experiencing homelessness, violence, mental health, illness, or addiction by improving access to TANF, Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program, Working Connections Child Care and Housing and Essential Needs for those who are unstably housed and doubled up with others for financial reasons by including them in the definition of homelessness.

SB 5164 and HB 2573 - *Providing public assistance to certain victims of human trafficking.*

These proposed policy changes supports Strategy 6: Build an integrated human service continuum of care that addresses the holistic needs of children, adults, and families by improving access to public assistance services for victims of human trafficking.

HB 1645/SB 5533 - *Certificates of parental improvement.*

This proposed policy change supports Strategy 6: Build an integrated human service continuum of care that addresses the holistic needs of children, adults, and families by allowing a person whose child was found by a court to be dependent as a result of a finding of child abuse or neglect to petition for a certificate of parental improvement.

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

SB 6343 - *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.

SB 5493 - *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.

APPENDIX E
ADDITIONAL OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

| RECOMMENDATION | SUGGESTED OPTIONS | SOURCE | REQUIREMENTS TO IMPLEMENT |
|--|---|--|--|
| STRATEGY 1: UNDERSTAND STRUCTURAL RACISM AND HISTORICAL TRAUMA, AND TAKE ACTION TO UNDO THEIR HARMFUL EFFECTS IN STATE POLICY, PROGRAMS, AND PRACTICE | | | |
| <p>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.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agencies review policies and practices in light of outcome and impact data that is disaggregated by race; may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Developing a racial equity impact statement process to evaluate the effects of policy and programs on reducing disparities in outcomes and achieving equity ○ Integrating best practices in recruitment, hiring, and contracting to increase racial and ethnic diversity among leadership, staff, and partnerships ○ Increasing mentor, fellowship, apprenticeship, and internship opportunities for people from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds ○ Working in partnership with communities of color to build data systems and methods that better represent the priorities, experiences, and strengths of Indigenous, Black, and Brown Washingtonians • 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 groups and other local collaborations. • Agencies continue to expand efforts to incorporate equity measures into public assistance performance-based contracts. Outcome measures disaggregated by race and ethnicity will allow for better understanding of who services are helping, and for whom they are not effective. | <p>Task Force Advisory Committee</p> <p>DSHS</p> | <p>Timeline: 1-3 years</p> <p>Modest funding need likely</p> |

| RECOMMENDATION | SUGGESTED OPTIONS | SOURCE | REQUIREMENTS TO IMPLEMENT |
|--|--|--|---|
| STRATEGY 2: MAKE EQUAL SPACE FOR THE POWER AND INFLUENCE OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES MOST AFFECTED BY POVERTY AND INEQUALITY IN DECISION-MAKING | | | |
| <p>RECOMMENDATION 2a: Invest greater state resources in partnerships with communities of color and other groups most affected by poverty, so solutions are customized and sensitive to cultural and linguistic needs.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agencies convene a statewide poverty summit 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 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. • DSHS’ Community Services Division continue its effort to obtain meaningful, actionable input from those served, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clarifying, in proposed 2020 agency request legislation regarding local planning areas under RCW 74.08A.280, that public assistance recipients are to be part of these local advisory and collaboration boards ○ Exploring formation of an advisory group composed of people who currently receive or recently received public assistance benefits. In developing this group, drawing on lessons from the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) Parent Advisory Group, Head Start and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program parent ambassadors, and the Colorado Department of Human Services Family Voice Council. ○ Initiating a new customer survey process, with multiple options for responding, that will make customer surveys a continuous and systemic part of business operations; using feedback from surveys to improve the delivery of public assistance programs | <p>DSHS</p> <p>Task Force Advisory Committee</p> <p>DSHS</p> | <p>Timeline: 1-3 years Modest one-time funding need</p> <p>Timeline: 1-2 years to begin Modest funding needed to support the participation of low-income Washingtonians</p> |

| RECOMMENDATION | SUGGESTED OPTIONS | SOURCE | REQUIREMENTS TO IMPLEMENT |
|---|---|-------------------------------|--|
| <p>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 the <i>10-Year Plan for the Future</i>.</p> | <p>This body should be designed in collaboration with the Task Force Advisory Committee, Steering Committee, agencies, legislators, and other major stakeholders to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Members receive professional development, education, and training opportunities that maximize their participation and contributions | Task Force Advisory Committee | <p>Timeline: 1-2 years to begin</p> <p>Modest funding needed to support the participation of low-income Washingtonians</p> |
| <p>RECOMMENDATION 2c: Task the emerging Office of Equity to collaborate with Indigenous, Black, and Brown Washingtonians to develop a formal process for truth and reconciliation.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agencies support and participate as requested by the Governor and tribal governments in truth and reconciliation efforts. This is 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. | DSHS | <p>Timeline: 3-5 years to begin</p> |
| STRATEGY 3: TARGET EQUITABLE INCOME GROWTH AND WEALTH-BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH LOW INCOMES | | | |
| EXPANDING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES | | | |
| <p>RECOMMENDATION 3a-v: Increase investments to improve high school graduation and post-secondary enrollment of children and youth</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. | Task Force Advisory Committee | <p>Data sharing</p> <p>Timeline: 3-5 years</p> |

