

FACING RACE

How Budget Cuts Are Increasing Racial Disparities



WASHINGTON
COMMUNITY
ACTION NETWORK

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INTRODUCTION

In 2011, Washington State's Legislators and Governor faced daunting tasks. The economic crisis and the resulting budget shortfall dominated the legislative session, which extended into a Special Session. In this crisis, our state faces a choice. Will we make budget and revenue decisions that strengthen opportunity and reduce racial and economic disparities? Or, will we weaken opportunity and reinforce existing disparities with another all-cuts budget?

In tough economic times, we must pay close attention to equity when making state budget decisions. Everyone has been greatly affected by this recession. But Washington's communities of color and low-income communities have faced unequal pain. High levels of unemployment and home foreclosures illustrate two areas where our economic crisis has had a profound impact.

- The U.S. Department of Labor reported that between the second half of 2007 and mid-2009, white unemployment doubled in the West, while American Indian unemployment tripled.¹ Unemployment in the fourth quarter of 2010 was 8.5 percent for whites, but was much higher for Latinos (12.9 percent) and particularly for African Americans (15.8 percent).
- Despite being less likely to own homes, people of color have borne a disproportionate burden of the housing crisis. From 2007 to 2009, Black and Latino borrowers, respectively, were 76 and 71 percent more likely than whites to face foreclosure.² This stark difference in the amount of foreclosures by race is largely due to predatory lending by financial institutions.

Racial inequities extend to other indicators as well – health, education, and criminal justice. In Washington State, whether you are white, black, or brown, low-income or high-income, you deserve the opportunity to succeed. Washington's budget decisions can echo this or make matters worse.

In the 2011 legislative session, our Legislature failed to take adequate steps to advance racially and economically equitable opportunities in our state. Instead of focusing on ways to raise additional revenue in order to expand opportunities and proactively reduce disparities, the legislature addressed the shortfall almost exclusively through budget cuts which reinforced disparities.

The 2011-2013 biennial budget saw drastic cuts in almost all areas of our lives. As a consequence, the babies of pregnant women will not get a good start because funding for Maternity Support Services has decreased. Students' class sizes will grow. Tuition to colleges and universities has increased drastically and higher education will become out of reach for all but the wealthiest families. People have been kicked off of Basic Health. Home care hours for our elderly have been reduced. English as Second Language families will be lost in translation as they face limited access to interpreter services. The hard truth is that cuts have not made Washington prosper or regain strong economic footing. In fact, these decisions have reinforced the recession by making Washington more poor, sick and weak.

Meanwhile, as low and moderate-income people and people of color across the state are losing their jobs and their homes, wealth gaps continue to increase. A deeply unequal tax policy – leading to one of the most regressive in the nation, according to the Institute for Tax and Economic Policy – means that decisions are forcing wealthy Washington residents to not do their fair share to help the state recover from the recession. Yet, with Washington's wealth of resources, the prevailing severe cuts could have been mitigated.

- Washington is home to some of the most innovative people, and profitable companies and industries in the world, even in today's tough economic climate. In terms of individual wealth, Washington State has more than 130,000 millionaires, ranking 13th in the nation on a per person basis.
- Washington's resources, however, are not being employed and shared equally. Washington's tax policy puts the lion's share of the burden on low and middle-income residents, even though high-earners use the same state resources for transportation, power, and industry.
- Those who earn less contribute an unfair share to the state's revenue, and people of color earn far less on average than their white counterparts. The poorest 20 percent of Washington residents – disproportionately racially diverse – pay 17 percent of their incomes in state taxes, while the wealthiest one percent of Washington's residents pay less than three percent of their incomes in state taxes. Immigrant households, which represent 12.5 percent of households in Washington, also pay more than their fair share, accounting for 13.2 percent of all taxes paid in 2007.³

We are underutilizing the wealthiest residents' capacity to contribute and are not capitalizing on opportunities to pull out of the recession by having a more equitable tax system. We must do better.

Our state's tradition of innovation and independent leadership calls for us to step up and address racial and economic gaps in well being in the midst of a multibillion dollar deficit and rapid demographic changes.

People of color make up a large and growing proportion of the state's population. In 2000, people of color numbered 1.2 million, or 20.6 percent of the population.⁴ Today, people of color represent almost one-quarter (25 percent) of Washington's residents. By 2030, the proportion of Washington residents who are people of color is expected to grow to one in three. Simply put, Washington's people of color are core to today's recovery and tomorrow's prosperity.

Budget decisions that bring about equity are possible. Racial and economic disparities in education, health care, economic and work force development and wealth are some of the biggest challenges to our long-term economic and social survival as a state. A central goal of all future state policy, budget, and revenue decisions must be the reduction or elimination of racial and economic inequity in our state.

This report details in full the major cuts to the 2011-2013 biennial budget. The budget cuts were deep and extensive, yet they will not effect everyone in the state equally. The burden of the 2011-2013 budget falls disproportionately on communities of color and exacerbates already existing racial disparities within the areas examined in the report. As the full effects of the budget are felt, people of color and low-income people will be devastated by the impact of losing critical care and services.

Each budget cycle, the Governor and State Legislature have an opportunity to avoid reinforcing racial disparities. By rejecting cuts to services that disproportionately impact communities of color and focusing on ways to bring new revenue into the state, our legislature could make great strides in reducing racial disparities. In order for Washington State to move forward, the Governor and State Legislature must address current racial inequities and actively promote policies that focus on equity and inclusion.

Simply put, Washington's people of color are core to today's recovery and tomorrow's prosperity.

RACE MATTERS IN WASHINGTON

People of color make up a large and growing proportion of the state's population. In 2000, people of color numbered 1.2 million, or 20.6 percent of the population.⁵ By 2010, this number had exceeded 1.5 million or 24.2 percent.⁶ The proportion of Washington residents who are people of color is expected to grow to one in three by 2030.

The fastest growing population groups in Washington State are people of color – Asians, Latinos, and multiracial people.⁷ Although the population of the state is expected to increase by 42 percent by 2030, these three groups are projected to increase by 132, 150, and 160 percent, respectively.⁸

Much of this growth is related to growing immigrant and refugee populations. The state ranks 10th in the U.S. in number of immigrant residents, and one in 10 Washington residents was born outside of the U.S.⁹ Two-thirds of all Asians¹⁰ and nearly four in 10 (38.9 percent) Latinos are immigrants.¹¹ Additionally, Washington State has been among the top ten states for refugee resettlement since 1975. Over the last 30 years, Washington has received refugees primarily from East Africa, Southeast Asia, and the former Soviet Union.¹² Today, refugees are arriving from a larger variety of countries, including Iraq, Cuba, Somalia, and Afghanistan, and in 2009, about 23 percent of refugee arrivals came from Bhutan.^{13,14}

Washington policymakers must embrace the increasingly important role that people of color – both immigrant and non-immigrant – play in Washington. The wide and persistent racial inequities in income, health, education, food security, criminal enforcement, and access to jobs and services much be recognized and addressed.

The proportion of Washington residents who are people of color is expected to grow to one in three by 2030.

Racial inequities are pervasive throughout Washington State. They include:

Education: Washington State is ranked in the bottom-five of all states in closing the racial and ethnic achievement gap for K-12 students.¹⁵ At the current pace, it will take at least 45 years to close the gap between students of color and their white counterparts, according to the Education Trust and Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). That means that unless something changes, a child born today in Washington will not see a level playing field until the year 2056.

Assets and Income: Nationally, families of color have far fewer assets than do white families, primarily the result of less intergenerational transfer of wealth through inheritances, bequests, and intra-family transfers.¹⁶ In 2007, the median white family held \$170,400 dollars in assets, compared to \$21,000 for Latinos and \$17,100 for African Americans.¹⁷ There is a similarly wide gap in income. Latinos earn only 55.3 percent of the median income of whites; while African Americans earn just 63.7 percent and American Indians/Alaska Natives earn just 61.5 percent as much as whites.¹⁸ Over the past decade, disparities in income have increased.¹⁹ Asian Americans earn more per capita income than Latinos or African Americans but still earn less than whites despite comparable rates of educational attainment.²⁰ However data broken down by ethnic group shows that per capita income and poverty rates for some Asian American ethnic groups (such as Hmong, Cambodian, Laotian, and Bangladeshi Americans) are similar or less than those of Latinos and African Americans.²¹

Poverty and Access to Jobs: Nationally, communities of color are more likely to live in poverty than whites. A recent study found that 10% of whites are living below the poverty line, compared to 11% of Asian Americans, 14% of Pacific Islanders, 22% of Latinos, 23% of American Indians/Alaska Natives and 25% of African Americans.²² In Washington State the trend is similar. 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 white people.²⁵ The U.S. Department of Labor reported unemployment in the fourth quarter of 2010 at 8.5 percent for whites, but much higher for Latinos (12.9 percent) and particularly high for African Americans (15.8 percent). The recession has not hit all communities equally. For example, between the second half of 2007 and mid-2009, white unemployment doubled in the West, while American Indian unemployment tripled.²⁴

Health and Health Care: African American men and women are much more likely to die of heart disease and stroke than their white counterparts, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. This is despite the existence of low-cost, highly effective preventive treatment. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have the highest incidence of stomach and liver cancers.²⁵ Compared to whites, Latinos are almost twice as likely to have no health insurance and 150 percent as likely to use some form of public health insurance.²⁶ Life expectancy for many communities of color is also lower than that of their white counterparts. For example, people living in south and southeast Seattle (a neighborhood that is one of the most diverse in the nation) have a life expectancy almost 10 years shorter than Mercer Island residents, separated by only a mile of water.²⁷ The main reason for these disparities in health care is lack of access to quality, affordable health care.

