



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR JAY INSLEE

**EXECUTIVE ORDER 21-05**

**REDUCING INTERGENERATIONAL POVERTY IN WASHINGTON**

**WHEREAS**, the effects of economic hardship are well documented and clear: poverty causes negative outcomes for children, adults, families, and communities and costs the U.S. economy over \$1 trillion annually. A Washington without poverty and less inequality would be substantially better off. Well-being would soar due to improved education, health, and employment outcomes, and rates of homelessness, child neglect, addiction, and crime would decrease. Our communities would be more vibrant, healthy, and safe, and they would experience substantial economic benefits: for every \$1 spent on reducing childhood poverty, the state would save at least \$7 in return;

**WHEREAS**, reducing poverty and inequality is about dignity, humanity, and belonging. When Washingtonians have their foundational needs met and believe their lives are valued, they are more likely to thrive and fully contribute to their families, schools, communities, and jobs. Investments in economic stability, equity, and inclusion benefit our collective well-being;

**WHEREAS**, I created the Poverty Reduction Work Group (PRWG) in 2017, tasking it to create a comprehensive, 10-year plan to reduce poverty and inequality in Washington State. Powered by a Steering Committee of people experiencing poverty, the PRWG developed the 10-Year Plan to Dismantle Poverty in Washington State, with 8 strategies and 60 specific recommendations that will serve as a foundation for our collective work to secure a just and equitable future for all Washington residents;

**WHEREAS**, the work of the PRWG complements the ongoing efforts of the Legislative-Executive WorkFirst and Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force (LEWPRO), which recently submitted its own five-year poverty reduction plan;

**WHEREAS**, the LEWPRO, whose strategic plan closely aligns with the PRWG's 10-Year Plan, adopted the PRWG as its statutorily required Intergenerational Poverty Advisory Group per RCW 74.08A.510, and the PRWG will continue in this capacity; and,

**WHEREAS**, to reduce intergenerational poverty, we must work hard to build the state's current programs to make sure they offer a steady continuum of care and focus on long-term solutions that address root causes of poverty through systemic change. Accordingly, my budget request for the 2022 legislative session will make significant investments to advance these poverty-reduction goals:

- It will strengthen existing economic support programs, to assure that Washingtonians who experience poverty can easily access the services they need, as they need them. It will also reduce the number of gaps where those experiencing poverty might fall through

the cracks in our safety net programs. These actions will create more employment pathways, promote economic stability to help people build assets and wealth, improve education opportunities, invest in solutions that bolster health and well-being, and support the social capital of people and the communities where they live. In all, my 2022 supplemental budget includes more than \$248 million in state and federal funds to improve the continuum of care in our poverty reduction programs.

- A program director and project manager will be established at the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to track agency progress relating to: building a more holistic continuum of care across all government services, bolstering economic opportunity, prioritizing urgent needs of those experiencing poverty, strengthening health supports, and preparing for the future of work. Additionally, the director will coordinate with budget and policy advisors as well as agency legislative liaisons and secretaries/directors on budget and policy formation and implementation of enacted legislation that affects intergenerational poverty reduction.
- A Technical Advisory Group will be established in DSHS to provide a measurement and data framework to help the state make decisions that yield a more just and equitable future. The core members of this group will include a project manager, data scientist, and an analytics and visualization specialist, who will help produce higher quality, integrated cross-system service delivery. The group's data analysis will go beyond traditional metrics of economic recovery to better help agencies on budget and policy formation and program implementation.
- The Office of Equity will facilitate policy and systems change to promote equitable and just policies, practices, and outcomes by assisting agencies in applying an equity lens in all aspects of agency decision making, including service delivery, program development, policy development, and budgeting. In this capacity, the Office will provide technical assistance to agencies to help ensure equity in our intergenerational poverty work. The Office will provide technical assistance to agencies on ensuring equity in our intergenerational poverty work. State agencies will retain their inherent responsibility to engage communities on budget and policy formation and program implementation; however, they may need technical assistance in understanding national best practices, peer reviewed literature, and emerging trends regarding equity. Staffing within the Office of Equity will help us achieve this goal.

