



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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**EXECUTIVE ORDER 16-03**

**TRANSFORMING SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
IN WASHINGTON STATE**

**WHEREAS**, creating a separate children and families department has the potential to promote greater accountability, heighten the visibility of children's issues, and reduce barriers to improving service and outcomes for children and families; and

**WHEREAS**, an increasing number of jurisdictions, including Indiana, New Jersey, New York City, Tennessee, Georgia, and Wisconsin, have created separate children's departments to improve outcomes; and

**WHEREAS**, data from other states indicates that separate departments correlate with necessary levels of authority, enhanced visibility for children's issues, ease in enacting changes and general system improvements, as well as improved outcomes; and

**WHEREAS**, in Washington, the concept of a separate children and families department has been introduced legislatively and studied extensively; and

**WHEREAS**, making large, structural changes to state government takes careful planning and consideration of fiscal costs, impacts on staff, goals of programmatic reform, impacts on the ongoing work performed by the existing department, performance indicators, and timeframes; and

**WHEREAS**, organizational change, alone, does not improve outcomes. Research indicates that effective leadership, adequate financial resources, and distribution of authority in the organization are all vital to achieving stated goals.

**NOW, THEREFORE, I**, Jay Inslee, Governor of the state of Washington, hereby create the Washington State Blue Ribbon Commission on the Delivery of Services to Children and Families as follows:

1. The Commission shall consist of 16 members appointed as follows:
  - a. The Speaker of the Washington State House of Representatives may appoint two members, one from the majority caucus and one from the minority caucus;
  - b. The President of the Washington State Senate may appoint two members, one from the majority caucus and one from the minority caucus;

- c. The Governor of Washington shall appoint the following:
  - i. A representative of the Office of the Governor;
  - ii. The Secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services or the Secretary's designee;
  - iii. The Assistant Secretary of the Children's Administration within the Department of Social and Health Services;
  - iv. The Director of the Department of Early Learning or the Director's designee;
  - v. A superior court judge with experience in family law;
  - vi. A juvenile court administrator;
  - vii. The Director of the Office of the Family and Children's Ombudsman or designee;
  - viii. A representative from the Washington Federation of State Employees;
  - ix. Two members representing tribal governments;
    - x. One subject matter expert on issues related to improving outcomes for children and families involved in the child welfare system; and
    - xi. One subject matter expert on issues related to economic welfare of children and families involved in the child welfare system.
2. All members shall serve at the pleasure of their appointing authority. The co-chairs of the Taskforce shall be a member of the Legislature, as selected by the legislative members, and the Governor's designee. The co-chairs shall develop a work plan, set the agenda, and provide leadership and direction for the Taskforce.
3. A quorum for the Taskforce meetings shall consist of a majority of the members. The Commission shall make recommendations on an affirmative vote of the majority of its members.
4. The Commission shall recommend the following:
  - a. A clear mission and vision for the new organization;
  - b. New organizational structure, including recommendations on which agencies, administrations, commissions, or other functions of state government should be included within the new Children's Department;
  - c. Estimated costs for the reorganization – including IT and capital;
  - d. A clear process for managing the reorganization, including the involvement of regional management and case-carrying staff;
  - e. Measurable benchmarks by which the effectiveness of the new children and families department would be assessed.
5. In developing its recommendations, the Commission may form workgroups and consult with experts in organizational restructuring. Workgroups should be inclusive of perspectives of community-based providers, youth, foster and adoptive parents, and parent allies.
6. The Commission shall produce a written report of its recommendation no later than November 1, 2016.

7. The Department of Social and Health Services, the Department of Early Learning, and the Governor's Office of Financial Management shall provide staff support for the Commission.
8. If the Commission requires assistance or non-privileged data from any other state agency, board, or commission, then such agency, board, or commission shall provide assistance or data to the Commission upon request.

This order takes effect immediately.

Signed and sealed with the official seal of the state of Washington on this 18th day of February, 2016 at Olympia, Washington.

By:

/s/

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Jay Inslee  
Governor

BY THE GOVERNOR:

/s/

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Secretary of State