



Increasing
OUR IMPACT
IN 2019

WASHINGTON STATE
**BUDGET
& POLICY
CENTER**

State policy to support community resilience

At the Washington State Budget & Policy Center, we know the state budget is where the rubber meets the road – the legislative tool that guides investments in Washington communities.

We work with partners and grassroots coalitions to advance economic and fiscal policies that lift up families with low and moderate incomes, reduce barriers to opportunity for people of color, and create shared prosperity for all Washingtonians.

Working together to increase our impact

2019 was a year of progress and growth.

We successfully completed our Impact giving campaign following a generous pledge to match any new or increased donations up to \$25,000, and had our most successful individual donor fundraising year to-date thanks to partners like you. And we hired four new staff members to help us enhance our impact.



We didn't know it at the time, but building our internal capacity in 2019 has proven especially important as we navigate the public health and economic crisis created by COVID-19. We are all seeing in profound ways the critical role that public services play in our lives, and the impact of deep racial and economic inequities in shaping the public health and economic crisis. Our work to advance state policies that promote equity and economic security and respond to a deepening state budget crisis and economic downturn is vitally important to support public health and community well-being and to ensure a just economic recovery.

Thank you for working alongside us to push for bold, equitable policy changes that help all Washingtonians thrive.

With gratitude,

Misha Werschkul
Executive Director

Key impacts from the 2019 state legislative session



Our research laid the foundation for legislature's action to reverse damaging recession-era cuts to Workfirst, Washington's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program.

We led the way to stopping an egregious business tax break that would have cost the state more than \$60 million in future tax revenues that would otherwise support schools, health care, and other investments that build thriving communities.

We built momentum to advance bold policies to flip our state's upside-down tax code – playing a key role in the passing of legislation raising over \$800 million in progressive taxes per biennium – while working closely with coalitions and community partners.

2019: By the numbers

Media

60+ Articles and references in the media

25+ State media markets reached

15 Infographics, reports and fact sheets

Online Buzz

4,270 Twitter followers

3,158 Facebook followers

43 Schmudget blog posts

Community Engagement

1,000+ Community members engaged at events

19 Presentations, webinars, and events

22 Testimonies in Olympia

2020 legislative session updates

Our policy priorities were important to the well-being of Washingtonians before COVID-19. They are now even more critical as this economic crisis leaves so many people facing devastating financial insecurity. As we lift up the progress we made – in collaboration with many partner organizations – on three of our top priorities this legislative session, we also acknowledge that the road toward recovery will be long. But we will be there every step of the way calling for bold policy solutions to support our people, communities, and businesses.



Executive Director Misha Werschkul testifying on the aerospace tax preference

During the 2020 session in Olympia, lawmakers:

- **Funded a Child Savings Account program study.** The study will explore design options and develop an implementation plan to establish Child Savings Accounts at birth for every child born in Washington state.
- **Took further steps to reverse harmful cuts to WorkFirst/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** by beginning to ease harsh sanction policies and allowing families where a child is homeless to access a time limit extension. They also boosted monthly income for some WorkFirst/TANF recipient families by reinstating the child support pass-through, which allows families to retain a portion of child support payments made on their behalf.
- **Invested in early learning by increasing rates for Early Childhood Education Assistance Program and Working Connections Child Care providers,** which will help families find care and help early learning professionals make ends meet. The legislature also expanded eligibility for financial assistance to more families and they invested in dual-language programs.

In the final days immediately following the state legislative session, the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the state budget became increasingly clear. This led Governor Inslee to veto funding for certain new projects in the 2020 supplemental budget, including some of the priorities we worked on like funding for the Child Savings Account program study. This was disappointing, but reflects the magnitude of the crisis facing our state and the critical need for new progressive revenue to support community investments.



Budget & Policy Center staff members with coalition partners in Olympia

Number of testimonies in Olympia: **13**

Number of partner Lobby Days attended: **14**

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