

THE COLOR OF CUTS

The Disproportionate Impact of Budget Cuts
on Communities of Color in Washington State



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The people of Washington State believe in the values of equity and shared prosperity. Over the past two years, Washington State's economic crisis has put these core values to the test.

The Governor and the Legislature faced a \$12 billion shortfall in the 2009–11 biennial budget, which was closed through a combination of federal funds, reserves and fund transfers, new revenue, and program cuts. The projected budget shortfall for the 2011-2013 biennial budget is \$4.6 billion, but due to recent anti-tax initiatives and past cuts, the options for closing the gap are far more limited.

The supplemental budget, passed by the Legislature in February of 2011, has already led to cuts that impact all residents: cuts to education and healthcare; cuts to programs that serve kids, seniors, and people with disabilities; and cuts to environmental programs. Many of the programs that suffered cuts are programs communities of color and low-income communities rely on.

The impact of the 2011 supplemental budget cuts fell disproportionately on people of color. It is likely, based on recent budget proposals from the Governor, that the 2011-2013 biennial budget proposal will continue to devastate people of color and low-income people across the state.

This report demonstrates how the supplemental budget cuts have disproportionately affected people of color. Failure to assess the impact of anticipated 2011-2013 budget cuts on communities of color will profoundly exacerbate existing racial and economic disparities in our state.

The report recommends that the Governor and State Legislature reject cuts to services that disproportionately impact communities of color and raise new revenue to promote equity and prosperity for all Washington residents.

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Race and Inequity in Washington State

Race matters in Washington. Of Washington State's 6 million residents, nearly 1 in 5 is a person of color, a number that is expected to grow to 1 in 3 by the year 2030. Nationally, Washington State ranks 7th in the number of Asians and 13th in the number of Latinos that reside in the state.¹ Washington is home to growing and thriving immigrant and refugee populations, and 1 in 10 residents was born outside of the U.S.

The proportion of people of color is growing not only in King County but across the state from Spokane and the Columbia River Valley to Western Washington from Vancouver to Snohomish and Whatcom counties.

Despite their growing numbers, communities of color do not enjoy an equal social or economic position compared to other communities. Communities of color continue to be plagued by racial disparities in home ownership, wealth accumulation, poverty, health, education, and the justice system. Some disparities include:

- According to the Education Trust and Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), Washington State is ranked in the bottom-five of all states when it comes to closing the racial and ethnic achievement gap. At its current pace it will take 45 to 50 years to close the gap between students of color and their White counterparts.
- According to the U.S. Department of Labor, in the fourth quarter of 2010 unemployment for Whites was 8.5 percent. This was considerably lower than unemployment rates among Latinos or African Americans, 12.9 percent and 15.8 percent respectively.
- According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, African American men and women are much more likely to die of heart disease and stroke than their White counterparts. This is despite the existence of low-cost, highly effective preventive treatment.
- According to Washington State's Sentencing Guidelines Commission, youth of color comprise 45 percent of the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration population despite comprising only 27 percent of the state's youth population.
- According to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, in the third quarter of 2010 the homeownership rate for African Americans was just 45 percent. The homeownership rate for Latinos was 47 percent, while the homeownership rate for Whites was 75 percent.
- According to the Washington Department of Social and Health Services, people of color in Washington State are far more likely to be living in poverty than non-Hispanic Whites.²

These indicators shed light on racial inequity in our state. With Washington's wealth of resources, these disparities do not have to exist. Washington is home to some of the most profitable companies and industries in the world, including Microsoft, Starbucks, Costco, and Amazon.³ In terms of individual wealth, Washington State has more than 130,000 millionaires, ranking 13th in the nation per capita. With this abundance of wealth, Washington has the resources to address race-based disparities.

Those resources, however, are not being shared equally. Even as people of color earn less, they pay more in state taxes. Washington residents pay more of their income in state taxes as their income decreases. Currently, the wealthiest 1 percent of residents contribute less than 3 percent of their income in state taxes, while the poorest 20 percent pay 17 percent of their incomes in state taxes. Immigrant households, which represent 12.5 percent of households in Washington, accounted for 13.2 percent of all taxes paid in 2007—nearly \$1.5 billion.

People of color in Washington are contributing their fair share towards the state budget. The state budget should reflect a fundamental goal of achieving prosperity and equity for all Washingtonians, not punish those who contribute so much and who are most in need of support. In the current revenue crisis, Washington State lawmakers must face this challenge and prevent the gap between the haves and the have-nots from widening further.

Revenue and Budget Cuts: Washington’s Continuing Crisis

Washington State faced a revenue shortfall that exceeded \$12 billion in the 2009-2011 biennium. This shortfall led to many devastating cuts that directly impacted people of color. That shortfall was addressed through a combination of cuts and savings (\$5.1 billion), federal funds (\$3.6 billion), fund transfers and reserves (\$2.5 billion), and revenue increases (\$761 million).

Cuts made during the 2011 Legislative Session as part of the recent Supplemental Budget are analyzed in this report. These do not include deep cuts made prior to the session. Cuts to higher education, programs for seniors and the disabled, to Medicaid-optional services such as adult dental care, and to many other programs prior to the session have had a dramatic impact on vulnerable communities. A full analysis of many of these earlier cuts would also reveal a disproportionate impact on people of color and a widening of racial disparities in access to health care, educational opportunity, and quality of life.

As we enter the coming biennium, the budget outlook is no less grim. Forecasters expect a continuation of revenue-dampening trends, with the Economic and Revenue Forecast Council predicting a \$4.6 billion shortfall for the 2011–13 biennium. Unlike the last budget cycle, the state cannot count on federal funds (due to federal funding cut-backs and a focus on debt reduction), revenue increases (unlikely after the passage of anti-tax initiatives on the November 2010 ballot), or reserves. There is a real possibility that lawmakers, in continuing to make severe cuts to programs, place the goal of racial equity out of reach.