| RECOMMENDATION | SUGGESTED OPTIONS | SOURCE | REQUIREMENTS TO IMPLEMENT |
|---|---|--|--|
| experiencing foster care and/or homelessness. | | | |
| RECOMMENDATION 3a-vi: Increase the availability of affordable child care and housing for student parents on or near college campuses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support programs like the Jeremiah Program and Keys to Degrees, which co-locate high-quality early learning, human services, affordable housing, and peer-to-peer support systems on college campuses, and have a proven record of reducing intergenerational poverty. | Task Force Advisory Committee | Funding Timeline: 1-3 years to pilot |
| RECOMMENDATION 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 post-secondary educational pathways. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage the Washington College Grant and increase awareness of the importance of completing financial aid applications. 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. Continue to learn and pursue equity-focused policies and strategies to increase educational postsecondary success of students of color. | Washington Student Achievement Council | Funding and RCW changes to address the basic needs of college students |
| INCREASING WAGES & COMPENSATION | | | |
| RECOMMENDATION 3c: Incentivize, promote and expand access to no- or low-cost financial resources and education that | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 promote programs that work with financial institutions to lower the cost of banking, lending, and moving money for people with low incomes. | Task Force Advisory Committee | Funding and RCW changes Timeline: 1-5 years |

| RECOMMENDATION | SUGGESTED OPTIONS | SOURCE | REQUIREMENTS TO IMPLEMENT |
|--|---|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidate responsibility for state investments in asset building in a single state agency. A program, similar to the Oregon Saves model, dedicated to oversight of efforts would increase the exposure, efficacy and ultimate success in establishing Washington State as a national model for reducing intergenerational poverty through asset-building. | | |
| <p>RECOMMENDATION 3d: Enact changes to the state tax system that lower the effective tax rate for low- and moderate-income households (bottom two quintiles).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.⁵⁸ Pursue 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. Pursue child tax credits that support the stability of families with young children that gradually phase out as children enter school. Research suggests refundable child tax credits can be structured to have sizable anti-poverty effects | Task Force Advisory Committee | <p>Funding and RCW changes</p> <p>Timeline: 3-5 years</p> |
| MAKE COST OF LIVING MORE AFFORDABLE | | | |
| <p>RECOMMENDATION 3f: Adopt the Child Care Collaborative Taskforce recommendations to increase the availability of affordable, high quality early care and education.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase child care subsidy rates and transition to a monthly rate – similar to that which private pay families are charged; base subsidy rates on the full cost of providing quality care. Change the structure of subsidy co-pays so that the amount a family pays does not increase so rapidly with income (mitigating the cliff effect). Increase the income eligibility cap for child care subsidies so that low and moderate income families can be served (again, reducing the cliff effect). Expand efforts to recruit and retain child care providers, especially those caring for infants and toddlers and those who can accommodate families who work non-standard hours. | <p>Child Care Collaborative Task Force</p> <p><i>(suggested options align with their Initial Report)</i></p> | <p>Funding</p> <p>Timeline: 1-5 years</p> |

⁵⁸ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK547359/> A Road Map to Reducing Child Poverty

| RECOMMENDATION | SUGGESTED OPTIONS | SOURCE | REQUIREMENTS TO IMPLEMENT |
|---|---|-------------------------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create 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 and support commensurate wage levels. • Strengthen and expand programs that serve and support school age children before school, after school, and during holiday and summer breaks. Similar to early care and education programs, these programs provide supervision so parents are able to work and help children from kindergarten through middle school develop academic and social-emotional skills needed for success. • Align with the upcoming December 2020 recommendations to the legislature from the Child Care Collaborative Task Force that includes, among other things, prioritizing access to Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program, child care and other early childhood services for racial, ethnic, linguistic and geographic populations that are furthest from opportunity and increasing access to trauma informed/healing centered early childhood services. • Examine upcoming recommendations from a study, commissioned by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families and Department of Commerce per legislative direction in 2SHB 1344, of funding models, employer support, regulatory issues and other fundamental factors impacting the child care market. | | |
| <p>RECOMMENDATION 3g: Increase and preserve affordable housing for renters and owners.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. | Task Force Advisory Committee | <p>Funding and RCW changes</p> <p>Timeline: 1-5 years</p> |

| RECOMMENDATION | SUGGESTED OPTIONS | SOURCE | REQUIREMENTS TO IMPLEMENT |
|---|--|--------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide housing vouchers for homeownership in community land trusts⁵⁹ that build individual capital while preserving long-term affordability in a community, preventing displacement of future generations. • Explore amending authority for State Investment Board to direct a portion of state investments toward the development of affordable housing. | | |
| STRATEGY 4: STRENGTHEN HEALTH SUPPORTS ACROSS THE LIFE SPAN TO PROMOTE THE INTERGENERATIONAL WELL-BEING OF FAMILIES | | | |
| <p>RECOMMENDATION 4b: Ensure funding and access to culturally and linguistically appropriate health care and support services before, during, and after pregnancy.</p> | <p>The following recommendations are aligned with the DSHS’s Research and Data Analysis findings in The Maternal Well-Being of Washington State’s TANF Population</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 (idea 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; for example, DSHS currently partners with community organizations and DCYF to offer facilitated play groups for families seeking public assistance, in five Community Services Office lobbies. • Ensure families using the TANF infant and toddler exemption from work participation activities are connected to behavioral health, home visiting and other parenting support services. | DSHS | <p>Funding & RCW Change</p> <p>Timeline: 3-5 years</p> |

⁵⁹ 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 Seattle 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.

