



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES

1500 Jefferson Street, SE • P.O. Box 40975 • Olympia WA 98504-0975

April 30, 2020

Governor Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee,

Please accept the Department of Children, Youth and Families' letter of support for the **Poverty Reduction Work Group's 10-year Plan for the Future to reduce poverty and inequality in Washington state**. For the past two years, PRWG has worked diligently to develop a plan that, if implemented, will meaningfully and measurably reduce poverty and inequality in Washington state. We are grateful to you for your support of poverty reduction, and look forward to bringing the plan to action.

Reducing poverty and inequality is critically important to the mission of the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF). DCYF's vision is to have all Washington's children and youth grow up safe and healthy- thriving physically, emotionally and educationally, nurtured by family and community. Resilience, education, and health outcomes for children, youth, and families are often much worse for people of color. DCYF is committed to eliminating disproportionalities in each of these priorities.

We understand that the PRWG co-lead agencies will be conducting a series of community engagement meetings and finalizing the *10-year Plan for the Future* this summer. We look forward to supporting their efforts. In the meantime, we urge your continued support of the strategic plan and taking immediate steps to begin implementing it by:

- Directing state agencies to write action plans to fulfill the strategies outlined in the plan;
- Elevating the influence and expertise of people most affected by poverty in the implementation of the plan;
- Ensuring COVID-19 response and spending strategies focus on reducing inequality; stabilizing, supporting and sustaining child care, child welfare, and juvenile rehabilitation providers; enabling best practices for recruitment, hiring, and contracting to increase racial and ethnic diversity among state agency employees and providers; promoting the education, economic security and behavioral health of youth exiting foster care and juvenile rehabilitation; building an integrated high quality birth-to-5 system of care; increasing availability of high-quality services for vulnerable families and communities; increasing active efforts to keep children and youth home with their families; and
- Funding the PRWG's short-term priorities in the next budget cycle.

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We believe these actions will lay a strong foundation for the full implementation of the plan over the next 10 years, and provide immediate, urgent relief for the 1.8 million Washingtonians currently struggling to make ends meet in communities throughout our state.

Thank you for supporting the Poverty Reduction Work Group and your passion for making Washington state a place where every child, adults, and family can thrive. If we can do anything further to support this effort, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ross Hunter". The signature is stylized and cursive, with the first name "Ross" written in a larger, more prominent font than the last name "Hunter".

Ross Hunter
Secretary