Governor Gregoire has proposed more devastating budget cuts as a way to balance the budget. While the proposed cuts will hurt all Washingtonians, communities of color stand to be especially harmed. From community clinics, to school programs, to language services and income supports, programs that communities of color rely on have consistently been targeted for elimination by both the Governor and the state legislature.

This year, immigrant communities are finding themselves under heavy attack given the Governor’s proposal to eliminate or cut programs that only serve immigrants and refugees, including the New Americans program, naturalization services, medical interpreter services, children’s health care, refugee services, state only food stamps, and health coverage for immigrants through the Basic Health program.

As the Governor and the state legislature contemplate further cuts to safety net programs, lawmakers must consider the impact their actions have on communities across the state, specifically communities of color. Failure to assess the impact of budget decisions on communities of color will profoundly exacerbate existing racial and economic disparities in our state.

Group	1998–99	2009–10	Net Change
All	999,616	1,040,750	+41,134
White	759,708 (76%)	672,350 (64.8%)	-87,358 (-11.2%)
American Indian/Alaska	27,989 (2.8%)	27,363 (2.6%)	-626 (0.2%)
Latino	90,965 (9.1%)	158,612 (15.3%)	+67,647 (+6.2%)
African American	50,980 (5.1%)	56,790 (5.5%)	+5,810 (+0.4%)
Asian American/Pacific Islander	70,973 (7.1%)	89,231 (8.6%)	+18,258 (1.5%)
Bilingual/ELL	50,980	83,260	+32,280 (63.3%)

CUTS AT A GLANCE

Impact of the 2011 Supplemental Budget Cuts on People of Color in Washington State

Cuts made in the 2011 supplemental budget will have a devastating and disproportionate impact on people of color.

Health and Quality of Life

Program	2011 Supplemental Budget	Impact
Apple Health for Kids	Funding reduced by \$346,000 with the intention of dramatically increasing premiums for families between 201% and 300% FPL.	Low-income immigrant children, who are disproportionately children of color, may have to pay more for health coverage which may lead to children losing health coverage.
Basic Health Plan	Limited to individuals who are eligible under the Medicaid waiver.	An estimated 17,000 low-income individuals, including 15,000 immigrants, will lose coverage.
Maternity Support Programs	Funding reduced by 35 percent.	65,000 high risk pregnant women are at risk of losing prenatal care and infant care for the first year of life.
Disability Lifeline	Income assistance cut by an additional 20.7 percent above the 20 percent recent reduction from the December 2010 special session.	21,000 disabled individuals will see significant reductions in cash grants for food, medicine, and housing—disproportionately felt by African Americans and Native Americans.
Long Term Care	15 percent reduction in Senior Citizens Service Act (SCSA) funds 10 percent reduction in home care service hours for home care consumers. 4.7 percent cut to nursing home care	Cuts to long-term care mean senior and other vulnerable populations will not have support with transportation, bathing assistance, minor home repair, foot care, and meals. Some of the most vulnerable in our state have lost as much as 25 percent of the home care hours they need to remain safely in their homes.
State Food Assistance Program	Reduced by \$4.8 million, or 50 percent.	31,000 individuals in approximately 14,000 low-income immigrant households will receive less food assistance than they need.

Early Learning, K-12 Education, Higher Education

Program	2011 Supplemental Budget	Impact
K-4 Class Size	Reduced by \$25 million.	Class sizes will swell and widen the racial academic achievement gap for students of color.
Seasonal Child Care Admin (EL)	Cut \$365,000 and administration of the service through community-based agencies ended in March 2011.	Thousands of children of migrant and seasonal workers, who are predominantly Latinos and people of color, will lose access to seasonal child care services through community organizations.
College Bound Outreach Programs	Cut \$500,000.	Low income students of color will miss opportunities to pursue higher education.
Higher Education Tuition Assistance	\$25 million is reduced from the State Need Grant.	Thousands of low-income students of color will be priced out of higher education.

Civil Rights and Inclusion Cuts

Program	2011 Supplemental Budget	Impact
Refugee Employment Services Naturalization Program	Cut \$1.5 million Eliminated Dec. 1st 2010. \$500,000 in funding was restored in the 2011 supplemental budget but the funds have already been exhausted, per DSHS.	Thousands of immigrants and refugees will struggle to become citizens and integrate into the workplace, which will cost the state money.
New American Program	Cut \$30,000, slated for elimination on March 1st, 2011.	
Ethnic Commissions and Office of Indian Affairs	Cut \$98,000	Without commissions representative of communities of color—people of color will not have a voice that is actively at the table and represented in state government.

WHAT'S AT STAKE

The Legislature is considering further cuts to health care, education, housing, and other programs as a way to address the upcoming \$4.6 billion budget shortfall. This section analyzes cuts that have been proposed by Governor Gregoire and their likely impact on people of color and racial inequity in the state. These cuts were proposed by the Governor as part of the supplemental budget process, and will be considered in the 2011–2013 biennial budget process.

Quality of Life and Health

Proposed cuts to programs dedicated to the health and wellness of Washingtonians would not impact everyone equally, but would disproportionately impact certain vulnerable groups. As the health of individuals directly affected by the cuts decreases, Washington will see an increase in health disparities by income, race, and gender.