| RECOMMENDATION | SUGGESTED OPTIONS | SOURCE | REQUIREMENTS TO IMPLEMENT |
|--|---|-------------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support high quality child care for infants and toddlers and prioritize families with young children for homelessness services. | | |
| <p>RECOMMENDATION 4c: Expand culturally and linguistically appropriate voluntary home visiting so all families who are eligible can receive it.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure additional funding for DCYF and DSHS' Community Services Division to expand its successful collaboration to link families with young children who are receiving public benefit assistance to home visiting services; this multi-generational approach to strengthening families, eliminating disparities, and providing wrap-around community-connected services to support young families is essential. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2014, DSHS and Department of Early Learning (now part of DCYF) partnered 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 policy brief. Currently there are formal referral pathways to home visiting programs for families on WorkFirst in one-half of the state. | DSHS | <p>Modest funding</p> <p>Timeline: 1-3 years</p> |
| <p>RECOMMENDATION 4d: Ensure access to free and low-cost counseling and contraceptive options.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure access to long term acting reversible contraceptives (LARCS) for people who want it. | Task Force Advisory Committee | <p>Funding</p> <p>Timeline: 1-3 years</p> |
| <p>STRATEGY 5: PRIORITIZE THE URGENT NEEDS OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS, VIOLENCE, MENTAL HEALTH, ILLNESS, OR ADDICTION</p> | | | |

| RECOMMENDATION | SUGGESTED OPTIONS | SOURCE | REQUIREMENTS TO IMPLEMENT |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| <p>RECOMMENDATION 5b: Increase state and local rental assistance and diversion programs that allow children, youth, adults, and families to avoid homelessness.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand and enhance efforts to address the particular challenges families experiencing domestic and family violence face in finding and keeping safe and affordable housing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support advocacy efforts to cultivate a network of local landlords, property managers, and affordable housing providers who are willing to support domestic violence survivors who are seeking safe and stable housing after victimization. ○ Anecdotal initial feedback from domestic violence programs suggests that even relatively moderate amounts of assistance (e.g., \$100 - \$1,000) makes it possible for survivors and their children to secure safe and stable housing, relocate away from an abusive partner, or otherwise restore a measure of security and stability after victimization. Domestic violence advocates have long noted that lack of adequate financial resources has been a major barrier to domestic violence victims' ability to end an abusive relationship. ○ One such effort, developed by the Washington Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WSCADV), is the Domestic Violence Housing First service model. It focuses on getting survivors of domestic violence into stable housing quickly and then providing support as they rebuild their lives. Through funding from the Gates Foundation and other private funders, they have launched and supported pilot projects in recent years and, based on initial positive outcomes, they are expanding and additional domestic violence programs are beginning to integrate this approach into their service models. | <p>DSHS</p> | <p>Modest funding</p> <p>Timeline: 1-3 years</p> |
| <p>RECOMMENDATION 5f:</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in access to a broad range of inpatient and outpatient services including stabilization, diversion, peer respite, etc. | <p>Task Force Advisory Committee</p> | <p>Funding</p> <p>Timeline: 3-5 years</p> |

| RECOMMENDATION | SUGGESTED OPTIONS | SOURCE | REQUIREMENTS TO IMPLEMENT |
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| Improve access to prevention, treatment, and recovery support services. ⁶⁰ | | | |
| STRATEGY 6: BUILD AN INTEGRATED HUMAN SERVICE CONTINUUM OF CARE THAT ADDRESSES THE HOLISTIC NEEDS OF CHILDREN, ADULTS, AND FAMILIES | | | |
| 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. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charge WorkFirst partner agencies, and other agencies that are members of the Governor’s Health and Human Services subcabinet, with doing this work. • In the coming five years, task a working group to 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. | DSHS | Timeline: 1-2 years to develop a plan and begin work |
| 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. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 tie public benefit levels across all programs 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 | Task Force Advisory Committee | Funding and RCW change Timeline: 3-5 years |

⁶⁰ <https://www.hhs.gov/opioids/sites/default/files/2018-09/opioid-fivepoint-strategy-20180917-508compliant.pdf>

| RECOMMENDATION | SUGGESTED OPTIONS | SOURCE | REQUIREMENTS TO IMPLEMENT |
|---|--|--|--|
| | <p>geography, family size, and composition, and can be used to set targets to expand eligibility for assistance programs.</p> | | |
| <p>RECOMMENDATION 6d: Increase cash assistance and test the impact of making it unconditional upon work.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update existing cash grants in the TANF, Aged, Blind, or Disabled (ABD), and Refugee Cash Assistance 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. • Advocate for federal cash assistance that does not mandate work. If federal TANF policies are not modified to reduce the focus on work participation, take action to ensure there is no need to push families prematurely into work activities (e.g. use solely state funds to pay for serving those unlikely to be able to meet participation requirements). | <p>Task Force Advisory Committee</p> <p>DSHS</p> | <p>Funding and RCW change</p> <p>Timeline: 3-5 years</p> |
| <p>RECOMMENDATION 6e: Smooth on-ramps and off-ramps for programs.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove asset limits to qualify for public assistance programs. • Ease harsh sanction and time limit policies in the TANF program (<i>see also Recommendation 6g</i>) • Eliminate the cash, child care, and medical “cliff effects”. • Allow for categorical eligibility when possible and appropriate. • Align eligibility across programs to ensure people can meet foundational needs as they work along the continuum of care. | <p>Task Force Advisory Committee</p> | <p>Funding and RCW change</p> <p>Timeline: 3-5 years</p> |
| <p>RECOMMENDATION 6f: Revamp policies, programs, and practices to inspire hope and build resilience.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. | <p>Task Force Advisory Committee</p> <p>DSHS</p> | <p>Funding</p> <p>Timeline: 1-3 years</p> |

