

Each of us is the expert in our own lives,  
stories, and experiences.

## Listening Session FAQ

At Poverty Action, we believe that low-income communities and communities of color inherently have the expertise and experience needed to identify and lead solutions to the problems impacting them. Our work both starts and is carried out in partnership with Washingtonians living on low incomes, **and it all starts with our semi-annual Listening Sessions.**

### What is a Listening Session?

A Listening Session is an informal gathering of a group of about 10-15 people with a facilitator and a few community organizers, where we hold a discussion on basic needs (such as the WFTC, TANF, food stamps, WIC) and other important issues.



We will guide the group through questions about your experience with assistance programs and facilitate group discussions where you have a chance to speak about issues that are important to you. Poverty Action's goal is to hear from people with lived experience in poverty, because you know best what your needs are. We would love to hear ideas for making things work better for folks and what is working well so we can share this information with our other partners and legislators! We provide compensation for attendees of \$30/hour for a max of \$90.

### Why do we have Listening Sessions?

The primary goal of Listening Sessions is to build relationships and trust with low-income Washingtonians across the state so that we can elevate their voices during the legislative session and beyond. We go to where there are underserved populations with a lack of access to benefits and difficulty accessing what people need to live a productive life. After each Listening Session, we take what we hear to legislators to create necessary changes and provide opportunities for people who want to be advocates to speak to policymakers themselves. **Your opinion is valuable, and we want to make sure it is heard!**

## Who comes to Listening Sessions?

Through partnerships with local community-service organizations, we only invite the people who host organizations directly serve to have the opportunity to join in a discussion. Our sessions are often with rural populations that have less access to basic amenities, include Spanish-speaking and other cultural groups including immigrant and farm working communities, native communities, BIPOC communities, and other marginalized groups. The idea is to center and elevate the voices of those who do not often have clear pathways to getting their voices heard and their needs met.

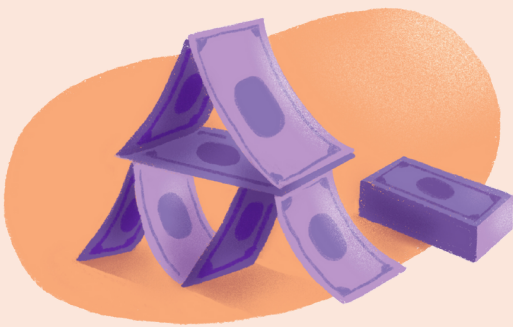


## Where are Listening Sessions held?

We hold sessions in the communities that are served by our partners. To make sessions accessible, we hold them in shared spaces such as community centers, churches, etc. which are provided by our partners. We provide food for each session and can provide childcare if needed. We also provide language and ASL interpretation if needed and accommodate accessibility challenges.

## When are Listening Sessions held?

Poverty Action holds listening sessions from June-October each year in different parts of Washington State. The specific time and date of each session are dependent on the availability of a site to host as well as when people are available to attend, so sessions can be anytime that is convenient for all – this is usually in the evening during the week.



## How can I take part?

If you are a person who has been contacted by an organization that we are partnering with this year, then welcome! We will have more information on logistics and how to sign up soon -- we are looking forward to meeting you!