In Washington State, people of color are disproportionately uninsured. The proportions of uninsured by race are 21 percent for Latinos, 23 percent for Native Americans, 14 percent for Pacific Islanders, 12 percent for Whites, 10 percent for African Americans and 9 percent for Asians. Children of color are significantly more likely to be uninsured than White children.⁴ Across the United States and in Washington, children of color, immigrants and those in low income families continue to lag behind White and affluent children on nearly every health indicator. Many of these indicators and conditions, such as preterm birth, low birth weight, and asthma, can have negative long-term effects on child's development and functioning.

Recent spending and budget cuts have already impacted people's access to state health care programs, such as the Basic Health Plan. These programs are the only source of affordable coverage for many people of color, immigrants, and refugees. Communities of color already experience health disparities caused by a multitude of barriers, including language, culture, income, and geography. Further cuts to these programs will exacerbate health disparities by race. This section focuses on how the proposed cuts would adversely affect the health of communities of color in Washington.

AT-A-GLANCE

Health care programs targeted for reductions or complete elimination by the Governor's budget proposals include:

- Eligibility reduction in Apple Health for Kids to eliminate coverage for 27,000 immigrant kids, the great majority of whom are kids of color.
- Elimination or further reductions to the Basic Health Plan, which will result in increased health disparities for low-income people of color.
- Reductions to Disability Lifeline, which will increase disparities in health care access and poverty and will be felt disproportionately by African Americans and Native Americans.
- Cuts to Long Term Care, which will affect assisted care for 8,100 clients with a disability or a chronic illness, 58 percent of whom are people of color, and cost over 30,000 jobs.
- Reduced funding for Maternity Support services, which will put at risk access to prenatal and infant care for 65,000 pregnant women and their children.
- Elimination of medical interpreter services for more than 240,000 limited-English speaking Washingtonians.
- Reductions to the State Food Assistance Program, which will threaten access to food for more than 30,000 immigrant and refugee families.

Apple Health for Kids

Apple Health for Kids is Washington State's comprehensive health insurance program for children. Coverage is free for children in families below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL-\$36,620 for a family of three). Families earning over 200 percent FPL pay monthly premiums set by an affordable, sliding scale. All children who live in families with incomes below 300% FPL are eligible for coverage.

Today, 27,000 undocumented children are enrolled Apple Health for Kids. The Governor's supplemental budget proposed to eliminate coverage specifically for these immigrant kids, which would jeopardize their ability to learn and result in more costly long-term consequences. About 40 percent of these kids live in King, Pierce and Snohomish Counties while 25 percent live in Yakima and Benton counties. DSHS classifies 78 percent of them as Hispanic.

Conclusion: Cuts to Apple Health for Kids will increase health disparities for kids of color in Washington.



"Without any healthcare coverage, my family will have no other option than for my 15 year old son to drop out of school and look for a job to help support our family financially. I am worried about the financial, emotional, physical, and mental impact the budget cuts will have on my family and community. Legislators need to prioritize people over profits for the future of all children and communities."

Maria Luna, Bellevue resident



Basic Health Plan

Washington's Basic Health Plan is a state program that provides low-cost health care coverage to low-income individuals and families who are not eligible for federal health coverage, such as Medicaid, yet are unable to receive coverage through work or afford private insurance. As of 2010, eligibility criteria included a gross family income at or below 200% FPL (\$36,620 for a family of three). While the Basic Health Plan does not collect enrollment data by race or ethnicity, an analysis by the Washington State Board of Health suggests that Basic Health enrollees are more likely to be people of color.⁵

The 2011 supplemental budget cuts to Basic Health limited the program to individuals who were also eligible for coverage under the state's Medicaid waiver. As a result, an estimated 17,000 people, including more than 15,000 immigrants, will lose coverage, including a disproportionate number of people of color and immigrants. People losing eligibility include: children, seniors and individuals who do not meet the income requirements for the Medicaid match (the Medicaid cutoff is at 133% FPL), green card holders with less than 5 years in status, applicants for asylum, U and V visa holders (Violence Against Women Act petitioners and survivors of violence), people with temporary protected status (some Haitian, Somali, Sudanese and other nationals who cannot return home because of natural or political crisis), special immigrants from Iraq and Afghanistan, and certain other categories.

In the last two years, funding for Basic Health has been cut in half resulting in coverage for only 56,000 enrollees, meanwhile the waiting list for the program has grown to 137,000 persons.

Conclusion: Cuts to the Basic Health Plan will result in greater disparities in health care access for people of color in Washington, particularly people of color who are in low-wage jobs, immigrants, and refugees.

Disability Lifeline

Formally GA-U (General Assistance for the Unemployable), Disability Lifeline is a program in the Department of Social and Human Services (DSHS) that provides up to \$339 in cash assistance per month to Washington residents who are unemployable due to physical or mental disability, yet do not qualify for Medicare. This monthly living assistance is used for food, housing, and health care treatments. People on Disability Lifeline also receive health care coverage. Eliminating Disability Lifeline will likely lead to increased homelessness, illness, or death for 21,000 disabled individuals.

According to the Washington State Board of Health, African Americans and Native Americans are disproportionately represented in the Disability Lifeline program.⁶

Distribution of Disability Lifeline Participants and Washington Total Population by Race	% in Program	% in Washington
White	66.7%	76.2%
Latino	6.1%	9.3%
African American	11.3%	3.4%
Asian or Pacific Islander	3.2%	6.9%
Native American	4.2%	1.4%

Sources: (1) Department of Social and Health Services 2008
(2) Office of Financial Management 2008

The 2011 Supplemental Budget reduced monthly cash assistance by 20.7 percent, which is an additional cut beyond the 20 percent reduction approved by lawmakers during the December 2010 special session.