| RECOMMENDATION | SUGGESTED OPTIONS | SOURCE | REQUIREMENTS TO IMPLEMENT |
|--|--|-------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider statewide expansion of the Getting Ahead peer group support model for families receiving TANF/WorkFirst. | | |
| <p>RECOMMENDATION 6g: Implement WorkFirst and TANF Program Improvements</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and advocate for alternatives to work participation rate as the sole federal performance measure for the program. Alternative performance measures that may be considered include exits to employment, wage progression, credential achievement and reduced rates of return to TANF. These alternative 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 tailor WorkFirst offerings to the 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. Implement statewide warm referrals to home visiting and parent support programs. Connect earlier with families at risk of hitting the five-year TANF time limit. This provides an opportunity to 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. Expand statewide the practice of providing support services to fully meet transportation needs required to participate in WorkFirst. Provide post-TANF supports to minimize benefit cliffs and assist those who are newly employed transition from cash assistance to wages. Provide a tapering TANF grant for four months after a family begins work to help ease the transition to employment. Reduce the severity of sanction policies and increasing the criteria for time-limit extensions (<i>see also Recommendation 6g</i>). | <p>DSHS</p> | <p>Modest funding and increased authority to shift funding within TANF provisos</p> <p>Timeline: 1-2 years</p> |

| RECOMMENDATION | SUGGESTED OPTIONS | SOURCE | REQUIREMENTS TO IMPLEMENT |
|--|--|--------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offering services and supports to families in which only the child receives a TANF grant. | | |
| <p>RECOMMENDATION 6h: Transform Case Management</p> | <p>Support the work underway by DSHS’ Community Services Division which includes changes in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment 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. <p>Other foundational changes needed to support Transforming Case Management are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical environment modifications to make public assistance offices welcoming, inclusive, safe and positive for customers and staff. Communication enhancements 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 Respect, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (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 strengths-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. Measure Performance to adhere to fidelity of case management procedures and regularly calibrate and evaluate. Establish supervisor/management access | DSHS | <p>Modest funding and increased authority to shift funding within TANF provisos</p> <p>Timeline: 1-2 years</p> |

| RECOMMENDATION | SUGGESTED OPTIONS | SOURCE | REQUIREMENTS TO IMPLEMENT |
|--|--|--|---------------------------|
| | <p>to accurate and consistent procedures and performance metrics to foster accountability and provide effective coaching for staff at implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentional change management initiatives to ensure maximum staff involvement and communication. | | |
| STRATEGY 7: DECRIMINALIZE POVERTY AND REDUCE RELIANCE ON THE CHILD WELFARE, JUVENILE JUSTICE, AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEMS THAT EXACERBATE ITS INTERGENERATIONAL EFFECT | | | |
| BEFORE & UPON ENTRY | | | |
| <p>RECOMMENDATION 7a: Decriminalize and destigmatize poverty by shifting resources toward diversion, treatment, and support services.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Expand access to treatment for mental health, substance abuse, and addiction for children and adults at risk of being detained. • Expand efforts to provide courts with access to the 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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. | <p>Task Force Advisory Committee</p> <p>DSHS</p> | |

| RECOMMENDATION | SUGGESTED OPTIONS | SOURCE | REQUIREMENTS TO IMPLEMENT |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| WHILE INVOLVED | | | |
| RECOMMENDATION 7d: Provide robust, trauma-informed case management to children, adults, and families involved in child welfare, juvenile, and criminal justice systems. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 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. | Task Force Advisory Committee | Funding Timeline: 1-3 years? |
| 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. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.⁶¹ • Allow youth and adults in justice settings to obtain a meaningful post-secondary credential or degree that prepares them for re-entry. • Expand mentoring and apprenticeship opportunities for justice involved youth and adults while in detention. | Task Force Advisory Committee | |
| RECOMMENDATION 7f: Review and Reform Legal Financial Obligations (LFOs). | Strengthen and enforce LFO reform laws, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit “pay to pay” and “pay to stay” fees while individuals are incarcerated • Limit incentives for defendants to take two-year probation plea deals • Suspend child support payment responsibilities while a non-custodial parent is incarcerated. 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 | Task Force Advisory Committee DSHS | Funding and RCW changes |

⁶¹ <https://dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/reports/JR-6160WorkshopRecommendations2018.pdf>

| RECOMMENDATION | SUGGESTED OPTIONS | SOURCE | REQUIREMENTS TO IMPLEMENT |
|--|--|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| | <p>no income or assets available. This proposal benefits families with an incarcerated parent by limiting the accumulation of child support debt during incarceration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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. | | |
| <p>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.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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 and/or relocating them out of state. ● Provide more permanent supportive housing options for extended youth care and for youth exiting the child welfare system. | Task Force Advisory Committee | Funding and RCW changes |
| UPON RELEASE & RE-ENTRY | | | |
| <p>RECOMMENDATION 7h: Connect children, adults, and families to public assistance and support services <i>at least</i> three months before they exit a system.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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. | Task Force Advisory Committee | |

| RECOMMENDATION | SUGGESTED OPTIONS | SOURCE | REQUIREMENTS TO IMPLEMENT |
|--|---|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 from city- and county-controlled housing placement lists. • Expand the DSHS’s Community Services Division and Department of Corrections partnership in order to connect reentering individuals with food, cash, or medical assistance upon release. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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 reentry by meeting the basic needs of individuals upon release. | DSHS | |
| <p>RECOMMENDATION 7i: Eliminate education and employment barriers, and invest in stronger, better-coordinated exit and re-entry policies, services, and programs.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Strengthen K-12 school re-engagement for youth exiting the juvenile justice system. | Task Force Advisory Committee | Funding |
| <p>RECOMMENDATION 7j: Expand and strengthen post-release family and peer support services.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. | Task Force Advisory Committee | Funding |

| RECOMMENDATION | SUGGESTED OPTIONS | SOURCE | REQUIREMENTS TO IMPLEMENT |
|---|---|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 | | | |
| <p>RECOMMENDATION 8a: Adopt the recommendations detailed in the FOW Taskforce report,⁶² and bolster it with more specific, intentional strategies to achieve equity for workers of color, women, immigrants and refugees, and rural Washingtonians.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerate accreditation for immigrants and refugees with advanced training and degree, increasing 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. • Promote Integrated Basic Education Skills and Training (IBEST) and Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) programs in the community and with employers. <p>Specific to medical graduates, the state can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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; • Ensure Managed Care Organizations that serve Medicaid clients provide credentialing and reimburse international medical graduates who hold a Limited License to practice medicine (LLIMG). • Dedicate 10% of Washington funded ACGME accredited residency positions to immigrant and refugee doctors living in Washington. • 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. | Task Force Advisory Committee | |

