

2023 Legislative Agenda

At the Washington State Budget and Policy Center, we envision a Washington state in which everyone can live a life of economic dignity. Where everyone – no matter where they’re from, who they love, or what they earn – can take care of themselves and their loved ones while also having opportunities for joy and rest. In 2023, state lawmakers must enact policies that move us all closer to this vision. As too many Washingtonians continue to struggle to make ends meet amid skyrocketing costs of living, the legislature must prioritize funding for housing, education, and other public services and reject short-sighted tax cuts that unnecessarily benefit the wealthy at the expense of everyone else. This year, the Budget and Policy Center calls on lawmakers to reject the politics of the status quo – and to build on **the progress of recent years** toward creating an economy that works for everyone.

This session, lawmakers must:

Pass a **budget bill that responds to calls from advocates for funding for priorities** like schools, infrastructure, housing, food access, and health care. With temporary federal recovery funds tapering off and new economic challenges on the horizon, lawmakers must direct more state resources to these building blocks of thriving communities. In doing so, they must prioritize and increase resources for people with low incomes; Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC); and others who have been most impacted by the ongoing pandemic and economic crises.

Advance cash assistance policies that are rooted in trust and autonomy. This includes passing a **Guaranteed Basic Income policy** to reduce poverty, improve long-term well-being, and honor the dignity and self-determination of recipients. Additionally, lawmakers should create a **Baby Bond savings program**, or the Washington Future Fund, to help level the playing field for children from families with lower incomes by making a down payment on their future economic security. Lawmakers should also increase the impact of the **Working Families Tax Credit** by ensuring equitable access through administrative and technical fixes, as well as expanding the credit eligibility to all Washingtonians 18 and older.

Promote government accountability by passing and implementing policies that seek to repair harm and treat people with dignity. To do this, lawmakers should **reform Legal Financial Obligations** to stop government agencies from extracting wealth from communities through harmful fines and fees that the criminal legal system levies upon people.

Continue to advance tax reform that promotes racial, gender, and economic justice in our tax code through new taxes on Washington’s wealthiest residents and large, profitable corporations. This includes implementing a **wealth tax**, putting in place an **equitable payroll tax on the salaries of CEOs** and other highly paid corporate employees, and **closing loopholes and raising tax rates on multimillion-dollar estates**. Lawmakers should use tax revenue generated through these reforms to fund Washington’s communities and address the inequities baked into our current tax code.

Principles to guide our legislative priorities

- Lead with equity.
- Provide immediate, impactful and sustained relief.
- Make permanent fixes to underlying structural failures.
- Implement policy responses rooted in trust and dignity, not paternalism.
- Reject a scarcity mindset: there is enough wealth in our state to invest in our people.

The Washington State Budget and Policy Center is a research and policy organization that works to advance the well-being of all Washingtonians.



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