



2021-23 Biennial Budget Proposal Comparison

Throughout the 2022 Legislative Session, the Governor, House of Representatives, and Senate will each propose a supplemental operating budget for remainder of the 2021-2023 biennium. The operating budget determines the level of funding for all state spending, including many investments and programs that serve communities living on low incomes in Washington state.

After each branch of government introduces a budget proposal, the House Appropriations committee and Senate Ways & Means committee hold hearings on these proposals and ultimately pass a negotiated budget. Throughout the legislative session, Statewide Poverty Action Network will provide an overview of the budget proposals that impact low-income communities.

Going into this legislative session, the budget will have to again contend with the economic crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Legislators will also come into the legislative session with a small state budget surplus and approximately \$1 billion in remaining American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds that can be spent in 2022. We will advocate for continued and increased investments in programs that support those living on the lowest incomes in our state, who have also most deeply felt the impacts of this pandemic.

BASIC NEEDS

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) assists parents with incomes so low they cannot meet basic needs for themselves and their dependent children. [Click here for more details about the program.](#)

State Family Assistance (SFA) provides a cash assistance program comparable to TANF to documented immigrant families with children who have resided in the U.S. less than five years and do not yet qualify for the federal TANF program.

Poverty Action priority: Poverty Action supports continued investments to TANF and policy changes that restore policies which prioritize equity and the well-being of families and children. We are advocating to undo harsh policies which prevent families experiencing hardship from accessing TANF and create inequitable outcomes for Black, Indigenous, and Latino/a families.

Governor’s budget	House budget	Senate budget	FINAL BUDGET
<p>Allocates \$424,000 to eliminate the 60-month time limit for child-only TANF cases and SFA cases in which parents are ineligible.</p> <p>Allocates \$50,000 to increase the monthly payment standard for households with 9 and 10 children</p>			



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<p>participating in TANF/SFA. The previous standard had the maximum grant set at 8 children.</p> <p>Allows for one-time funding for housing and utility assistance for families on TANF and participating in WorkFirst. These are federal TANF block grant funds that are typically “swept,” or reallocated to the general fund when there is an underspend in the TANF program. In this case, the underspend is a result of education and training programs being less available due to COVID.</p>			
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The **Housing and Essential Needs (HEN)** program provides rental, utility, transportation assistance and hygiene supplies to very low-income adults who either have a temporary disability that prevents them from working or who have a permanent disability and are in the process of applying to federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Poverty Action priority: We are committed to protecting all investments and increasing state resources for HEN. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the deep importance of housing to the wellbeing of all Washingtonians. We support this program for vulnerable adults along with deeper housing investments.

Governor’s budget	House budget	Senate budget	FINAL BUDGET
<p>Allocates \$2.16 million to create a bridge period of housing assistance for individuals enrolled in the Foundational Community Supports initiative who are transitioning from benefits under the HEN program.</p>			



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<p>Allocates \$651,000 to eliminate the Mid-Certification Review for HEN and ABD (<i>see below for more info on ABD</i>) recipients and restores people who were previously terminated for not completing one.</p> <p>Allocates \$207,000 to expand eligibility for HEN and ABD for certain victims of human trafficking.</p>			
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The **Aged, Blind and Disabled (ABD)** program provides a \$197 monthly cash grant to low-income elderly and disabled adults who are waiting to transfer to federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI). A small number of disabled and elderly immigrants who are not eligible for the federal programs also receive assistance through the ABD program. Recipients use their grant to pay for housing and meet their basic needs.

Poverty Action priority: We support raising the ABD cash grant to \$417/month to create parity with a one-person TANF cash grant.

Governor's budget	House budget	Senate budget	FINAL BUDGET
<p>Allocates \$36.62 million to increase the ABD cash grant standard from \$197 to \$417 per month per person.</p> <p>Allocates \$195,000 to expand ABD eligibility to people 19-64 who reside in public mental health institutions.</p>			



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Medical Care Services (MCS) provides health care and dental coverage for elderly or disabled immigrants who receive Aged, Blind, or Disabled (ABD) assistance or Housing & Essential Needs (HEN), but who are ineligible for Apple Health, our state’s Medicaid program, because of federal limits on serving immigrants.

Poverty Action priority: Maintain current investment and benefits.

Governor’s budget	House budget	Senate budget	FINAL BUDGET
Allocates \$2.5 million to remove the asset limit tests for the Medicare Savings plan, which supports an additional 4,500 low-income seniors with coverage for Medicare Part A and Part B premiums and copayments.			