⁶² <https://www.wtb.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Future-of-Work-2019-Final-Report.pdf>

APPENDIX F

Figure 1: Poverty for Major Demographic Groups by Degree of Severity, Washington State 2013-2017

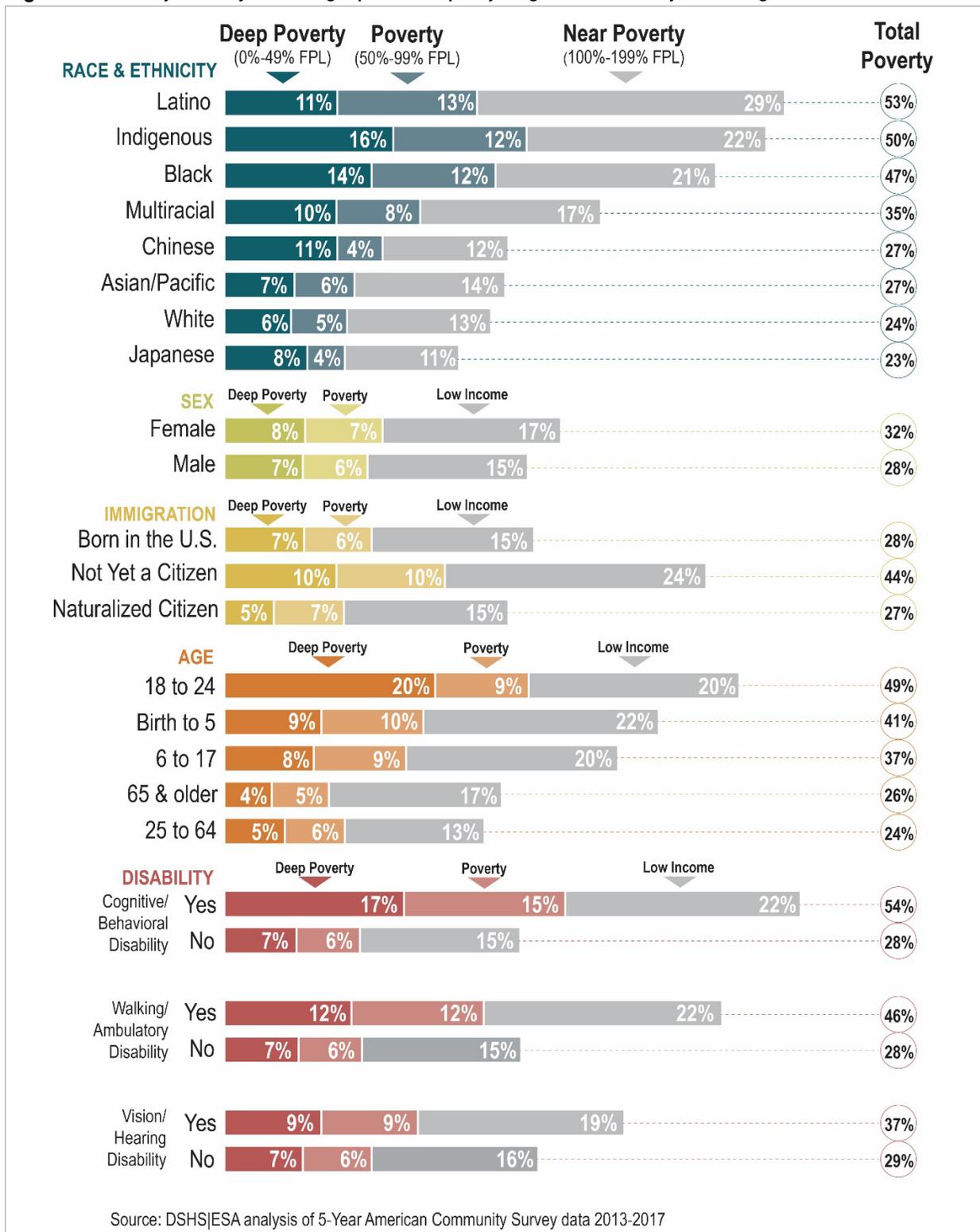


Figure 2: Investing in reducing poverty improves well-being and return on investment.