Conclusion: Cuts to, or the elimination of, the Disability Lifeline program will disproportionately impact the health and well-being of people of color, particularly African Americans and Native Americans.

Long Term Care

Long term care (LTC) refers to a wide range of medical, personal, and social services. LTC may include help with daily activities, such as dressing, bathing, eating, toileting, getting in and out of a bed or chair, and walking. It also may include home health care, adult day care, nursing home care, or care in a group living facility. People of color are 58 percent more likely to rely on long term care services than their White counterparts.

In recent budget cuts, long term care received a 9 percent funding reduction, with particularly deep cuts to home care services. These cuts translate into reductions in services for over 50,000 people in long term care.

LTC providers also face serious cuts to work hours, health benefits, and training standards. The legislature has once again proposed to suspend mandatory 75 hours of basic training, peer mentorship, criminal background checks and certification requirements until at least January 2014. These requirements, which became law under Initiative 1029 were supposed to go into effect January 1, 2010, and their continued delay places both LTC workers and consumers safety at risk.

Long term care providers account for over 30,000 jobs statewide. In Washington, 26 percent of home care workers are people of color, which is greater than the overall percentage of people of color living in Washington State (18 percent).

In the 2011 Supplemental budget, long term care suffered a 15 percent reduction in Senior Citizens Service Act (SCSA) funds, a 10 percent reduction in hours for home care consumers on average, and a 4.7 percent cut to nursing home care.

Conclusion: Cuts to long term care will severely impact the quality of life of more than 50,000 people living with a disability or a chronic illness, a disproportionate number of who are people of color, and will result in the loss of thousands of jobs.

Race & Ethnicity	# of Providers	% of Workforce	% of WA Population
White	22,348	73%	82%
Black	1514	5%	3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3803	12%	6%
Native American	201	5%	2%
Hispanic/Latino	2,414	7%	7%
Totals ⁷	30,280	100%	100%

Source: SEIU Healthcare 775NW Membership Data

Medical Interpreter Services

With over 19,000 interpreter appointments made every month, medical interpreters currently help thousands of limited English speaking persons communicate with their doctor. Failure to provide interpretation or providing sub-standard interpretation puts patients' health at risk, increases costs for medical care and increases the risk of litigation for providers.¹⁰ Not only does Washington have relatively large Latino and Asian populations, ranking 7th among the states in the number of Asians and 13th in the number of Latinos,¹¹ but it ranks as one of the top 10 states in the US for initial refugee arrivals. Over the last five years, over 12,300 refugees initially resettled in Washington, for an average of 2,460 refugees per year.¹² Currently, more than 240,000 patients rely on a medical interpreter to communicate with their doctor. With the state's immigrant communities growing every year, the demand for these services will continue to exist for both doctors and patients.

The Governor's proposed elimination of medical interpreter services will translate into losses not only for patients and doctors, but for interpreters themselves as well, many of whom are people of color. There are over 2,000 medical interpreters in the state. If medical interpreter services are eliminated, Washington will forfeit \$12.2 million in federal matching funds to pay for these much needed services. Without state funding support, hospitals and clinics will be forced to absorb the costs for medical interpretation, an estimated \$3 million, at a time when hospitals and clinics are already facing cuts in funding. This may force some hospitals and clinics to stop providing medical interpretation, and will force patients to rely on children for interpretation or simply go without.

Conclusion: Eliminating medical interpreter services will increase health risks and costs for people of color, immigrants, and refugees in Washington and will result in the loss of thousands of jobs for interpreters, predominantly immigrants and people of color.

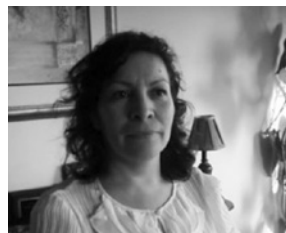
Maternity Support Services

Maternity Support Services are preventive health services that supplement medical coverage for Medicaid-eligible women who are pregnant or within 60 days post-pregnancy. Maternity Support Services are offered in addition to medical and prenatal care, and are proven to improve the health of infants and mothers while reducing costs.

People of color also suffer greater health risks in birth. In Washington, infant mortality rates among African Americans are almost twice as high compared to Whites, 8.1 deaths compared to 4.5 deaths per 1,000 live births.⁸ Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) deaths among Native Americans occur at 2.3 times the rate of White mothers. Prenatal care and pregnancy support services are critical strategies in reducing health disparities.⁹

Maternity support for at-risk mothers was reduced by 35 percent in the supplemental budget. DSHS has proposed completely eliminating Maternity Support Services and Infant Case Management.

Conclusion: Cuts to, or elimination of, Maternity Support Services will jeopardize the health of 65,000 at-risk pregnant women and infants for the first year of life, a disproportionate number of whom are people of color.



"I work at a community clinic in Burien as a medical assistant. I mostly interpret for young mothers. They're considering cutting maternity support, and I'll tell you why this is dangerous. As a medical assistant, I see a lot things happen to families when the care is not available. Infants are very delicate and it's when they don't receive the proper care and have their weight moderated in the first few months that they have permanent damage. I think about the young mothers that I see at the clinic, and all the support they need to make sure their children are safe and healthy. By cutting these services, the state is putting more and more families at risk. As both a mother and medical assistant, I cannot stand by and watch this happen."

Martina Soletto, Seattle resident

State Food Assistance Program

The State Food Assistance Program was created in 1997 to provide food assistance to documented immigrants in Washington. Washington is one of seven states that operate state-funded food assistance programs for residents ineligible for federal food stamps because of immigration status.