Criminal Justice: African Americans in Washington State are more than nine times as likely to be in prison than are whites in the state, while the ratio of African American to white arrests for violent offenses is only 3.72 to 1. In other words, Washington State’s racial disproportionality cannot be explained by higher levels of criminal involvement as measured by violent crime arrest statistics.²⁸ A group of studies found that within the Washington State criminal justice system, there are statistically significant race and ethnic differences in case handling. The differences appear at different decision points in different cases and although some may appear to be minor, these “...small differences in what a person is charged with, whether they are released pre-trial, if they are convicted, and what sentence is given are very consequential to the individuals processed and they add up to substantial impacts for minority communities within the state.”²⁹

Youth of color are also disproportionately represented within the Washington State criminal justice system. They comprise 45 percent of the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration population despite comprising only 27 percent of the state’s youth population.

Home Ownership: Despite being less likely to own homes, people of color have borne a disproportionate share of the housing crisis. From 2007 to 2009, Black and Latino borrowers, respectively, were 76 and 71 percent more likely than whites to experience foreclosure.³⁰ This stark difference in the amount of foreclosures by race is largely due to predatory lending. Predatory lenders often target communities of color and studies have found that “... wide differences in lending by race, even when accounting for income levels, suggests that more minorities are receiving high-cost loans than is justified based on creditworthiness.”³¹

These examples of racial inequity pose a fundamental challenge to political leadership in the state. A goal of all state policy, budget, and revenue decisions should be the reduction and/or elimination of racial inequity in the state.

This report will assess the 2011-2013 state budget and determine where the Legislature and the Governor have succeeded or failed at making substantial progress in addressing racial equity.

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METHODOLOGY

This report examines the 2011-2013 Biennial Budget passed by the State Legislature and signed by the Governor at the conclusion of the 2011 Special Session. This analysis does not include cuts made during the 2011 supplemental budget (a detailed analysis of those cuts, titled “The Color of Cuts,” is available online). The report assesses major budget decisions in relationship to their most direct potential or actual impacts on all Washingtonians, and people of color in particular.

Each section highlights existing racial inequities, and documents the impact of legislative decisions on communities of color.

- Revenue
- Health Care
- Human & Social Services
- Education
- Criminal Justice
- Civil Rights & Citizenship

DESPITE INITIATIVES, A MOVEMENT FOR REVENUE

Despite an electoral track record as a socially liberal state, Washington features a stunningly regressive tax structure that disproportionately leverages Washington’s people of color.

Washington is one of seven states in the country that lack the ability to target specific segments of earners through a graduated income tax that focuses more on ability to pay than a flat sales tax.³² As a result, low- and middle-income residents pay a higher proportion of their income in taxes than high-income earners.

In fact, according to an Institute on Taxation & Economic Policy report, Washington is the most regressive state in the country. The bottom fifth of the state population—with an average annual income of \$11,000—pays 17.3 percent of their income in state taxes, while those making between \$37,000 and \$62,000 pay 10.8 percent. However, the top 1 percent of the population, with an average income of \$1.8 million, pays just 2.6 percent of their income in state taxes.³³

And as they pay more of their income to fund the cost of public services, low- and middle-income residents are disproportionately impacted by budget cuts, with the decimation of education, health care, public safety, and other services geared to benefit those in need.

Meanwhile, this regressive tax structure harms communities of color most. According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2010 American Community Survey, the average Black person in the state earned nearly 30 percent less than the average Washingtonian. Earnings for the average Native American were 36 percent lower than the state average, while a typical Hispanic or Latino person earned less than half of the average Washingtonian. And

the average Black, Native American or Hispanic/Latino household is more than 2.5 times more likely to be impoverished than the average Washingtonian.

It is Washington's most vulnerable citizens—the children, the unemployed, the elderly, those with disabilities, immigrants, refugees and people of color in general—who will be most impacted by the Legislature's inability to raise revenue.

Initiatives Deal Progressive Movement Major Setback

The progressive revenue movement absorbed a huge blow on Nov. 2, 2010, when Washington voters overwhelmingly rejected Initiative 1098—which would have created a graduated income tax affecting only individuals making \$200,000 or more and couples making \$400,000 or more.

Voters also approved Tim Eyman's Initiative 1053, which requires a two-thirds supermajority in the Legislature or a simple majority of voters at the ballot to raise taxes.

Finally, voters' approval of Initiative 1107 rejected a tax levied by the Legislature on pop, candy, gum, bottled water and certain processed foods. While the tax is widely viewed as highly regressive, it will cost the state \$272 million in revenues over three years.³⁴

The discussion is a complicated one for people of color, as revenue is sorely needed to prevent cuts to vital programs from which these communities benefit. But because the single most powerful lever legislators have to raise revenue—the sales tax—would negatively impact low- and middle-income people most, communities of color stand to lose even more.

A Missed Opportunity: Closing Tax Loopholes:

Despite the statutory obstacles legislators face because of Initiative 1053, there was a movement last session for a balanced approach to confronting the shortfall. **HB 2078** would have closed some tax loopholes and funneled the money into K-3 education.

The bill would have closed two tax breaks in particular: the tax exemption for Wall Street banks earning more than \$100 million on first-time home mortgages and the exemption for out-of-state shoppers. While falling far short of making up the budget shortfall, it is one way to raise revenue without using a regressive tool.

“We have a revenue problem that's devastating our education system and social-service safety net,” Reps. Laurie Jinkins and Kristine Lytton, two of the bill's co-sponsors, said in a Seattle Times op-ed. “We need systemic revenue reform, but in the short term, our modest proposal is a start.”³⁵

The bill was passed out of the Ways & Means Committee and received a simple majority of votes on the House floor. However, the 52-42 vote failed to meet the two-thirds majority threshold established by Initiative 1053, killing the bill.

Revenue bills proposed this session will also face the two-thirds threshold, as the Legislature will not have the ability to suspend an initiative for another year.

HEALTH CARE

Overview

The 2011-2013 budget includes \$676.8 million in total cuts from programs dedicated to the health and wellness of Washingtonians. These cuts do not impact everyone equally, but disproportionately impact certain vulnerable groups, particularly people of color.

People of color in Washington State suffer from poorer health outcomes than white residents. The Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities³⁶ notes the following racial disparities in health and health care:

- Out of all racial/ethnic groups, Hispanic adults are the least likely to report having a personal healthcare provider
- Asians and Pacific Islanders suffer disproportionately from certain chronic diseases than all other racial or ethnic groups
- Coronary heart disease mortality rates are drastically higher for American Indian/Alaska Natives and Blacks than for Whites
- Black and American Indian/Alaska Natives have double the infant mortality rates than other groups
- Communities of color have a disproportionately larger numbers of hazardous treatment facilities, landfills and toxic release inventory facilities in their neighborhoods

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 development and functioning. It has been shown that "People in racial and ethnic minority populations experience more barriers to care, a greater incidence of chronic disease, lower quality of care and higher mortality than the general population."³⁷ With chronic illnesses, access to regular doctor's visits and medication are critical to survival. Without this access to preventative care, the result will be an even larger increase in mortality rates among these communities for conditions that are treatable.

One of the most important roles the state plays in mitigating health disparities is the provision of quality, affordable health coverage. People of color are more likely to be uninsured than whites, but they are also more likely to be receiving public insurance (Medicare, Medicaid, Basic Health, or Apple Health for Kids) than whites.³⁸ Latinos compose 9.3 percent of the state population, yet they represent 18 percent of those covered on Medicaid.³⁹ Similarly, African Americans make up 3 percent of the total state population, yet represent 8 percent of those covered on Medicaid. As a result, budget cuts to state health coverage programs will not affect all communities equally. People of color (but also everyone who is at risk of losing insurance, already on public insurance, the chronically ill and low-income families), will feel the impact of cuts to these programs the most.