Figure 3: Wages for Low- and Median Wage Earners Have Remained Stagnant Since 1979

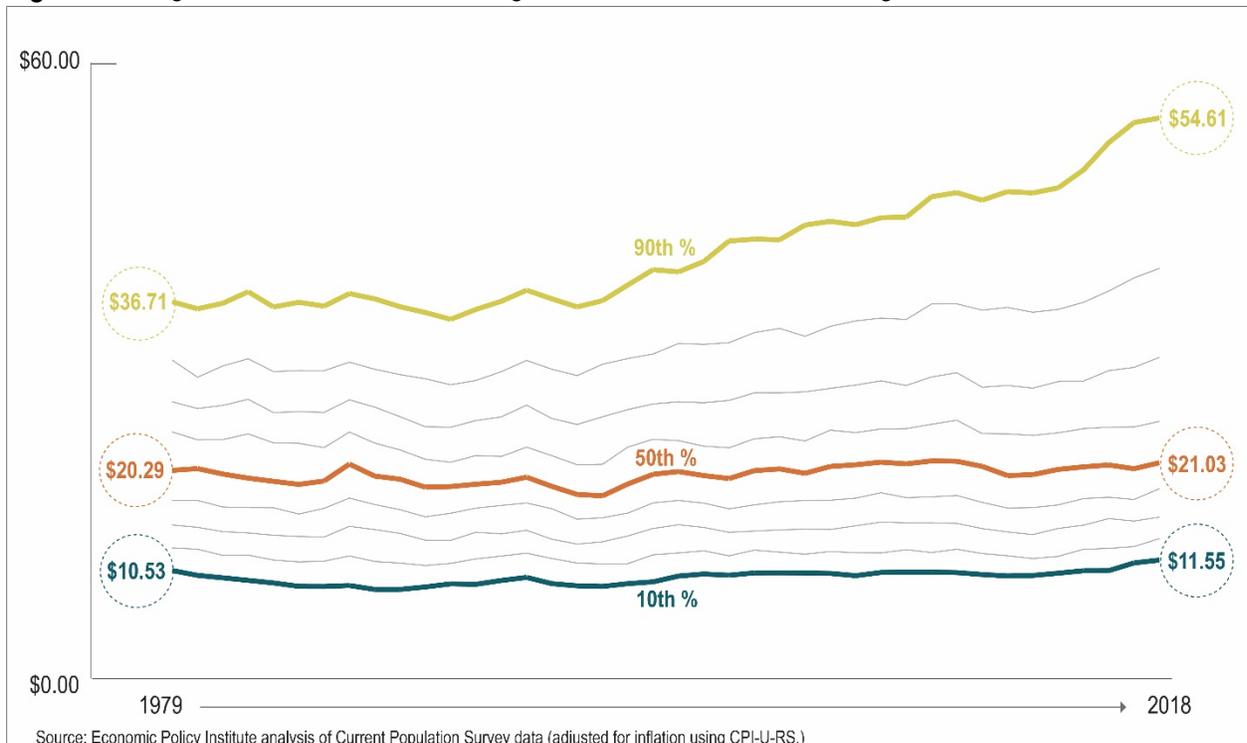


Figure 4: Closing the Racial Income Gap Would Bolster Washington State's Economy

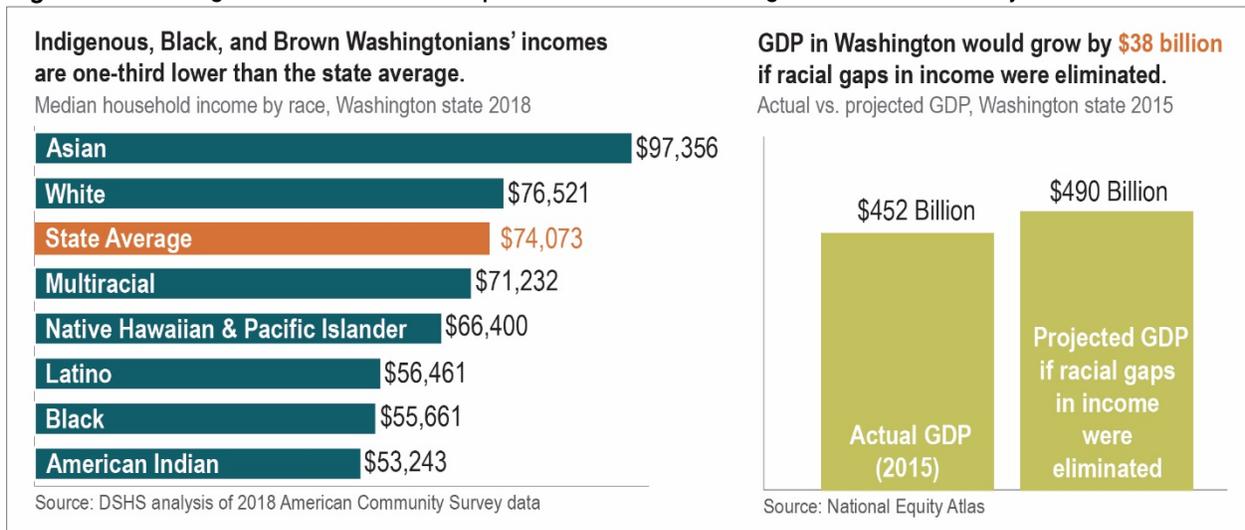


Figure 5: K-12 Discipline Rates by Student Demographics & Characteristics, Washington State 2018