Recipients of State Food Assistance benefits fall into three general categories: legal permanent residents with fewer than five years in that status, people legally residing under color of the law (PRUCOL), or citizens of countries with compacts of free association with the U.S. that allow residing and working in the U.S. but deny citizenship. Two countries with compacts of free association with the U.S. include the Marshall Islands and Micronesia.

Recipients of the State Food Assistance Program are predominantly people of color from various countries of origin. As of last spring, the following countries led the list: Mexico, Marshall Islands, Ethiopia, Philippines, Russia and Micronesia. In August 2010, nearly 14,000 people in Washington received state food assistance benefits averaging \$114 per month. Of 31,000 people who rely on food assistance funds, 47 percent are children and 8 percent are seniors.

The 2011 Supplemental Budget reduced the State Food Assistance Program by \$4.8 million, or 50 percent.

Conclusion: Cuts or reductions in eligibility for the State Food Assistance Program will put thousands of immigrant children and families, most of whom are people of color, at risk of losing access to food assistance.



"I am from Laos, but I am an American because I have lived here for most of my life. I came here in 1979 due to war in Laos during the Vietnam War. We had to escape across the Mekong River to Thailand and stayed in the refugee camps for two

and a half years. I am now in the process of becoming a citizen. We are losing assistance from the State Food Assistance program and it is hard enough being a single mother, now I'm worried about how to put food on the table for my two girls. We deserve to be safe and sustain our families."

Darasavanh Kommavongsa, Seattle resident

Education

Across the nation, long-standing gaps in educational performance and attainment exist between White students and students of color. Washington State is ranked in the bottom five of all states in closing the racial and ethnic achievement gap. At the current pace, it will take 45 to 50 years to close the gap between students of color and their White counterparts.

An effective state education system should create opportunity for all Washingtonians. Unfortunately students from communities of color—particularly Latino, Native American, and African Americans—struggle with attaining education beyond high school. While there are known remedies to the achievement gap, these require an equitable allocation of resources.

This section analyzes: K-4 Education Funding, Higher Education Tuition, College Bound, and Child Care Supports.

AT-A-GLANCE

Education programs at risk of proposed reductions or elimination include:

- Cuts for Class Size Reduction will lead to swelling class sizes, making it more difficult for students of color to get the support they need to succeed academically.
- Cuts to the College Bound Scholarship Program will leave thousands of low-income students (including youths of color) without the mentoring and financial assistance necessary to pursue higher education.
- Child care subsidies for seasonal workers were reduced in the supplemental budget, and Seasonal Child Care Programs administered through contracts with non-profit organizations serving migrant and seasonal workers will end in March 2011.

K-4 Education Funding and Class Sizes

Washington State ranks 44th nationally in state funding per student, and spends \$1.5 billion less than the national average per year on education. This has resulted in underfunded K-12 school programs.¹³ Reductions in class sizes are proven to help close the racial academic achievement gap, but limited funding has made it difficult to reduce class sizes and student to teacher ratios.

In 2009, 1,775 students were relocated when five Seattle schools closed. Of the five schools that were closed, four were located in dense communities of color. Both Cleveland High School and Rainier Beach High School—two high schools located in predominately African American communities—were slated for closure until the NAACP and other civil rights groups successfully challenged the decision.¹⁴ Continual concerns have been expressed by communities of color about a lack of school funding and programs in their geographic areas, as well as the risk of student displacement when changes are made to their school programs.

In the 2011 supplemental budget, Class Reduction was reduced by \$25 million. Meanwhile, over the last decade, the number of White students in Washington’s public education system has declined, and the population of students of color has increased by 38 percent. Thus, cuts to education funding have an increasing impact on educational opportunity for students of color.

Conclusion: Cuts to K-12 school programs and class reduction efforts will exacerbate the achievement gap for growing numbers of students of color.

Student Demographics in Washington State

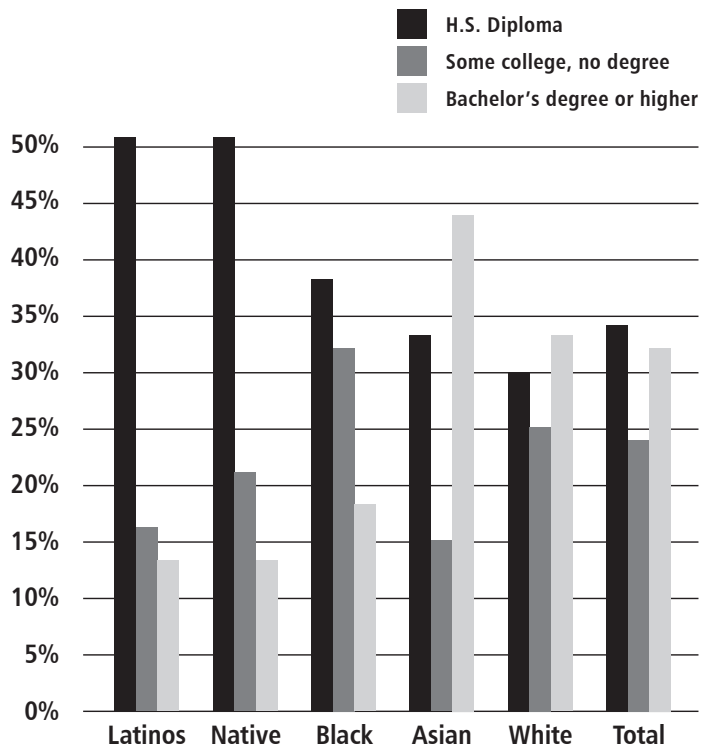
	1998-99	2009-10	Growth
All Students	999,616	1,040,750	4.1%
White	759,708	672,350	-11.5%
Latino	90,965	158,612	74.4%
Asian/Pacific Islander	70,973	89,231	25.7%
African American	50,980	56,790	11.4%
Native American	27,989	27,363	-2.2%
Bilingual	50,980	83,260	63.3%

