



Washington Community Action Network
La Red Activa Comunitaria de Washington
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Facing Race: How Budget Cuts Are Increasing Racial Disparities **Key Findings**

The cuts made to the 2011-2013 biennial budget disproportionately affect communities of color within Washington State and exacerbate existing racial disparities.

Racial inequities are pervasive throughout Washington State. They occur within the areas of education assets and income, poverty and job access, health and health care, education, criminal justice and home ownership. It is therefore increasingly important that all budget and revenue decisions take into account the implications on communities of color.

Continuing to pass all-cuts budgets is not the answer. It will only ensure that communities of color in Washington fall even further behind. Our Legislature needs to close corporate tax loopholes and bring in revenue in order to expand opportunities and reduce racial and economic disparities within our state.

The report analyzed the following areas: health care, human & social services, education, criminal justice and civil rights & citizenship. This is an overview of some of the key points and findings from the various sections of the report. The full report will be available on our website on November 23rd:
<http://washingtoncan.org/wordpress/reports/>.

Health Care

- Cuts made to Basic Health and community clinics will make it harder for communities of color and low-income families to receive affordable health care which will lead to increased disparities in health
 - Although the Basic Health Plan does not collect enrollment data by race/ethnicity, the WA. State Board of Health has shows that Basic Health enrollees are disproportionately people of color
 - Hispanics only make up 9.3% of the total state population, but they represent 36% of community health center patients
- People of color also suffer greater health risks at birth. Cuts made to Maternity Support Services will jeopardize the health of 65,000 at-risk pregnant women and infants through the critical first year of life
- 19,000 interpreter appointments are scheduled every month and over 80,000 Washington residents rely on these services. The cuts to interpreter services and the potential move to remote and telephonic interpreter services will result in thousand's of ESL families being lost in translation at the doctor's office. This will also result in job loss for interpreters, many of whom are people of color.

Human & Social Services

- Cuts made to Home Care resulted in an average 10% reduction in personal care hours. People of color are 58% more likely than whites to rely on home care services. Cuts to Home Care also result in jobs lost and wages reduced for home care workers, 30% of whom are people of color.
- Time limits and cuts to TANF also disproportionately affect communities of color, as they face higher barriers to economic opportunity than other communities.
- With a 61.5% reduction in funding for the Housing Trust Fund, low-income families in need of housing support will have fewer chances to find affordable housing, leading to an increase in homelessness and a degradation of health and educational outcomes.





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Education

- Significant racial disparities exist within Washington State's education system. According to the Education Trust and Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, at the current pace it will take at least 45 years to close the gap between students of color and their white counterparts
- Early Learning is shown to be crucial to future academic success, which is even more important for children of color, taking into account the statistic above. 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.
- \$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
- Budget cuts totaling \$66.5 million to higher education financial aid programs will create cost barriers for students of color and low-income families.
- \$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

Criminal Justice

- In Washington's juvenile justice system, similarly situated juveniles of color face harsher sentencing outcomes and disparate treatment by probation officers than their white counterparts.
- 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.
- \$127 million was cut from the Department of Corrections. While the effects of these cuts remains to be determined, decreased funding for or elimination programs behind bars and upon re-entry would impact recidivism and life outcomes for people in the criminal justice system.

Civil Rights & Citizenship

- Reductions to the Naturalization Program and the Washington New Americans Program (which help thousands of immigrants and refugees become U.S. citizens) will place additional barriers between thousands of immigrants and refugees who seek the rights and protections of U.S. citizenship
- Cuts made to Refugee Employment Services/LEP Pathways impacts the ability of thousands of people of color to participate fully in Washington's society and economy.