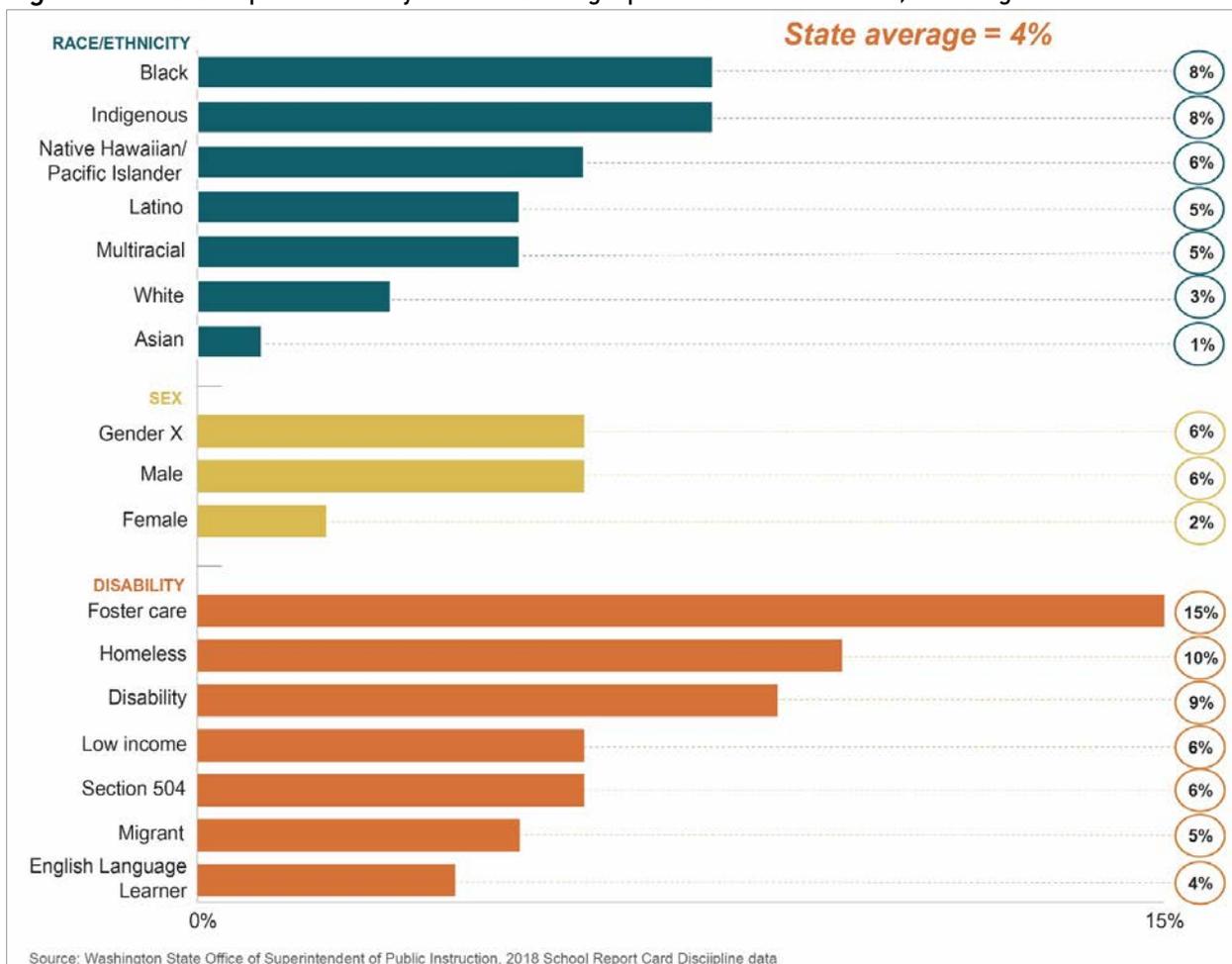


Figure 6: Homeless Students

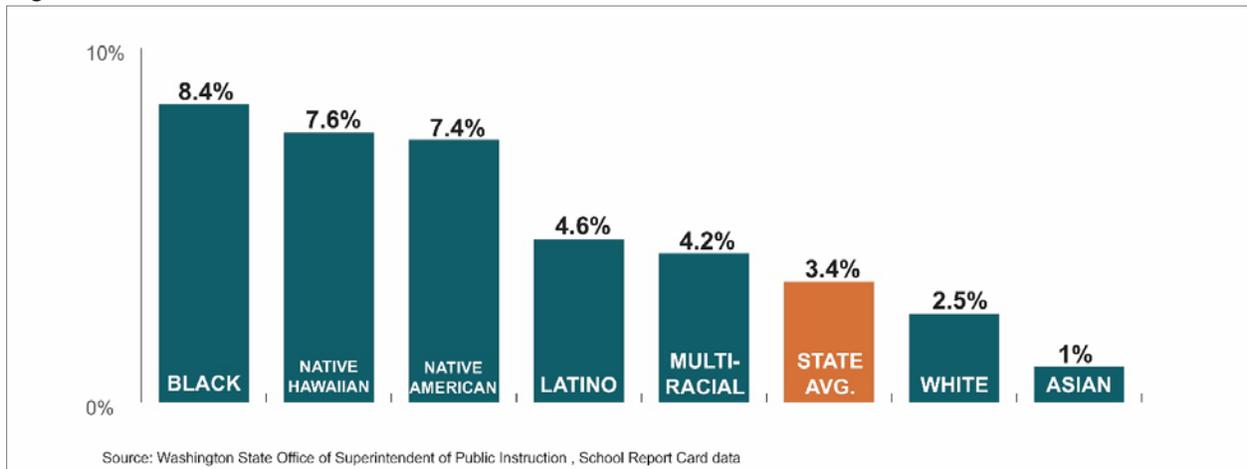


Figure 7: Economic Hardship by Degrees of Severity, 2019

| 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 |

Figure 8: Maximum Eligibility Ranges across Select Public Assistance Programs ((6e) Smooth on-ramps and off ramps for programs)