Source: Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee 2010

Higher Education Attainment

The racial and ethnic achievement gap grows in magnitude as youth near entry to the workforce or higher education. In Washington State, students of color are less likely to attain education beyond high school, and this is particularly true for Latino, Native American, and African American students. For example, 64 percent of Latinos obtain high school diploma as their highest level of educational attainment, but only 13 percent obtain a Bachelor’s degree or higher degree. Likewise, the numbers are much lower for African American students (38 percent obtain high school diploma and 18 percent obtain a Bachelor’s degree or higher degree) and Native American students (56 percent obtain a high school diploma and 13 percent obtain a Bachelor’s degree or higher degree).¹⁵

Highest Educational Attainment by Race, ages 25-64, 2007 The College Bound Scholarship is a state-funded program that assists low-income students (including students of color) with higher education attainment. The program provides mentoring and financial assistance based on tuition rates at Washington public colleges and universities and covers tuition and fees not covered by other state financial aid awards.



Source: 2007 American Community Survey

Since 2007, the College Bound Scholarship program has enrolled more than 70,000 low-income youths across the state with a commitment to stay in school and apply to a higher education institution.¹⁶ The College Bound program is available to all Washington residents, regardless of status.¹⁷

Conclusion: Cuts to the College Bound Scholarship Program will leave thousands of low income students (including youth of color) without the mentoring and financial assistance necessary to pursue higher education.

Tuition Costs and Higher Education

State higher education institutions are experiencing reductions in funding and students are facing increased tuition costs. Already, public universities, technical schools, and community colleges have started making cuts; between 2008 and 2010, the state cut operational funding for public institutions by 30 percent. In the 2009–10 and 2010–11 academic years, tuition increased 14 percent per year.

Many students of color are being priced out of attaining higher education. Currently, only 77 percent of enrolled students eligible for state financial aid are receiving assistance, compared to 98 percent in 2009. Of students who qualify for a State Need Grant in 2011, 22,000 will not receive one. State Work Study funding has been cut by a third. And despite steep tuition increases, higher education institutions have cut hundreds of jobs, including jobs in student support services.

Conclusion: Increasing college tuition and cuts to higher educational support programs will price thousands of students of color out of higher education and will widen the racial achievement gap.

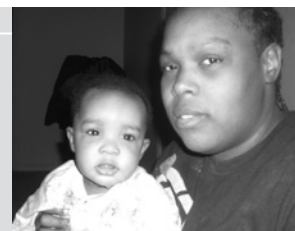
Seasonal Child Care Programs

The seasonal child care program, part of the Department of Early Learning (DEL), provides child care subsidies to eligible seasonally employed agricultural families. The program is administered through contracts with non-profit organizations serving migrant and seasonal workers, and its purpose is to provide safe, licensed child care while parents are working in agricultural settings.¹⁹

As of December 31, 2010, seasonal child care subsidies were no longer available for the rest of state fiscal year 2011 (through June 30, 2011). Administration of the program through community-based organizations is slated to be completely eliminated by March 2011, and the same eligibility reductions, from 200 to 175% FPL, to Working Connections Child Care assistance are also limiting access to Seasonal Child Care.

Conclusion: Cutting the seasonal child care program will affect child development and safety for children of migrant and seasonal workers and limit the ability of migrant and seasonal workers to work, the majority of whom are people of color.

“Since I’ve had my baby, I’ve been out of work for a year. My children and health (chronic arthritis) prevent me from working full-time. I can only work seasonal work or part-time, but when I do find something, then I have to worry about the costs of child care. My little boy has a hole in his heart and I can’t leave him alone. They’ve cut me off TANF and food assistance because my disability income was “too high.” We’re barely making it through the month. I don’t know how families are supposed to live like this.”



Shaunte Powell, Burien resident

Civil Rights

Washington State has some of the strongest non-discrimination laws in the country. Washington law protects residents from discrimination based on Race, Creed, Color, National Origin, Sex, Marital Status, Family with Children Status, Age, the Presence of any Sensory, Mental, or Physical Disability, the Use of a Trained Dog Guide or Service Animal by a Person with a Disability, honorably discharged veteran or military status or Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity. Despite these robust legal protections, Washington's Civil Rights enforcement system has been eroded over the last three decades by continual budget cuts. These cuts have prompted civil rights advocates to ask whether there can be civil rights in Washington State without an effective enforcement system.

Programs and entities that focus specifically on ensuring that people of color can participate in public policy decision-making and defend their civil rights are being targeted for cuts and elimination.

AT-A-GLANCE

Proposed cuts that affect civil rights include:

- Eliminating programs that help thousands of immigrants and refugees to become U.S. citizens.
- Eliminating programs that help refugees integrate into the workforce and regain self-sufficiency to attain economic stability for their families limits economic growth for the state.
- Ethnic Commissions are slated to be eliminated or consolidated into one entity, taking away the voice of ethnic communities in public government and the necessary avenues for communities to express their specific needs.

The programs discussed in this session include: Refugee Employment Services, The Naturalization Program, The Washington New American's Program, and the Human Rights and Ethnic Commissions.

The Naturalization Program and the New Americans Program

Naturalization provides many benefits: catalyzes asset building, increases job opportunity, leads to economically stable lives for immigrant families. Despite the benefits, programs that help immigrants and refugees obtain citizenship are being targeted for cuts and elimination by the Governor and state legislature.