Basic Health Plan

\$129.6 million cut

Washington's Basic Health Plan is often the only health coverage option for low-income individuals, particularly those without access to employer-based coverage.

Cuts in the biennial budget have the following impact:

- 20,000 people who were previously covered by Basic Health have lost their coverage
- No new enrollees will be allowed on the program for the next two years
- The 153,284 people currently on the waiting list, as well as the other individuals who will be unenrolled from Basic Health will have no alternative insurance options that are affordable
- In 2013, the Basic Health Plan will only insure 33,000 people/month (while there will be over 100,000 individuals on the waiting list)

While the Basic Health Plan does not collect enrollment data by race or ethnicity, an analysis by the Washington State Board of Health shows that Basic Health enrollees are disproportionately people of color.⁴⁰ Cuts to Basic Health will increase the barriers that many people of color and low-income people face in accessing quality health care.

The cuts made to Basic Health last session also strongly targeted the immigrant community. Last January, Washington State received federal matching funds for part of the Basic Health population. In mid-February, the Legislature decided, under budgetary pressures, to cut off funding for Basic Health coverage for most of the remaining non-federally-funded population, largely consisting of immigrants. According to a press release by the Northwest Health Law Advocates, “when the decision was made to disenroll these members, the disenrollments were done very hurriedly, with notices sent to nearly 17,000 people in a 5-hour time period the same day the legislature passed the new budget.”

The state disenrolled members without having access to information about whether they were actually still eligible for coverage. The Basic Health termination notices also did not describe the new eligibility criteria or give the members complete information about how to show continued eligibility. A recent court ruling found that the disenrollments based on the immigration status of people lawfully present in the United States violated their constitutional Equal Protection rights. The judge also held that the state notices of disenrollment were inadequate and violated the recipients' Due Process rights. The individuals and families affected by the ruling are those that are legal permanent residents, but have not yet lived in the United States for 5 years.

All individuals should be afforded the right to reliable and affordable health care coverage. As referenced earlier in the report, immigrant households, which represent 12.5 percent of households in Washington, pay more than their fair share in taxes, accounting for 13.2 percent of all taxes paid in 2007.⁴¹ Yet despite this fact, immigrants tend to be the first group targeted when the state is looking to trim costs.

In this upcoming Special Session, the Governor recommended the complete elimination of the Basic Health Plan. Without Basic Health, affordable health care coverage is out of reach for many. If the program is eliminated completely, this will only serve to increase state spending in the long run, as families and individuals are forced to go to the Emergency Room due to illness.

Conclusion: Cuts to the Basic Health Plan result in greater disparities in health care access for people of color in Washington, particularly people in low-wage work. If the entire program is eliminated during the upcoming Special Session, thousands of individuals who rely on the program (many of whom are people of color) will be unable to afford health care coverage.

Community Health Clinics

\$110 million cut (\$86 million cut from Medicaid payments to FQHCs and \$24 million cut from the health clinic grant program)

Community health clinics provide a critical safety net for people who are uninsured or underinsured. The reduction of Medicaid reimbursements to Federally Qualified Health Centers will directly impact the ability of health centers to provide core health services. In addition to the \$86 million cut to Medicaid payments to FQHCs, clinics also had \$24 million (50 percent of the total) in cuts to the health clinic grant program. Health clinic grants are used to offset the cost of primary care services for low-income clients who are eligible for sliding-scale fees.

In Washington State, people of color are more likely to rely on community clinics to receive health care. Although Hispanics only make up 9.3 percent of the total state population, they represent 36 percent of the community health center patients.⁴² With these cuts, clinics will have fewer resources to care for these patients. It will be harder for clinics to accept Medicaid patients and/or uninsured patients, even though community health centers are often the only places that will accept these patients. Because community clinics are the last option for preventive and non-emergent care for many patients, people in need will resort to expensive care in hospital emergency rooms or

avoid care altogether, which will have devastating human and financial costs. It is far more cost effective to provide care at the clinic level than in an emergency room. While hospitals are mandated to serve anyone walking into an emergency room, cuts must be made elsewhere in their system in order to afford to provide this service, thus impacting the whole community.

Conclusion: Clinics will be forced to scale back services or treat fewer patients, and some clinics may be forced to close doors. Since communities of color rely disproportionately on community clinics for care, people of color will bear the brunt of these cuts and racial inequity in health outcomes will increase along with costs for the state and all insured Washington residents.

Emergency Room Utilization

\$33 million cut

The 2011-2013 budget limits reimbursements for non-emergent visits to the emergency room for Medicaid patients to three reimbursable visits per patient per year. With the cuts made to Basic Health and community clinics, more and more families are likely to seek care in the emergency room when they have an ailment that cannot be ignored. According to the Washington State Hospital Association, “many of the conditions on the state’s list of ‘non-emergency’ visits are life-threatening emergencies for infants and young children. These include hernia, diabetic coma, convulsions from high fever, major difficulty breathing, and severe hemorrhage in infants.”⁴³

This harmful policy will also have a greater impact on children of color, who already suffer from poorer health outcomes and more hazards.⁴⁴ For example, “...Latino and Black children are more likely to suffer from poor dental health, asthma, lead poisoning, obesity and diabetes and they are less likely to have a usual source of care.”⁴⁵ Given these factors, it’s more likely that children of color will need to visit the Emergency Room than their white counterparts.

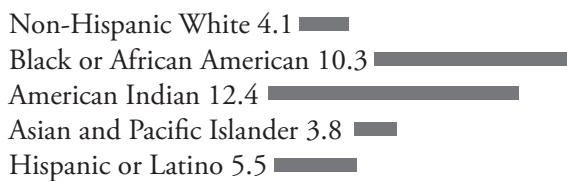
Conclusion: Cuts to emergency room utilization funds cause an undue stress on both hospitals and the people affected, the majority of which will be communities of color, low-income and uninsured.

Maternity Support Services

\$12 million cut (30% of funding)

State funding for Maternity Support Services (MSS) was reduced by \$12 million, with a corresponding loss of \$11.9 million in federal matching funds (a total reduction of 30 percent). MSS 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 suffer greater health risks in birth. The chart highlights the death rate per 1,000 live births by race for the state of Washington.⁴⁶



As the chart shows, people of color face higher rates of infant mortality. MSS is utilized by 1 in 3 women in Washington, a disproportionate number of whom are people of color. Prenatal care and pregnancy support services are critical strategies in reducing health disparities.⁴⁷

MSS makes kids of color healthier. The program classifies Native American and African American children at the highest risk, and automatically allots them the maximum amount of care units. As a result, the rate of low-birth-weight babies born to Native American women has been reduced by 20%, and the rate born to African American is down by 50%. MSS has led to twice as many healthy African American babies.

Conclusion: Cuts to, or elimination of, Maternity Support Services jeopardize the health of 65,000 at-risk pregnant women and infants for the critical first year of life and will directly impact the health of entire communities of people of color through their children.



Adult Dental

Discontinued - \$29 million cut

The 2011-2013 budget eliminates adult dental care coverage within Medicaid for non-disabled, non-pregnant adults. The removal of dental coverage from Medicaid will cause 105,000 people to lose dental coverage.

Dental health is extremely important for overall health, and preventable dental problems are one of the most common causes of visits to the emergency room. People of color, who are more likely to depend on Medicaid for health coverage, and low-income people will bear the brunt of this budget cut.

Conclusion: Oral health is critical to overall health. By removing adult dental coverage from Medicaid, the budget denies critical care to 105,000 low-income people, a disproportionate number of whom are people of color.

"What's killing us is the budget cuts to dental care. My husband is a very funny man who can really make people laugh, but he's so self-conscious of his teeth that he won't smile at a job interview. He feels that if he does, his bad teeth will work against him, which is probably true. But I tell him that when he doesn't smile he looks mean. I feel that this is really hurting his ability to get a job. I have a job interview next week and also have a front tooth I'm about to lose. I'm praying that it will just hang on until after the interview."

Olympia resident

Apple Health for Kids

\$1.6 million cut (\$1.5 million from the state and the Federal match of \$34,000)

Every parent wants quality health care for their children. Apple Health for Kids is the state's health coverage program for low-income children. It provides sliding scale coverage for children in families with incomes up to 300 percent of the federal poverty line.

The Governor's proposed biennial budget called for the elimination of health coverage for all of the 27,000 children without documentation of legal status covered by Apple Health for Kids. The Legislature rejected this proposal, instead raising premiums for children without documentation of legal status who are living at or below 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL - \$36,620 for a family of three). The cuts have an effect on roughly 250 children.

Though a provision was made for private sponsorship, the Health Care Authority rejected a recent proposal to provide funds to cover the gap for these families, putting children's health at risk and ignoring the will of the Legislature.