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jay Inslee, Governor of the state of Washington, by virtue of the power vested in me by the Constitution and statutes of the state of Washington do hereby order and direct as follows:**

In order to build upon the recommendations of the Poverty Reduction Work Group and the Legislative-Executive WorkFirst and Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force, I am establishing the Subcabinet on Intergenerational Poverty Reduction.

The Secretaries of the Departments of Social and Health Services, and Children Youth and Families, the Director of the Department of Commerce, and the Commissioner of Employment

Security Department shall be members of the subcabinet. Other agencies, including the Departments of Licensing and Labor and Industries, shall participate in the Subcabinet's work as necessary to coordinate related employment issues for non-traditional workers and licensing and certifications for foreign trained workers. My policy and budget staff shall also participate, and other agencies shall be invited as needed.

The purpose of the Subcabinet shall be to further develop and implement the recommendations on intergenerational poverty reduction, including those of the Poverty Reduction Work Group and the Legislative-Executive WorkFirst and Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force. The Subcabinet's immediate focus shall be on building out an integrated eligibility system for clients, developing affordable housing solutions across the spectrum of the state's housing continuum, and eliminating gaps in our benefits programs and reducing the negative consequences of benefit cliffs.

Tasks of the Subcabinet shall include:

- Developing and implementing a cross-agency plan that reduces poverty. The plan shall include proposed strategies, the number of persons expected to be moved out of poverty, and the projected reduction achieved each year in the total number of Washingtonians living below 200% of the federal poverty level and the University of Washington's Self-Sufficiency Standard.
- Aligning and streamlining existing state efforts across the enterprise to create a modern, seamless, and integrated continuum of care that eliminates gaps and benefit cliffs in child-care, health and human services, and workforce development programs.
- Implementing initiatives to eliminate barriers to access and improve economic assets and social capital for children, adults, families, and communities most affected by poverty.
- Recommending budget and policy proposals and requesting legislation to address the risks to non-traditional workers in our state's economic model. Such risks include gaps in post-secondary education, access to employment, and benefits such as unemployment insurance, workers compensation, retirement security and paid leave.
- Identifying those factors that present barriers to intergenerational poverty reduction and recommending to the governor priorities for intergovernmental system reforms. Upon receiving the governor's approval of the recommendations, the Subcabinet shall address the priority barriers by convening of a broad group of interested organizations, including but not limited to: affected tribes, federal government agencies, the U.S. Congressional delegation from the state of Washington, other states facing similar barriers, community members affected by the systemic barriers, and philanthropic groups. The goal of these convenings is to affect systems change beyond the borders of our state to improve economic opportunity for all.

The DSHS Secretary will chair the Subcabinet, and the newly created DSHS poverty project manager referenced above will staff the Subcabinet. The Subcabinet shall meet regularly to

consider key interrelated issues and shall seek input on policy development and program design from communities, especially persons with lived experience of poverty. The Subcabinet shall regularly report progress directly to the governor. The Subcabinet shall also report progress to the LEWPRO on a regular basis.

Recognizing the significant contributions of the PRWG and their continued work with the LEWPRO, the Subcabinet shall remain in regular and routine communication with the PRWG to learn from its knowledge and expertise in policy and budget development and program implementation.

Given the current economic hardship experienced by so many across our state and nation due to a devastating pandemic, we must be more committed than ever to improving the support system to those experiencing poverty, whether situational or intergenerational. Now is the time to invest in just and equitable social and economic conditions that generate hope, resilience, and prosperity for all Washingtonians today and for generations to come.

Signed and sealed with the official seal of the state of Washington on this 16th day of December, AD., Two Thousand and Twenty-One, at Olympia, Washington.

By:

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Jay Inslee, Governor

BY THE GOVERNOR:

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of State