The Naturalization Program through the Department of Social and Human Services enables thousands of legal permanent residents to become U.S. citizens each year. Despite its success, the Naturalization Program was eliminated on December 1, 2010. Lawmakers restored \$500,000 in funding for the program in the 2011 supplemental budget, however, DSHS has notified agencies that no new funds will be coming to the program as the funds were already spent, though they provided no details.

Since 2009, the Washington New Americans program through the Department of Commerce has helped more than 2,000 immigrants complete their naturalization applications through direct services and free legal clinics offered across the state, while matching state funding dollar-for-dollar through in-kind and private funding sources. The Washington New Americans Program will likely be slated for elimination in the 2011-2013 biennial budget. There are approximately 170,000 legal permanent residents in Washington who are eligible for citizenship.²⁰

Conclusion: Without programs such as New Americans and the Naturalization Program, thousands of immigrants and refugees will continue to lack the rights and protections of U.S. citizenship and will be denied access to full participation in our society.



"Budget cuts are hurting immigrants all over the state. Families will have a hard time feeding their children because of cuts to food benefits. We won't be able to understand our doctors if interpreter services are cut. This is going to devastate our communities. Immigrants pay taxes and contribute to the economy, while corporations and banks are given tax breaks. This is an injustice to all of us."

Yolanda Tinoco, Bellevue resident

Refugee Employment Services

Refugee Employment Services provide employment assistance to refugees throughout the state. Refugees, the vast majority of whom are people of color, are often survivors of great adversity who bring personal initiative, skills, strong work ethics, high retention rates and diversity to the workplace and to our communities.

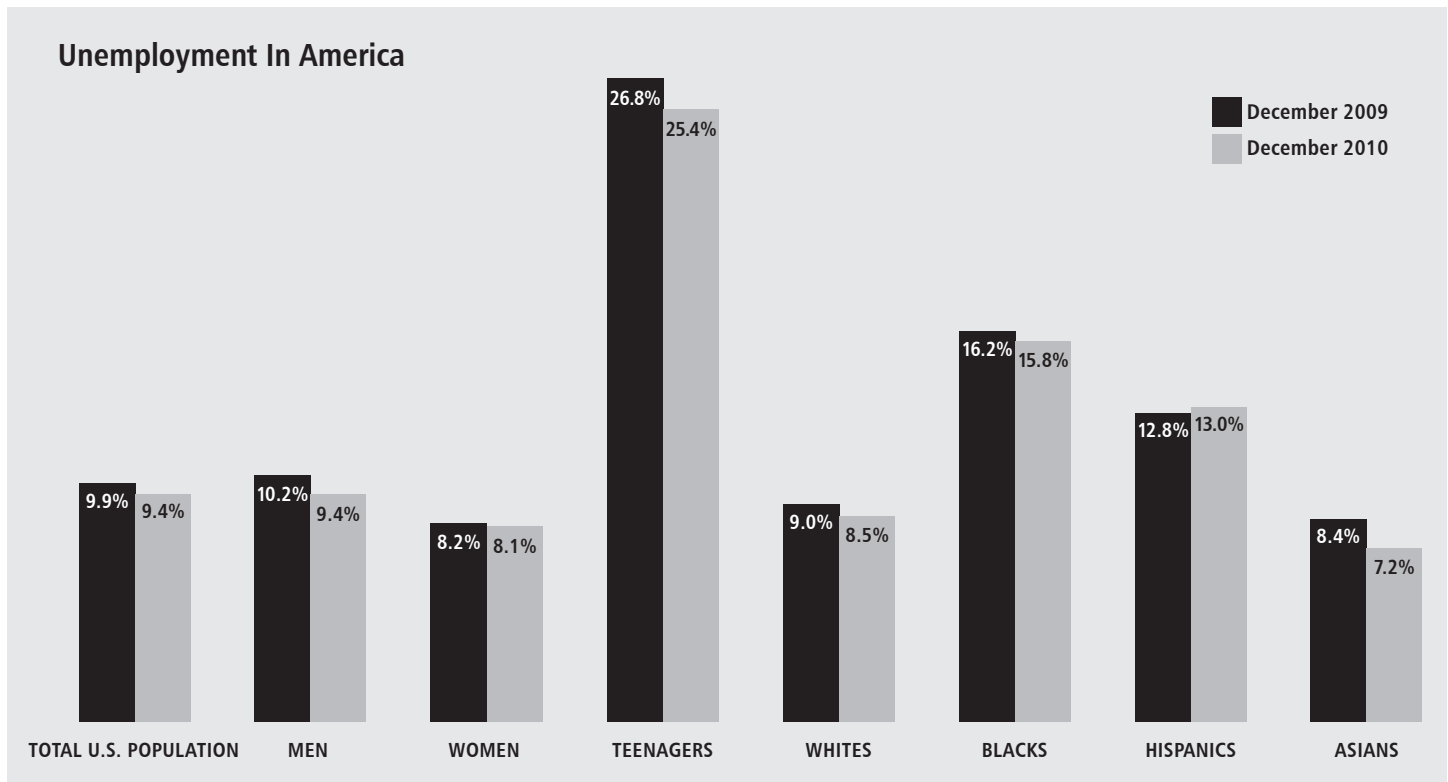
Washington ranks as one of the top 10 states for initial refugee arrivals. Over the last five years, over 12,300 refugees initially resettled in Washington.²¹ DSHS has implemented cuts to Refugee Employment Services in the 2011 fiscal year and has proposed its complete elimination in the 2011–2013 biennial budget.

Conclusion: The elimination of refugee assistance programs, such as Refugee Employment Services, will impact the ability of thousands of people of color to attain and maintain economic stability for their families and contribute to Washington State’s economy.