Conclusion: Cuts to Apple Health for Kids add a burden on working families from immigrant backgrounds. However, given the potential of elimination of coverage for undocumented children, the State Legislature was able to hold back a major assault on health equity for children of color.

"I have five children who are enrolled in the Apple Health Program for Kids and they all rely heavily on the health care coverage they're able to receive through the program. One of my children was born with severe asthma and allergies, my other son is losing his sight and needs frequent eyesight check-ups and my oldest son is currently getting counseling covered by the Apple Program. Annually, all of my children need check-ups and vaccinations, in particular to be enrolled in the K-12 public school system. My husband's salary is the only source of income for the family. Without the Apple Health program, we would not be able to afford health insurance for our children."

Maria Luna, Bellevue resident

Medical Interpreter Services in Medicaid

\$8.2 million cut (\$2.8 million from the state and a Federal match of \$5.4 million)

More than 19,000 interpreter appointments are made every month by more than 80,000 Washington residents who rely on interpreter services in healthcare settings. Every day 900 patients use state-supported interpreter services to communicate with their health care provider.

Washington's limited English proficient (LEP) population increased by 37.4 percent between 2000 and 2009,⁴⁸ and the need for interpreter services in medical settings will only increase with this population growth. Hospitals and clinics who now receive reimbursements for Medicaid patients who need interpretation will be forced to absorb these costs. Providers may be more reluctant to serve Medicaid patients when they have to pay for interpretation for the LEP Medicaid patients per Federal civil rights policy, harming the State's Medicaid provider network. And patients may rely on their own children for interpretation or simply go without. Either way, a lack of interpretation puts patients' health at risk, increases costs for medical care and increases the risk of litigation for providers.⁴⁹

The 2011-2013 budget cut \$8.2 million in state and federal funding for interpreter services within the Medicaid program. Budget legislation also opens the door for expanded use of remote and telephonic interpretation. However, there are concerns that these services may be less effective, may not produce significant cost savings, or may create other barriers to clear patient-provider communication.

In addition to patients and health care providers, Washington's 2,000 interpreters – many of whom are people of color – are impacted by these cuts.⁵⁰ Decreased funding, as well as outsourcing of interpreter services to video or telephonic mediums, will reduce the number of jobs available. Given high unemployment rates, the loss of interpreter jobs may have an unintended but compounding impact on the health and well-being of immigrants and communities of color.

The risk of lawsuits against providers when they cannot clearly determine patient needs/condition is also greatly increased.

Conclusion: Eliminating medical interpreter services increases 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.

At 19,000 interpreter appointments every month, medical interpreters currently help thousands of limited English speaking persons communicate with and understand their doctor's instructions.

"The patients have told me they will feel abandoned and helpless. They are scared. People have a basic right to communicate with their doctor, and so they need an Interpreter if they cannot express themselves because they don't speak English well."

Edmundo Cavazos, DSHS Certified Spanish Interpreter, Tacoma, WA

From Patients in Kent and Tacoma:

"Sin interpretes no se si pueda explicarle bien al doctor lo que traigo."

"Without an interpreter I don't know if I will be able to explain to the doctor what is going on with me."

"Como voy a poder decirle al doctor si las medicinas realmente funcionan o que cosa con la medicina? A lo major hasta me mata la medicina, y todo por culpa de no darnos interpretes. Eso esta muy mal!"

"How will I be able to tell the doctor if the medicine is really working, or what is going on with the medicine? Maybe the medicine might kill me, and all because of not having interpreters. That is really wrong!"

Human & Social Services

Overview

The budget for the 2011-2013 biennium includes funding cuts for programs that directly affect the health and well-being of Washington residents. The budget makes deep cuts to programs such as Home Care, mental health services, TANF, the Disability Lifeline and State Food Assistance. These programs provide essential support services including food, health care, housing, and employment support for low-income people, immigrants, and a disproportionate number of people of color in the state.

This section reviews budget decisions made by the State Legislature and enacted by the Governor in the area of human and social services.

Program Cuts In Detail

Home Care

\$98.1 million cut

Long-term in-home care provides a range of services for seniors and people with disabilities that allow them to remain safely in their homes. Home care services include non-medical assistance with daily activities like bathing, dressing, and meal preparation. It also includes medical services such as administering insulin for diabetics, medication management, and transfer. The majority of people who rely on long term care are seniors aged 65 or older, and 23% of clients are developmentally disabled. People of color are 58 percent more likely than whites to depend on these services.⁵¹

Budget cuts reduce the funding for personal care hours by \$98.1 million. This cut translates to a 10 percent reduction in personal care hours per consumer per month, with lower acuity consumers receiving more severe cuts to their personal care hours. As many people are in need of 24-hour supervision, the brunt of these cuts will fall on families who will have to cover gaps in care, or on service recipients who will go without necessary care or who will be forced to move to more costly institutional settings.

The cuts also affect home care providers, who account for over 43,000 jobs in Washington State.⁵² The 2011-13 budget suspends the mandatory 75 hours of basic training and certification required by law under Initiative 1029. Reductions in hours may result in a loss of jobs or wages for these low wage workers, over 30% of whom are people of color.⁵³

Conclusion: Cuts to home care threaten the health and well-being of people with disabilities and seniors, and disproportionately impact people of color who receive services and work as home care providers.



"I have been a homecare worker for 10 years now and I truly love my job. My client is a medically fragile young lady who has down syndrome. She wears oxygen due to the fact that she lost one of her lungs and she is in a wheelchair. A year ago I was considered a middle class worker. Since that time funding for home care has been drastically slashed. My client lost many of her services and 76% of her care hours. Now she only receives 20 hours of care per week, but she really needs 24 hour care. This means I've lost 76 percent of my income but I still do the same amount of work. On top of that, homecare workers haven't had a raise in three years. These cuts have caused me to give up my place of residence and move back in with my parents. I have been looking for more work since January but the economy is so bad I can't find anything. I've also lost my health care. I never thought that as a 29 year-old college graduate, I'd find myself in the food bank line. What's sad is when I look around and see a lot of people in line younger or around my age there. It baffles me how low-income and middle class households keep getting hit when the wealthiest people and corporations in this country still have a ton of tax breaks. If the poor and middle class have to sacrifice so much why do the wealthiest in this country not have to sacrifice when they have more to give? I'm starting to wonder what happened to my American dream."

Tanika Aden, Lakewood resident

Mental Health

\$33.2 million cut

Mental health care is critical to both individual health and the health of communities. According to the Department of Health and Human Services, “Poverty has the most measurable affect on mental health. People in the lowest strata of income, education, and occupation are about two to three times more likely than those in the highest strata to be diagnosed with a mental disorder.” Because low-income populations include a disproportionate amount of people of color, access to mental health care is an issue of equity.

Mental health issues impact communities in different ways. The suicide rate of Native Americans is 50 percent higher than the national rate. While rates of mental illness are similar between African Americans and whites after accounting for differences in income and education, African Americans are overrepresented in vulnerable populations (homelessness, incarceration, and foster care) where rates of mental health illnesses are much higher. Moreover, errors in diagnosis occur more frequently for African Americans than for whites. While the overall rates of mental health issues for Latinos are similar to that of whites, Hispanic American youth suffer significantly higher rates of anxiety disorders and suicide attempts. Additionally, specific ethnic groups such as Southeast Asian refugees suffer higher rates of post traumatic stress disorder due to conditions prior to immigration.⁵⁴

The Surgeon General reports that ethnic and racial minorities are less likely to receive necessary mental health services and are more likely to receive poor quality of care. The 2011-13 budget exacerbates this problem, as it cuts funding for mental health services by \$33.2 million. Cuts include a \$15 million cut from state mental hospitals and an \$18.2 million cut from Regional Support Networks (RSNs), which provide mental health services to low income individuals throughout Washington State.

Conclusion: Budget cuts to mental health care make access to treatment even more difficult and will have a disproportionate impact on people of color in Washington State. Untreated mental health issues leave communities more at risk.

Crises Postponed: State Food Assistance Program

Washington State’s Food Assistance program was created in 1997 to provide food stamps to documented immigrants who became ineligible for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The program provides a safety net to immigrants and refugees with extremely limited resources.

Washington is one of seven states that operate state-funded food assistance programs for individuals who do not qualify for the federal food assistance programs. 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.

Recipients of the State Food Assistance Program are predominantly people of color from various countries of origin. As of the spring 2010, the following countries led the list: Mexico, Marshall Islands, Ethiopia, Philippines, Russia and Micronesia.

