



Dismantle Poverty

10-year Plan Strategies & Recommendations

The Poverty Reduction Work Group's [Blueprint for a Just & Equitable Future: The 10-year Plan to Dismantle Poverty](#) is the culmination of two years' work with a diverse group of state agencies, legislators, racial and ethnic commissions, community-based organizations, advocates, employers, and philanthropy that met monthly to develop strategies and recommendations that, if implemented, will meaningfully and measurably reduce poverty and inequality in our state. The eight strategies and 60 recommendations are grounded in existing data and evidence, and strongly influenced by the expertise of a 22-member Steering Committee made up of people experiencing poverty.

STRATEGY #1: Undo Structural Racism

Understand structural racism and historical trauma and take action to undo how they manifest in state policy, program, and practice.

Recommendation 1a. Require state entities to collaborate with the Office of Equity (Bright Spot #2) to develop trainings on historical trauma, institutional racism, and implicit bias that are required of all public employees in systems that touch upon the lives of people experiencing poverty.

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

STRATEGY #2: Balance Power

Make equal space in decision-making for people and communities most affected by poverty and inequality

Recommendation 2a. Provide resources to the Office of Equity for a collaboration with Indigenous, Black, and Brown leaders and organizations to develop a formal process for truth and reconciliation.

Recommendation 2b. Establish a state entity to elevate the expertise and influence of people disproportionately affected by poverty and inequality in the implementation of the 10-year Plan.

Recommendation 2c. Invest state resources to increase ownership capacity in communities most affected by poverty.

Recommendation 2d. Fund meaningful access to legal assistance and representation for children, adults, and families disproportionately affected by poverty and racially biased systems.

Recommendation 2e. Make high-speed, broadband internet universally available.

STRATEGY #3: Increase Economic Opportunity

Target equitable income growth and wealth- building among people with low incomes.

Recommendation 3a. Implement Washington Kids for Washington Jobs recommendations, but bolster with more intentional strategies to achieve equity.

Recommendation 3b. Enforce stronger salary/wage transparency and fair labor practices among employers to ensure pay equity.

Recommendation 3c. Expand access to no- or low-cost financial resources and education that empower, rather than prey upon, people experiencing poverty.

Recommendation 3d. Enact changes to the state tax system that lower the effective tax rate for low-income households.

Recommendation 3e. Work in partnership with local labor organizations and the government to modernize labor laws and the rights of workers.

Recommendation 3f. Implement the Child Care Collaborative Taskforce strategies and recommendations to increase the availability of affordable, high quality early care and education.

Recommendation 3g. Increase and preserve affordable housing for renters and owners.

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

STRATEGY #4: Ensure Foundational Well-Being

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

Recommendation 4a. Strengthen the Apple Health program by creating a state-funded assistance benefit.

Recommendation 4b. Ensure funding and access to culturally and linguistically appropriate health care and support services before, during, and after pregnancy.

Recommendation 4c. Ensure access to free and low-cost contraceptive options and family planning counseling, including long-term acting reversible contraceptives (LARCS) for people who want it.

Recommendation 4d. Increase funding to support the availability of culturally diverse, nutritious foods in assistance programs like Women, Infants, and Children, the Farmers Market Nutrition Program, and the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program.

Recommendation 4e. Develop, implement and evaluate health and human service programs to better meet the unique needs of LGBTQIA+ children, adults, and families.

Recommendation 4f. Increase Medicaid funds for supported, in-home care and long-term services.

STRATEGY #5:

Prioritize Urgent Needs

Prioritize the urgent needs of people experiencing homelessness, mental illness, or addiction.

Recommendation 5a. Provide greater resources for consistent and timely community-led data collection and storytelling to deepen our understanding of the disproportionate impact of homelessness, violence, mental illness, and/or addiction on historically underserved Washingtonians.

Recommendation 5b. Adopt the “housing first” approach as the foundation to health and human service delivery and remove discriminatory barriers.

Recommendation 5c. Increase state and local rental assistance and diversion programs that prevent children, youth, adults, and families from becoming homelessness.

Recommendation 5d. Increase the number of emergency, transitional, and permanent supportive housing options.

Recommendation 5e. Develop stronger public-private partnerships to increase opportunities for supported education, job training, and employment.

Recommendation 5f. Create a Medical-Financial Partnership model for Washington state.

Recommendation 5g. Improve access to behavioral health prevention, treatment, and recovery support services.

Recommendation 5h. Improve integration of behavioral health treatment in early learning settings and K12.

Recommendation 5i. Require state entities to collaborate with civil legal aid providers and community-led programs to increase comprehensive support for children, adults, and families experiencing homelessness, violence, or a behavioral health issue.

STRATEGY #6: Build a Holistic Continuum of Care

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 wellbeing, in partnership with communities most affected by structural racism and poverty that each agency is collectively held accountable to achieve.

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.

Recommendation 6c. Develop a universal intake, data sharing, and technology platform so that we can share *essential* information on people across agencies, systems, and sectors.

Recommendation 6d. Increase unconditional cash assistance.

Recommendation 6e. Smooth on-ramps and off-ramps for programs.

Recommendation 6f. Revamp policies, programs, and practices to inspire hope and build resilience.

STRATEGY #7:

Decriminalize Poverty

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

Recommendation 7a. Shift resources away from child welfare, juvenile justice, and criminal justice toward comprehensive social, economic, and health supports for children, adults, and families.

Recommendation 7b. Connect child-welfare and justice-related families to legal resources and civil legal assistance to mitigate further negative consequences of criminalization.

Recommendation 7c. Keep families together as much as possible, when safe and appropriate.

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. Eliminate Legal Financial Obligations (LFOs).

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.

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 housing, 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: Prepare for the Future of Work

Ensure a just transition to the future of work.

Recommendation 8a. Adopt the recommendations detailed in the FOW Taskforce report,90 and bolster it with more specific, intentional strategies to achieve equity for workers of color, LGBTQIA+, women, immigrants and refugees, and rural Washingtonians.

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

Recommendation 8c. Protect Washingtonians from economic downturns by developing an economic “trigger” to provide countercyclical funding in human services, education, and economic and workforce development.

Recommendation 8d. Develop and pilot a portable benefits model and a guaranteed basic income program.