Washington Ethnic Commissions

Since their establishment in the 1970s, the Ethnic Commissions—such as the Office of Hispanic Affairs, Office of African American Affairs, Office of Asian American/Pacific Islander Affairs, and the Office of Indian Affairs—have been the voice in state government for communities of color. Their role is to bring the voice of people of color to the table within a state government that too often overlooks the specific needs of these communities. The commissions are a cost-efficient model, relying on the pro-bono work of over 30 volunteer commissioners across the state.

Conclusion: The elimination or consolidation of Ethnic Commissions will take away the voice and representation of different ethnic communities and their specific needs and priorities in state government.



NOTE: Teenagers are aged 16 to 19. Men and women are 20 and above. Racial breakdown and total are 16 and above. The rate for Asians is not seasonally adjusted.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor

RECOMMENDATIONS

As analyzed in this report, reduced funding and elimination of health care, education, and civil rights programs would increase health disparities by race, widen the racial achievement gap, impede political and economic advancement, and diminish the civil rights of people of color in Washington State. The Governor and State Legislature can and should mitigate the impact of budget cuts on people of color by exploring all options for possible cuts and by aggressively seeking new revenue sources.

Special tax expenditures cost Washingtonians \$6.5 billion every year, yet they do little or nothing to support people of color or to advance racial equity. Many of these tax subsidies and loopholes could be closed to maintain and improve health care, education and other essential public services for all residents. Every tax exemption needs to be evaluated against other priorities on the budget, and closed if out-dated or unnecessary. According to the Washington State Budget and Policy Center, there are 567 tax expenditures that cost the state billions of dollars each year.²²

At a time when the demand for state services is increasing as a result of the national recession, cuts to programs that serve the most vulnerable in our state must be done so with great caution. The current wave of unprecedented cuts to health care, education, protections for our most vulnerable and other essential public services require that our elected officials focus on real solutions. These solutions must be rooted in the goal of eliminating racial disparities in Washington State.

We recommend that the Governor and State Lawmakers:

1. Reject cuts to services that will have negative impacts—intentionally or unintentionally—on immigrant communities and communities of color.
2. Reject policy proposals that will have the effect of widening racial or economic inequality.
3. Support proposals that bring greater transparency and accountability to tax exemptions.
4. Support proposals to raise revenue in support of vital public services for all.

End Notes

- ¹ Office of Financial Management. “Washington population growth continues to slow.” Jun. 2009
- ² “Poverty and Hunger in Washington State.” Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, August 2008.
- ³ http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune500/2010/full_list/
- ⁴ Washington State Board of Health. Health Impact Review: Proposed Cuts to Health Care and Human Services Programs. March 31, 2009. pages 14–15.
- ⁵ A majority of BHP enrollees choose community health centers for their health care. While Latinos make up only 9.3% of the total state population, they represent 36% community health center patients. Similarly, African Americans represent only 3.4% of the state’s population, but comprise 6% of those served in community health centers. Therefore, Latinos and African Americans have been over-represented as patients who use community health centers, signifying that they are also disproportionately enrolled in the Basic Health Plan. Washington State Board of Health. Health Impact Review: Proposed Cuts to Health Care and Human Services Programs. March 31, 2009. pages 11–12.
- ⁶ Washington State Board of Health. Health Impact Review: Proposed Cuts to Health Care and Human Services Programs. March 31, 2009. pgs 7–8.
- ⁷ Source: SEIU Healthcare 775NW Membership Data
- ⁸ Kaiser Family Foundation, Washington: Infant Mortality Rate (Deaths per 1,000 Live Births) by Race/Ethnicity, 2004-2006, <http://www.state-healthfacts.org/profileind.jsp?rgn=49&ind=48&cat=2>
- ⁹ CDC, Infant Mortality Statistics from the 2006 Period Linked Birth/Infant Death Data Set. National Vital Statistics Reports. 2010.
- ¹⁰ Washington Federation of State Employees 2010.
- ¹¹ Office of Financial Management. “Washington population growth continues to slow.” Jun. 2009
- ¹² Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance/Department of Social and Health Services. 2010
- ¹³ Funding Washington Schools. 2010. <http://www.fundingwaschools.org/index.htm>
- ¹⁴ Ramirez, Marc. “NAACP says suit possible over Seattle school closures.” Seattle Times. Jan. 17, 2009.
- ¹⁵ Spaulding, Randy Ph.D. “American Community Survey.” Population Demographics Affecting Washington Higher Education. 2007
- ¹⁶ Higher Education Coordinating Board. <http://www.hecb.wa.gov/>
- ¹⁷ Applications for the College Bound Scholarship who are not US citizens or Legal Permanent Residents must have a signed affidavit pledging that they will apply for permanent residency as soon as possible.
- ¹⁸ The College Promise Coalition. <http://www.collegepromisewa.com/>
- ¹⁹ Department of Early Learning. <http://www.del.wa.gov/care/help/seasonal.aspx>
- ²⁰ One America. Immigrant Contributions to Our State Economy. April 2009. http://www.weareoneamerica.org/sites/default/files/Immigrant_Contributions_to_Our_State_Economy.pdf
- ²¹ Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance/Department of Social and Health Services. 2010
- ²² “Every Dollar Counts: Why It’s Time for Tax Expenditure Reform,” Washington State Budget and Policy Center Policy Brief, February 8, 2011.

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With over 35,000 members, Washington CAN! is the state's largest grassroots community organization. Together we work to achieve racial, social, and economic justice in our state and nation. Our strength as an organization depends on our members' involvement. We believe that we can only achieve our goals when people take action for justice.

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