The State Food Assistance Program provides 31,000 needy enrollees, half of whom are children, with an average of \$114 per month in food assistance. Of all enrollees, 47 percent are children and 8 percent are seniors. A disproportionate number of recipients are people of color. The 2011-2013 biennial budget reduced funding to the State’s Food Assistance Program by \$30 million by cutting the monthly benefits by 50%.

Although a \$30 million funding cut to the State Food Assistance Program was passed as part of the 2011-2013 budget, it has yet to be enacted. Columbia Legal Services filed a lawsuit against the state on the basis of equal protection and due process. A federal judge stopped the state from eliminating the program or cutting benefits until the case can be heard. DSHS has appealed the judge’s ruling, however. DSHS has also proposed elimination of the program in the next round of cuts; it is not clear yet whether the Governor will follow their recommendation. The legislature will once again be considering further reductions in the Special Session.

Cuts to the State Food Assistance program would disproportionately impact people of color, worsen childhood and family hunger, and directly affect the health, nutrition and educational opportunities of thousands of immigrant children and families. Hunger doesn’t discriminate. Cutting State Food Assistance does.

***Hunger doesn’t discriminate.
Cutting State Food Assistance does.***

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Nearly \$380 million cut

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a critical income support program that provides cash assistance and services such as child care, work support, education and transportation to low-income families with children. The deep cuts to the program come at a time when families are in more need of assistance than ever and will only exacerbate the struggles that families are facing to make ends meet.

Cuts to TANF include:

WorkFirst 60-Month Time Limit

In February, 2011 the Governor implemented a 60-month (5 year) lifetime limit of TANF receipt. This resulted in 5,500 families and nearly 13,000 children losing their only source of income at the time of implementation, with additional families reaching the lifetime limit and losing their benefits every month.⁵⁵

Child-Only 60-Month Time Limit

In November 2011, a 60-month lifetime limit of TANF receipt was applied to child-only TANF cases with a parent in the home. As a result, “Affected children will lose their TANF grant even if their parents’ income is too low to provide for their basic needs.”⁵⁶

15% cut to TANF cash grant

The TANF cash grant provides low-income families with cash grants to meet their basic needs while parents are looking for employment. In February 2011, the Governor cut the TANF cash grant by 15%, which resulted in a decrease from \$562 to \$478 per month for a family of three. According to a report compiled by Statewide Poverty Action Network, this reduced cash grant only covers 26% of the resources needed for a family to maintain a basic standard of living as defined by the state.⁵⁷

The cuts made to the TANF program will make it harder for low-income families to support themselves while in transition. Currently existing racial disparities and inequities make communities of color more likely to rely on TANF; although communities of color only make up 24.2% of the state’s overall population, they represent 58.6% of the people receiving TANF assistance.⁵⁸ Cuts to the TANF program will therefore hit hardest in communities of color and make it more challenging for communities of color to support their families in this time of need.

Conclusion: Reductions to TANF will disproportionately impact communities of color and will make it harder for those families to meet even their most basic needs. As the repercussions of cuts magnify within communities of color, racial disparities in poverty will widen, only exacerbating other already troubling disparities in education, health care and general well-being.

“I am a 29 year old Ethiopian refugee with three beautiful children that are 1 ½, 3 and 5. I have done everything I can to provide for my children, but we still rely heavily on state assistance. We receive money from TANF and I’ve seen that amount decrease continuously throughout the past couple years. It’s been harder and harder for me to put food on the table and make sure that my children can live the life they deserve. I’m at a point where I don’t know if I can stay in my house. It’s extremely stressful and I worry every day about the future of my children. If every man is created equal, where is this equality? How come every time there are cuts to the budget, immigrants and communities of color are the one who suffer most?”

Giday Adhanom, Seattle resident

Disability Lifeline Cash Grants

\$180 million cut

Disability Lifeline, formerly GA-U (General Assistance for the Unemployable), is a program of the Department of Social and Human Services. It provides cash assistance and medical benefits to working-age adults who are unable to work due to disabilities and do not qualify for Medicare. This monthly living assistance is used for food, housing, and basic needs. People on Disability Lifeline also receive health care coverage. The elimination of Disability Lifeline cash grants 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.⁵⁹

The budget for the 2011-2013 biennium reduced monthly grants for people with disabilities by 42 percent and eliminated cash assistance completely by October 31, 2011, for a total cut of \$180 million. Instead of cash assistance, eligible recipients will instead be referred to the Department of Commerce Special Needs and Housing Support program, where they can apply to receive a housing voucher to be administered by counties. The new budget allocates \$64 million for Special Needs and Housing Support.

Conclusion: Termination of Disability Lifeline cash grants will have a negative impact on people of color, particularly African and Native Americans. Funds for Housing and Special Needs do not compensate for the deep cuts to the program since the amount allocated is so slim compared to the total amount of funding cut.

Distribution of Disability Lifeline Participants & Washington Total

Population by Race	% in Program	% of Population 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

Housing Trust Fund

Funding reduced by 61.5%

The Housing Trust Fund (HTF) provides funding for organizations to help meet the housing needs of low-income and special needs populations. In the past three budget cycles, the HTF has seen funding drop from \$200 million, to \$130 million (with \$25 million set aside for higher income workforce housing), to \$50 million (which is what it's funded at for the '11-'13 biennium). Organizations that receive funding from the HTF include: local governments and housing authorities, regional support networks, nonprofit community or neighborhood-based organizations, federally recognized Indian tribes and regional or statewide nonprofit housing assistance organizations.⁶⁰

“More than 71 percent of people who live in homes supported by the Housing Trust Fund are extremely low-income (a family of three earning less than about \$17,500 in most areas of the state), making it a vital resource in the fight to end homelessness.”⁶¹ The need for affordable housing is more pertinent than ever. As communities continue to feel the backlash of the recession and unemployment remains high, low-income families are in even more need of support. Since communities of color are more likely to be low-income, they will be hit the hardest by this decrease in funding.

According to a report by the Board Advocacy Project, in 2009 housing providers combined applied for \$183 million from HTF, which would have created over 5,000 homes. Only \$22.5 million was available in funding, leading to only 706 homes being built.⁶² This means that 4,294 affordable homes were not able to be completed due to lack of resources. Since even less funding is available for HTF in the 2011-2013 biennium, the amount of affordable homes being built will be significantly lowered, affecting low-income families and communities of color across the state.

In this country, affordable housing is crucial to success. Affordable housing is also shown to improve both health outcomes⁶³ and educational outcomes⁶⁴ within communities. This is especially important among communities of color since racial disparities already exist in both health care and education.

Conclusion: Reduction of funding to HTF will increase homelessness in communities of color and low-income communities and will further increase existing racial disparities in education and health.

Missed Opportunities

HB 2048—This bill would have extended existing recording surcharges that fund low-income and homeless housing assistance. HB 2048 would have preserved the existing surcharge on recording documents, and added an additional surcharge of \$10 dollars, bringing the total surcharge to \$40. On June 30, 2015, the surcharge would return to \$30, which would sunset on June 30, 2017. ***This bill would have generated \$24 million and would have offset the \$8 million dollar reduction that was included in the final budget.***⁶⁵

Prime Sponsor: Representative Phyllis Kenney-46th District

HB 1526—Would have ensured that tenant screening services did not include a qualified victim protection record pertaining to the prospective client, including domestic violence and sexual assault protection orders in a tenant screening report to the landlord. The bill also included other prospective tenant protections related to limiting costs that landlords may collect for the screening and landlord notification to the tenant of what the tenant screening entails.⁶⁶ ***If passed, this bill would have ensured that landlords could not discriminate against tenants based on past history of domestic abuse and also would have limited the amount of costs for screening.***

Prime Sponsor: Representative Tina Orwall, 33rd District

EDUCATION

Overview

Washington State Constitution, ARTICLE IX: EDUCATION

SECTION 1 PREAMBLE. It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders, without distinction or preference on account of race, color, caste, or sex.

The Washington State Constitution clearly states that our education system should ensure the academic success of all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, or income. Low student-teacher ratios, ample counselors, support services for students and families, programs for students with special needs, affordable tuition, experienced and supported teachers, and targeted financial assistance are all required to help students succeed. Yet these essential attributes of a quality public education system do not exist for many students. As a result, students of color are far less likely to complete high school, attend college, or obtain a degree that prepares them for a career in a livable wage occupation.⁶⁷

Across the nation, gaps in educational performance and attainment between white students and students of color persist. Washington State is no exception. In fact, Washington ranks in the bottom five of all states in closing the racial and ethnic achievement gap. While some progress has been made, at the current pace it will take 45 to 50 years to close the gap between students of color and their White counterparts.⁶⁸

Significant racial disparities exist in Washington schools, reinforcing inequities experienced by people of color in other areas such as employment and income. Dropout rates are disproportionately high among students of color, with American Indians more than twice as likely as whites to not complete high school.⁶⁹ All these problems have led to significant disparities in Washington Assessment of Student Learning Scores, where students of color score consistently lower, especially in math, than white students.⁷⁰ Schools that perform above expectations on the WASL test tend to have substantially fewer low-income students, fewer African-American and American Indian students, and more Asian students than schools that performed below expectations.⁷¹

While there are known remedies to the achievement gap, these require an equitable allotment of resources. Tragically, cuts to state education funding in the biennial budget undermine these efforts by eliminating funding that has been proven to improve educational outcomes and reduce the achievement gap. For example, the 2011-2013 budget includes severe cuts to core programs including early learning, K-4 education, teacher compensation and recruitment, higher education tuition and financial aid. As a result of these budget cuts, students of color will face additional barriers to educational attainment. These cuts set Washington State on a path toward widening racial inequality for generations to come.