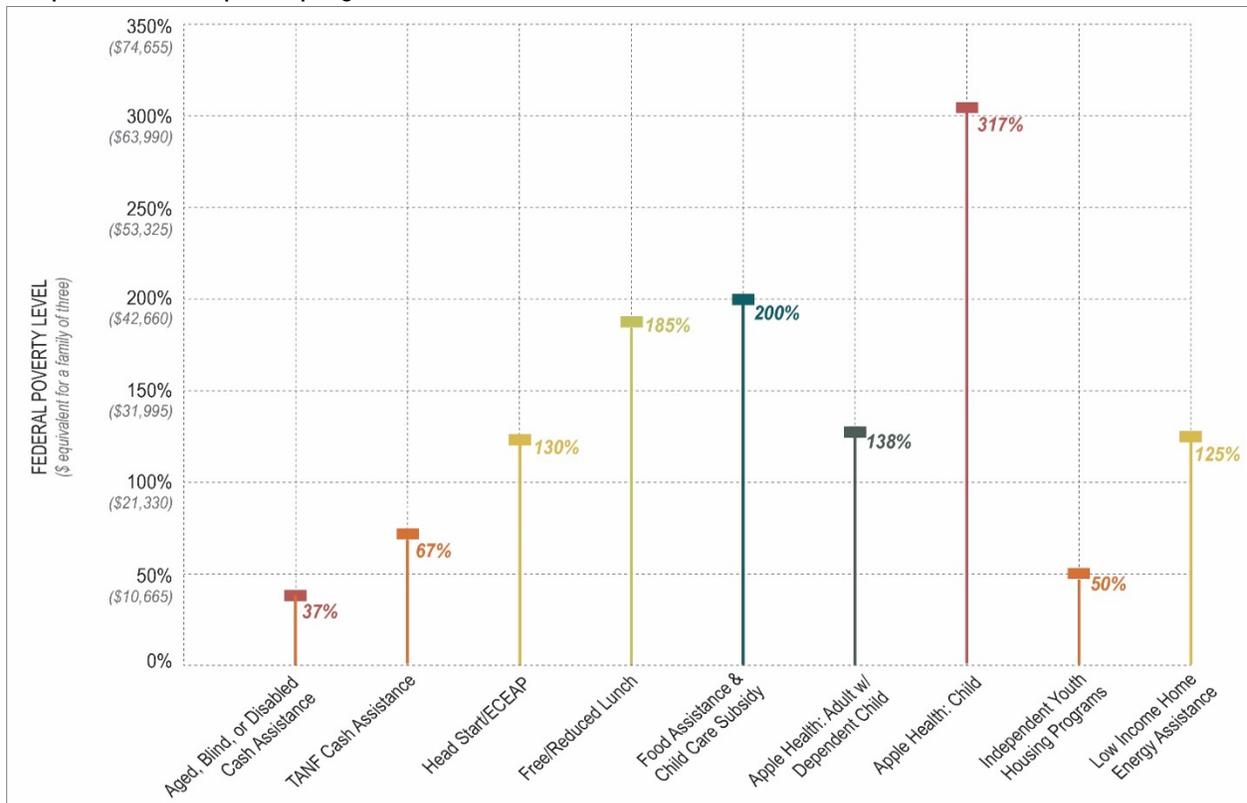
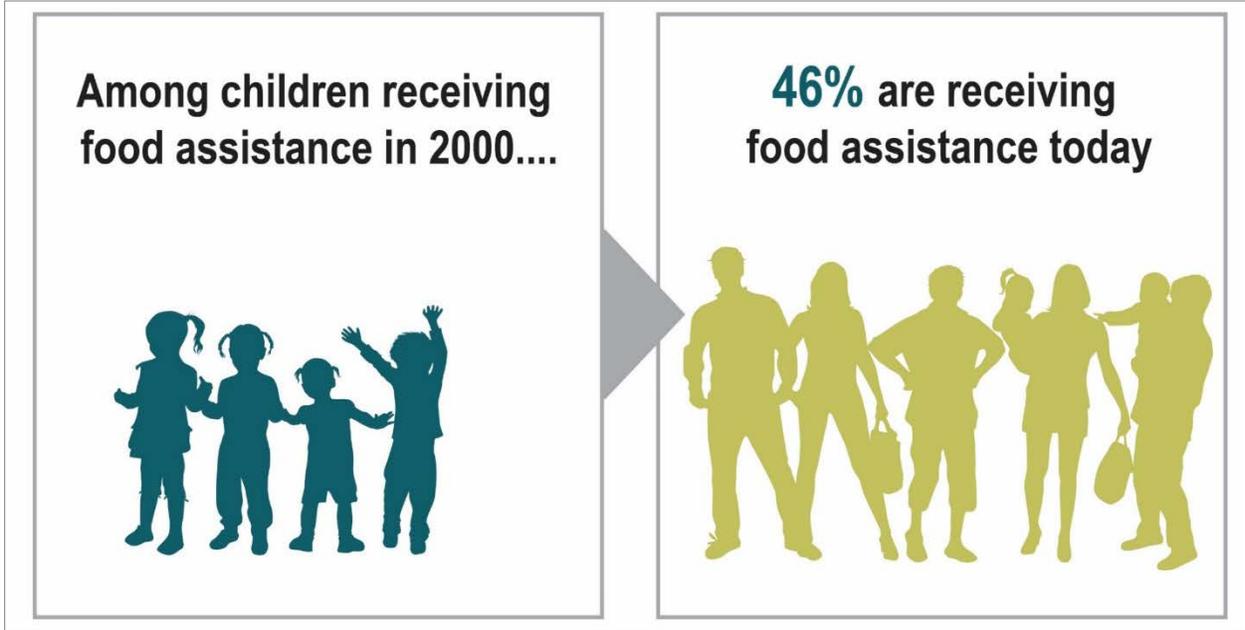


Figure 9: Percent of Adults Who Received Food Assistance as Children, Washington State 2018



APPENDIX G

