



2023 – 2025 BIENNIAL OPERATING BUDGET COMPARISON

Throughout the 2023 Legislative Session, the Governor, House of Representatives, and Senate will each propose an operating budget for the 2023-2025 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.

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.](#) Updates to TANF also typically impact State Family Assistance (SFA), which 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: Increase equity in access to TANF by eliminating policies that have demonstrated racist outcomes. In 2023, we’re hoping to permanently instate time limit exemptions for families experiencing hardship and remove time limits in child-only TANF cases. Additionally, we hope to pass more broad improvements to the TANF program to improve the program for all recipients.

Governor’s budget	House budget	Senate budget	FINAL BUDGET
Extends TANF time limit exemptions until 6/2025 (\$25.3M) Does not include eliminating the time limit for child-only TANF cases or any other improvements to the TANF program			

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).



2023 – 2025 BIENNIAL OPERATING BUDGET COMPARISON

Poverty Action priority: Join the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance in calling on the legislature to make a permanent \$15 million investment in HEN during this legislative session.

Governor’s budget	House budget	Senate budget	FINAL BUDGET
Makes needed investments in HEN (\$15M)			

The **Aged, Blind and Disabled (ABD)** program provides a \$417 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: ABD recipients currently must pay back the assistance they receive once they transfer onto SSI/SSDI. This requirement places an undue burden on recipients and should be eliminated.

Governor’s budget	House budget	Senate budget	FINAL BUDGET
Fully eliminates the requirement for recipients to repay their ABD once on SSI/SSDI (\$39.5M)			

DENTAL CARE ACCESS

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. In 2020, just 8% of the more than 1 million adults with Medicaid Dental coverage received a preventative dental care visit, and less than half of Apple Health covered children.

Poverty Action priority: Maintain and deepen current levels of investment, oppose any cuts to this essential health program, and invest in strategies to increase access to oral health care. In 2023, we support a budget investment to reinstate a dental director position, jointly housed at the Department of Health and the Health Care Authority.



2023 – 2025 BIENNIAL OPERATING BUDGET COMPARISON

Governor’s budget	House budget	Senate budget	FINAL BUDGET
Maintains current investments in the Medicaid Adult Dental program Does not include funding for the dental director position			

HOUSING

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: Join the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance in calling on the legislature to make a \$400 million investment in the HTF during this legislative session.

Governor’s budget	House budget	Senate budget	FINAL BUDGET
Using a bonding measure, that will require a statewide referendum vote, the Governor proposes to address housing and homelessness (raise \$1.3B), including adding funding to the Housing Trust Fund (\$623M): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4,960 new multifamily units (\$440M) • 750 new permanent supportive housing units (\$100M) • 275 new units for people with disabilities (\$25M) 			



2023 – 2025 BIENNIAL OPERATING BUDGET COMPARISON

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preservation and upgrades to existing affordable housing units (\$58M) 			
--	--	--	--

INNOVATIVE POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGIES

In conversations with people with low incomes around the state, we have repeatedly heard that people need support to meet their immediate basic needs, but they also have deep hope for a better future for their families and children. While we advocate for critical basic needs programs like TANF, HEN, and ABD, we must also push for innovative strategies for future generations to grow up in healthy, thriving families and communities.

Poverty Action priority: Increase opportunities for families to access unrestricted cash assistance and savings. This includes funding to:

- Expand access to the **Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC)**, our state’s version of the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), which is set to roll out in February 2023;
- Create and fund a statewide **Guaranteed Basic Income (GBI)** pilot; and
- Create and fund the **Washington Futures Fund**, a baby bonds program to create savings for children in low-income families.

Governor’s budget	House budget	Senate budget	FINAL BUDGET
Invests funding to implement WFTC as passed in 2021 Does not invest in a statewide GBI pilot Does not invest funding in the Washington Futures Fund proposal			