At a Glance - Education programs cut in the 2011-2013 Operating Budget that disproportionately impact students of color:

- Changes to Working Connections Child Care resulted in 2,500 families being cut from the program, an increase in co-payments and the establishment of a waiting list for the program
- \$3 million cut from the Early Childhood Education Career & Wage Ladder eliminated the entire program, reducing the professional and educational progress of 1,000 early learning teachers and caregivers throughout the state
- \$214.7 million cut from 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
- \$179.0 million cut from K-12 employee salaries will make it harder to attract and retain the most talented, diverse and culturally competent teachers
- \$535.5 million cut from two and four year colleges will eliminate many academic support staff and will reduce the capacity of higher education institutions to accommodate otherwise capable students with special learning needs
- \$31.0 million cut from State Work Study will reduce accessibility to higher education for low-income students who are disproportionately students of color
- \$18.8 million cut from targeted financial aid programs designed to help overcome opportunity gaps will adversely impact students of color
- \$16.7 million cut from the State Need Grant will make fewer resources available for student of color to afford higher education in the future
- \$7.5 million cut from Community and Technical Colleges will reduce access to libraries, financial aid counselors and student advisors, resources that are key to the success of students of color in post-secondary schools



Program Cuts In Detail

Early Learning

Changes to Working Connections Child Care and elimination of the Early Childhood Education Career & Wage Ladder

Early learning is a critical component to addressing racial disparities within education. In addition to increasing children of color's chances of thriving academically, there is also a strong link between access to early learning and health disparities. Early learning programs thus lay the foundation for overall success, especially among children of color. This past budget cycle saw cuts to two crucial programs that support early learning – Working Connections Child Care and the Early Childhood Education Career & Wage Ladder program.

Cuts to Working Connections Child Care include:

Changes in Eligibility

Eligibility for the Working Connections Child Care program was reduced from 200% FPL to 175% FPL. This change in eligibility caused 2,500 families to be cut from the program.⁷³

Increases in co-payments

For families with incomes between 82% FPL and 137.5 % FPL, monthly co-payments increased by \$15 (from \$50 to \$65). Families with incomes between 137.5% FPL and 175% FPL saw monthly co-payments increase using a sliding scale.⁷⁴

Implementation of a Waiting List

A cap of 33,000 families has been set for Working Connections Child Care. Between March and September there were anywhere between 3,000-5,000 families on the waiting list.

The cuts to Working Connections Child Care make it more challenging for low-income families, a disproportionate amount of whom are people of color, to receive the child care they need in order to continue working. The combination of the changes in eligibility, the cap on families accepted into the program and the increases in monthly co-payments all create additional obstacles for families that are already struggling to make ends meet. Parents in search of work will have a harder time securing employment without the guarantee of affordable child care available.

The Early Childhood Education Career & Wage Ladder

\$3 million cut, complete elimination of the program

This past session also saw the elimination of the Early Childhood Education Career & Wage Ladder program. The purpose of the Wage Ladder was to improve the quality of child care by enabling early learning teachers to earn appropriate professional compensation, based on educational advancement and achievement, as well as experience and job responsibility.⁷⁵ After a three-year evaluation, it was found that the program improved the quality of care and teaching in the classroom environment, teacher-child interactions and the educational achievement and pursuit of education.⁷⁶ The elimination of the program will have an effect on at least 55 child care centers in Washington.

The Wage Ladder provided a win-win situation for both teachers and students. The elimination of the program will “...imperil the professional and educational progress of 1,000 early learning teachers and caregivers across the state. These early learning teachers will lose critical supports necessary to sustain their participation in the early care and education field.”⁷⁷ As talented teachers are frustrated and pushed out of early learning, this will also have an effect on the children served. Since children of color already see racial disparities in education, they will bear the brunt of this burden.

Conclusion: Investment in early learning is proven to reduce racial disparities in both education and health. The cuts made to Working Connections Child Care and the Career & Wage Ladder will thus exacerbate already existing racial inequalities and will add additional barriers to long-term success for children and families of color.

K-12 Education Funding and Class Sizes

\$214.7 million cut

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.⁷⁸ While small class sizes are known as one of the most effective ways to reduce the racial academic achievement gap, the lack of political will to prioritize education funding for this purpose will result in increased student to teacher ratios over the next two years.⁷⁹

Underfunded public schools have an increasingly disproportionate impact on students of color. 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.

Public School 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

Funding for lower class sizes in K-4 classrooms was first eliminated in the December 2010 supplemental budget. Legislators voted on House Bill 2078, which would have restored class size reductions. This measure passed with a simple majority in the House, but did not reach the 2/3 majority required for passage of any bill that increases revenue. Moreover, the budget continues the suspension of voter-approved Initiative 728 and Initiative 732, which called for funding smaller class sizes and educator cost-of-living adjustments. Thus, the all-cuts 2011-2013 budget will enable the increase of class sizes in grades K-3 from 23 full-time equivalent students per teacher to 25, the maximum size under the definition of basic education. In the 4th grade, classes will grow to the maximum allowable size of 27 students per teacher.

While the budget provides partial funding to reduce class sizes for schools where more than 50 percent of students are eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch, the net effect is still a step backward for students in public education. The 2011-2013 biennial budget also reduces funding for alternative learning, a critical support for many students of color.

Conclusion: Cuts to K-12 school programs and class reduction efforts exacerbate the achievement gap.

Teacher Compensation and Recruitment

\$179 million cut

Allocations to school districts for K-12 employees' salaries were reduced by 3 percent for Administrators and by 1.9 percent for classified and certificated instructional staff for the next two years. Given this \$179 million dollar contraction, few positions will be made available to new teachers who need to be recruited to correct for the overrepresentation of white people on school staff. Over the last decade, the number of white students in Washington's public education system has declined, while the population of students of color has increased by 38 percent. These changing demographic trends are not reflected in instructional staff, and thus a hiring slow-down effectively widens this representational gap.

Racial disparities between faculty and the student populations they instruct are even more acute in higher education. Salary has been shown to be a factor in attracting and retaining professors of color, which in turn have been shown to improve the retention of minority students.⁸⁰ Several years of stagnant wages for faculty and academic student employees (teaching and research assistants) have made it more difficult for Washington to compete in attracting a skilled and diverse workforce. This past budget also saw an \$82.1 million dollar cut to higher education salaries, posing further barriers to an equitable education system.

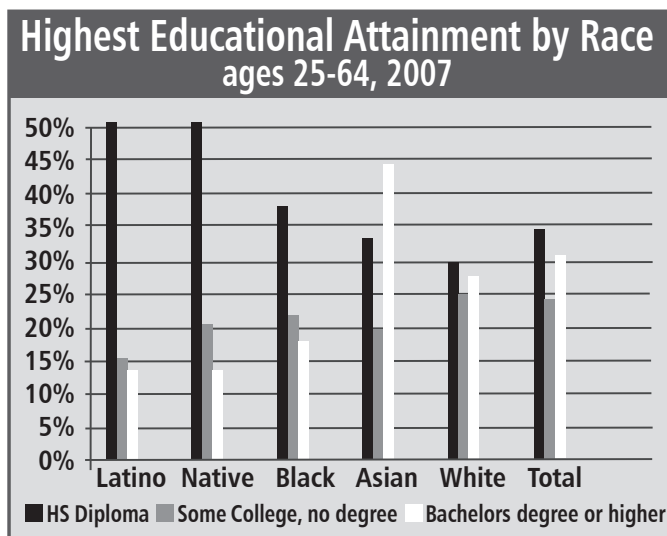
Conclusion: Without funding to diversify and recruit teachers of different backgrounds, many schools are unable to provide a teaching staff that is representative of the student body.

Higher Education Financial Aid and Tuition

\$535.3 million cut

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.