Dental Coverage is one of the benefits of our state’s Medicaid program, Apple Health, which provides critical access to dental care for low-income communities. The Medicaid dental budget has long been underfunded, to the detriment of patients’ access to care. Approximately 1.3 million Medicaid-insured Washingtonians, including more than 440,000 children, went without dental care in 2019. In 2021, the legislature doubled their investments to the Medicaid Adult Dental program which included doubling the reimbursement rates for providers. Additionally, the Legislature restored funding from the 2020 supplemental budget

Poverty Action priority: We support maintaining current levels of investment, opposing any cuts to this essential health program, and investing in strategies to increase access to oral health care.

Governor’s budget	House budget	Senate budget	FINAL BUDGET
Allocates \$15.68 million to increase the dental procedure rate for children. This will bring parity between children and adult rates.			



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The **State’s Food Assistance Program (FAP)** helps immigrant families and individuals avoid hunger by providing subsidies to help purchase food. This is a critical investment, because immigrants are not eligible for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP – formerly called Food Stamps) until they have been in the U.S. for five years.

Poverty Action priority: Increase investments in food assistance in recognition of the increase in food insecurity during the COVID-19 crisis.

Governor’s budget	House budget	Senate budget	FINAL BUDGET
<p>Allocates \$92.63 million in state and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to food assistance program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$32.2 million to continue to expand the capacity of the Emergency Food Assistance program. • \$524,000 to modernize the Transitional Food Assistance program to support families as they transition from TANF into employment. • \$560,000 to create employment and training opportunities for Food Assistance program recipients. 			



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The **Housing Trust Fund (HTF)** is a part of the capital budget and is the main source of funding to build, restore, and maintain for affordable housing in our state. This housing makes it possible for people living on low incomes to afford housing and still have enough money to cover other basic needs. Investing in the HTF creates thousands of jobs and generates millions of dollars in state and local tax revenues.

Poverty Action priority: We support housing advocates’ priority of investing a \$400 million into the Housing Trust Fund.

Governor’s budget	House budget	Senate budget	FINAL BUDGET
<p>Allocates \$100 million to the Housing Trust Fund, including funds to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build 1,500 permanent supportive housing & permanent affordable housing units. • Acquire property to be converted into approximately 2,460 units. <p>An additional \$815 million is included, with support from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$100 million to address utilities debt, other avenues to keep people housed • Expand supportive services for people with behavioral health needs • \$11.27 million to the Landlord Mitigation Fund. 			



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Poverty Reduction Efforts are general efforts aimed at reducing poverty in Washington. These efforts have largely emerged from the Poverty Reduction Work Group and work with the Governor’s 10-year plan to reduce poverty.

Poverty Action priority: Work to reduce generational and situational poverty by taking the lead from people with lived experience and compensating them appropriately. We take the lead from the Poverty Reduction Work Group’s Steering Committee on these items.

Governor’s budget	House budget	Senate budget	FINAL BUDGET
<p>Allocates \$6.2 million in state dollars to continue the Economic Security for All program which provides local communities with resources to help people in poverty access services that lead to self-sufficiency.</p> <p>Allocates \$15.79 million to help establish an integrated eligibility system, which will centralize benefits applications.</p> <p>Allocates \$50,000 to compensate people sharing their lived experience of poverty in government work.</p> <p>Allocates \$80,000 to establish best practices for community consultation through the Office of Equity.</p> <p>Allocates \$461,000 to form a Technical Advisory Group in Department of Social & Health Services (DSHS) that will seek data and stories from people who have lived in poverty to inform budget and policy decisions.</p>			



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REVENUE

In Washington state, people with low incomes pay up to six times the amount of their personal income in taxes compared to the top one percent of income earners. Our state also regularly faces budget shortfalls, threatening necessary investments in basic education and essential health and human services.

Poverty Action priority: Continue making strides toward enacting progressive revenue, which will increase funding essential services such as education, child care, health care, and other human services. Ensure those investments are equitable and require the wealthiest Washingtonians to pay their fair share of taxes.

In 2021, after 13 years of advocacy, the legislature updated and fully funded the **Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC)**, to provide a targeted tax credit to the lowest income earners in the state and will play a critical role in rebalancing the current inequity in our tax code. Budget priorities for the WFTC this year include funding for implementation infrastructure and outreach to communities who will benefit from the WFTC as it goes into effect in 2023.

Governor's budget	House budget	Senate budget	FINAL BUDGET
Allocates \$5 million for Community Based Organizations to conduct outreach regarding the Working Families Tax Credit.			