Sixty-four percent of Latinos obtain a 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 a 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).⁸¹ "Asian Americans are often thought of as having high levels of formal education. While this is generally true, a closer look at data from the U.S. Census Bureau reveals large disparities between Asian American ethnic groups, with the educational profiles of some communities similar to Latinos and African Americans."⁸² For example, in 2009 only 17% of Pacific Islanders obtained a Bachelor's degree or higher degree.⁸³



Source: 2007 American Community Survey

Already, students of color are less likely to attain education beyond high school than their white peers. The passage of Initiative 200 in 1998 eliminated state affirmative action programs, decreasing enrollment of communities of color (particularly at four year institutions like the University of Washington). With the cuts to the 2011-2013 budget, the higher education funding structure, increasingly reliant on tuition revenue rather than state appropriations, similarly hits many students of color (who on average live in households with lower incomes and less wealth) the hardest.

Even with some adjustments in the State Need Grant and other kinds of financial aid, the well-documented "sticker shock" effect of high tuition prices discourage underrepresented populations from even applying – even when there is financial aid available. With a growing population and a net reduction in Need Grant awards, a larger number of eligible students will lose out on support with some discontinuing their education as a result. State Work Study has also been an important piece of financial aid for students. \$31 million was cut from this program by increasing the required employer share of wages and by completely eliminating eligibility for non-residents – the vast majority of whom are Latino students.

Post-undergraduate educational attainment is strained as well by cuts to most financial aid programs that typically benefit graduate students. In addition to these primary program reductions, several other specialty aid programs were cut for a total of \$18.8 million including the elimination of new funding for the Washington Award for Vocational Excellence (WAVE) program, suspension of new awards from the health professional and future teacher conditional scholarship programs, elimination of the funds for Educational Opportunity Grants, and suspension of the Community Scholarship Matching Grant Program, the Foster Care Endowed Scholarship, and student support fees provided via the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. To the extent that these programs consider the socioeconomic need and diversity of applicants, these cuts represent further blows to students of color seeking ways to afford higher education.

While financial aid has traditionally been geared towards low-income students, tuition hikes are making it a necessity for increasing numbers of middle-income students as well. The Legislature approved a 16 percent annual increase in tuition for the state's three largest universities for the next two years, and increases of 11 to 14 percent per year for the state's other two- and four-year schools. In some cases the actual increases were even higher – UW, for example, approved a 20 percent increase for resident undergrads in just next year alone. Mandatory fees (not counted as part of “tuition” calculations) are also increasing dramatically in the coming years.

With \$535.3 million cut from Washington State higher education institutions, they will experience a 22.1 percent reduction from their maintenance level of funding overall. While these reductions will be partially offset by tuition increases, the overall net reduction to the higher education system is 5.1 percent.

Due to these reductions in funding for higher education, 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.

The whole notion of a “public” institution is one that it is predominantly funded by public means. In the past, public universities have been more affordable than private universities because the state picks up most of the cost. However as state funding for higher education is cut, the costs originally picked up by the state are being shifted to the student. In the 2009-2010 academic year, students at WSU paid 77% of the costs through tuition and fees and students at UW paid 62%.⁸⁴ That's compared to the 33% and 35% respectively they had to pay in 2007-2009.⁸⁵ As this percentage continues to increase, 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. 22,000 students who qualify for a State Need Grant in 2011 will not receive one. State Work Study funding has been cut by a third.⁸⁶ And despite steep tuition increases, higher education institutions have cut hundreds of jobs, including teaching assistant and tutor positions, as well as other jobs in student support services that ensure access and educational attainment for underrepresented populations.

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.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Overview

In 1980, out of all 50 states, Washington had the highest rate of disproportionate minority representation in its prisons. Today, people of color remain disproportionately represented in Washington State's court, prison, and jail populations relative to their share of the state's general population.

Many studies of Washington State criminal justice practices find that race and ethnicity influence criminal justice outcomes. Some findings include: ⁸⁷

- In Washington's juvenile justice system, similarly situated juveniles of color face harsher sentencing outcomes and disparate treatment by probation officers
- Defendants of color are significantly less likely than similarly situated white defendants to receive sentences that fall below the standard range
- Among felony drug offenders, Black defendants are 62 percent more likely to be sentenced to prison than similarly situated White defendants

Racial and ethnic bias distorts decision-making at various stages in the criminal justice system, thus contributing to disproportionalities in sentencing and incarceration. In the United States, Blacks are incarcerated at 5.6 times and Latinos at 1.8 times the rate of Whites. These numbers are reflected in Washington State, where Blacks are incarcerated at 6.4 times and Latinos at 1.3 times the rate of whites. ⁸⁸

The state must work to eliminate the disparities in incarceration rates and sentencing. At the same time, people within the criminal justice system need supportive services both within detention facilities and upon re-entry. Without these necessary programs and services, their chances for survival and re-integrating as a contributing member of society is minimal, therefore they have an increased chance of returning to prison with new offenses.

Program Cuts In Detail

Department of Corrections

\$127 million cut

The 2011-2013 biennial budget includes \$127 million in cuts to the Department of Corrections. The specific programmatic impact of these cuts remains to be determined. However, decreased funding for or elimination of many programs, including intensive juvenile probation, adult drug courts, adult cognitive and behavioral treatment, basic education (in prison), aggression replacement training, and intensive adult supervision, would increase racial inequity in our state.

Conclusion: The Corrections Department budget cuts may reduce or end many rehabilitation programs behind bars and upon re-entry, which will impact recidivism and life outcomes for people in the criminal justice system.

Crises Averted

Overwhelming Opposition Kills Gang Bill, But Another Fight Is Expected

HB 1126: ‘Concerning criminal street gangs’

Sponsors: Reps. Ross, Hurst, Pearson, Angel, Dahlquist, Haler

Attorney General Rob McKenna pushed a bill last session that, in addition to ratcheting up criminal penalties, would have allowed civil orders—known as injunctions—to be issued against people law enforcement thinks may be gang members.

Once an injunction is issued, a young person may be banned from being in an area and could be charged with a crime just for returning there—even if he has never committed any other crime. But members of the Racial Equity Team (RET)—a coalition of lobbyists representing community groups—say this approach only strengthens gangs by cutting off youth from the resources—like family members, jobs, sports, and school—they need to stay out of gang life. And if they are arrested and charged with violating the injunction, they can be sent to adult prison.

Under the bill, a prosecutor would provide names of suspects to a judge, who would then decide whether or not to issue an injunction. Suspects then would be required to go to court and defend themselves, without access to a court-appointed attorney.

The bill received a hearing in the House Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness Committee, with testimony overwhelmingly in opposition. Because of intense advocacy on behalf of communities of color, and working in conjunction with members of color in the House of Representatives, the bill never received a vote, effectively killing it for the session.

Despite successfully working to fight the bill, RET members have said they expect another gang bill to emerge in the upcoming legislative session.

Some RET members have said they potentially could support a bill that addresses gang violence if the focus is less on law enforcement and more on taking on gang kingpins, a relatively small number of individuals who are committing violent criminal acts. “But we can’t arrest our way out of the problem—we also need to provide susceptible youth with alternatives to keep them out of gangs,” said Gerald Hankerson, Vice President of the NAACP of King County.

CIVIL RIGHTS AND CITIZENSHIP

Overview

Washington State has some of the strongest non-discrimination laws in the country. 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.

This section assesses cuts that impact the ability of immigrants and refugees to attain the rights associated with citizenship. Specific programs discussed here include Refugee Employment Services/Limited English Proficient (LEP) Pathways, the Naturalization Program, and the Washington New Americans Program. In addition, this section addresses cuts to state commissions designed to represent the needs and interests of people of color within state government, and defend their rights.

At a Glance - Cuts that affect civil rights include:

- Drastic reductions in programs that help thousands of immigrants and refugees to become U.S. citizens.
- Cuts to programs that help refugees integrate into the workforce and regain self-sufficiency to attain economic stability for their families.

The Naturalization Program and the Washington New Americans Program

\$2.4 million cut

Washington State is home to approximately 170,000 legal permanent residents who are eligible for citizenship.⁸⁹ Citizenship provides a broad set of civil rights. For many immigrants and their families, citizenship also catalyzes asset building, increases job opportunity, and leads to economic stability. Pursuing citizenship can be costly and often requires technical and legal support, which is a barrier to many low-income immigrant residents.

The Naturalization Program through the Department of Social and Human Services (DSHS) enables thousands of low-income, elderly and disabled immigrants to become U.S. citizens each year. In addition, since 2009 the Washington New Americans program assisted more than 5,300 people on the path to naturalization and completed more than 2,000 naturalization forms. The program provides direct services and free legal clinics, while matching state funding through in-kind and private donations.⁹⁰

Permanent residents seeking citizenship who need this support are primarily low-income and are predominantly people of color. The final budget eliminates \$2.4 million in funding for the DSHS Naturalization program, a cut of 40%, and slashes the Washington New Americans program by 30% to \$396,000.

Conclusion: Cuts to programs such as the Washington New Americans citizenship and DSHS Naturalization Program will place additional barriers between thousands of immigrants and refugees who seek the rights and protections of U.S. citizenship.



Refugee Employment Services/LEP Pathways

\$5 million cut

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 our workplaces and communities. State-supported employment services for refugees include U.S. citizenship testing, employment services, foster care, cultural adjustment and social services, English as a Second Language instruction, job skills training, and job retention services.

Washington ranks as one of the top 10 states for initial refugee arrivals. This \$5 million cut in the 2011-2013 Biennial Budget eliminates many services for the program's 5,685 participants, and creates new barriers to the integration of refugees into the workforce.⁹¹

Conclusion: Cuts to refugee assistance programs, such as Refugee Employment Services/LEP Pathways, impact the ability of thousands of people of color to participate fully in Washington's society and economy.

Crises Averted Consolidation of Washington Ethnic Commissions

Since their establishment in the 1970s, the Ethnic Commissions – including 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 a voice in state government for communities of color. Their role is to bring issues affecting 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.

During this past legislative session, the Governor proposed consolidating all of the Ethnic Commissions into State's Office of Civil Rights. Although the measure did not pass through the legislature, it will be up on the chopping block again in the special session.

The consolidation of Ethnic Commissions into one office threatens to take away the voice and representation of different ethnic communities and their specific needs and priorities in state government.

Crises Averted

Bill Would Have Created 'Blatantly Discriminatory' 2-Tiered Drivers' License System

SB 5407: 'Concerning the issuance of drivers' licenses, drivers' instruction permits, juvenile agricultural driving permits and identicards'

Sponsors: Sens. Haugen, King, Becker, Prentice, Honeyford, Hargrove

HB 1577: 'Verifying that an applicant for a driver's license or identicard is lawfully within the United States'

Sponsors: Reps. Armstrong, Angel, Kretz, Warnick, Ross, Shea, Taylor, Klippert, Buys, Johnson, Haler, Dahlquist, Rivers, Harris, Hargrove, Walsh, Short, Anderson, Rolfes, Parker, Kristiansen, Schmick, Nealey, Dammeier, Ahern, Stanford, Finn, Moeller, Alexander, Hope, Hinkle, Green, Rodne, Overstreet, Van De Wege, Tharinger, Haigh, Hurst, Takko, Blake, McCune, Kelley, Orcutt, Pearson, Smith, Miloscia

Two bills in the House and Senate targeting immigrants were given rare opportunities for public hearings in the 2011 Legislative Session. But, thanks largely to the efforts of the Racial Equity Team (RET)—a coalition of lobbyists representing community groups—and a united effort by the members of color in the House, along with House and Senate leadership, the bills failed to get out of either chamber.

Toby Guevin, State Policy and Legislative Manager for OneAmerica and a member of the RET, says bills like these are filed nearly every year, but it was “disappointing that they were given hearings for the first time in many years.” However, while they gave people on the fringe a chance to voice their opinions, Guevin says it was also an opportunity for people of color to come together.

The Senate bill, which RET called “blatantly discriminatory,” would have created a two-tiered system that limits the type of drivers' licenses for certain immigrants, with those unable to prove lawful presence receiving a license marked, “Not valid for identification purposes.” This mark would subject tax-paying immigrant families to racial profiling and cause people to drive without a license or insurance out of fear of being targeted by law enforcement.

It would have, in essence, created a two-tiered discriminatory system of drivers' licenses based on a person's immigration status.

The bill was made eligible for a floor vote but didn't meet the deadline, effectively killing the bill, despite an all day last-minute procedural move by Sen. Don Benton (R-Vancouver) to force a vote by holding the transportation budget bill hostage. A similar bill in the House did not get out of committee. This issue, like the gang bill, is expected to re-emerge in the 2012 legislative session.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This report clearly shows the dramatic impact that the 2011-2013 biennial budget has on communities of color. In order for the Governor and the State Legislature to mitigate these impacts in future years, it is necessary to explore all options for possible cuts and seek new revenue sources.

Although Initiative 1053 makes it challenging to raise new revenue, we urge our state to look at all possible options before making cuts to vital programs and services that communities of color and all Washington residents rely on. According to the Washington State Budget & Policy Center, “there are currently hundreds of special tax breaks on the books that cost us more than \$6.5 billion a year...there are certainly enough options to make our approach to the state budget more balanced, especially when compared to proposed deep cuts to our public structures such as healthcare and education.”

We urge our Governor and Legislature to close some of these loopholes and bring much needed revenue into our state. Continuing to pass all-cuts budgets is not the answer. We cannot cut our way out of this massive deficit without bringing undue harm and pain to communities of color and low-income communities. Our state must have a balanced approach and aggressively find ways to bring in new revenue to maintain funding for these critical programs. People’s lives rely on it.

At a time when the demand for state services is increasing as a result of unemployment, the recession and the previous rounds of state budget cuts, cuts to programs that serve the most vulnerable in our state are not a solution. Not only does it shift the burden of the deficit to those populations, it also sets in motion a cycle of hardships that ultimately inhibits the prosperity of everyone in Washington.

In addition to seeking new revenue sources, it is critical the Governor and our State Legislature use a racial justice lens when looking at policy.

We recommend that the Governor and Legislature:

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 widen racial or economic injustice;
3. Support proposals to raise revenue in support of critical public services; and
4. Actively promote policies that will promote racial equity.

CONCLUSION

People of color play an integral role in Washington State's economy and future. It is crucial that our state actively works to provide opportunity and access for all residents, in order to close racial and ethnic disparities in wealth, health and well-being.

In order for Washington State to become more equitable, our Governor and Legislature must look at all policy through a racially-conscious lens. The 2011 Washington Legislative Report Card on Racial Equity is a tool to raise awareness and understanding of the affects that the recent budget cuts have on communities of color. Through passing an all-cuts budget, the Governor and Legislature actively contributed to growing the already existing racial disparities in our state.

Moving forward into the Special Session, we encourage both the Governor and the Legislature to think through the impacts of different cuts on communities of color and find ways to help these communities thrive during these difficult economic times. Racial equity-conscious policies bring Washington State one step closer to improving the lives of all our residents, and living up to the important ideals of opportunity and justice for all.

CREDITS

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This report would not have been possible without the contributions of many people – individuals who shared their story and community leaders who lent their insight and feedback.

We would like to especially thank: Jen Estroff, Ben Henry, jim justice, Toby Guevin, Teresa Mosqueda, Jermaine Toney, Lonnie Johns-Brown, Monica Peabody, Sarah Clifforne, David Parsons, Sahar Banijamali, Diane Narasaki, Leslie Dozono, Sofia Aragon, Rachael Myers, Yolanda Tinnoco, Tanika Aden, Maria Luna, the Racial Justice Report Card Coalition and the Race and Social Justice Initiative.

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ENDORISING ORGANIZATIONS

AFT Washington (American Federation of Teachers)
AHANA Business Alliance
American Friends Service Committee
APICAT for Healthy Communities
Arab American Community Coalition
Asian Counseling & Referral Service
Asian Pacific Americans for Civic Empowerment (APACE)
Asia Pacific Cultural Center
Asian Pacific Directors Coalition
Casa Latina
Center for Multicultural Health
Center for Social Justice
Children's Alliance
Chinese Information and Service Center
Community Building Foundation
Economic Opportunity Institute
El Centro de La Raza
Entre Hermanos
Got Green?
Greater Mt Baker Church
International Community Health Services
International District Housing Alliance
Faith Action Network
King County Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Latinos for Community Transformation
Lutheran Community Services Northwest
Minority Executive Director's Coalition (MEDC)
NAACP King County
NAACP of Spokane
Nonprofit Assistance Center (NAC)
National Association of Social Workers - Washington Chapter
Northwest Fair Housing Alliance
NOW
Alliance for a Just Society
Odyssey Youth Center
One America
Para Los Ninos
People's Institute NW
Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane (PJALS)
POWER
Real Change
Seattle Office of Civil Rights
Senior Services
Skagit Immigrant Rights Council
Spokane AIDS Network
Statewide Poverty Action Network
The Inland Northwest LGBT Center
The Lands Council
United Indians of All Tribes
VOICES
Washington Education Association (WEA)
Washington State Nurses Association
WEA Eastern Washington
Whatcom Civil Rights Project
Win/Win Coalition
WFSE/AFSCME Council 28
UAW Local 4121
Race and Social Justice Community Roundtable
SEIU 775
Washington Christian Leadership Coalition (WCLC)
United Black Clergy of Washington

