

2026 Legislative Agenda

The Washington State Budget and Policy Center envisions a state where everyone – no matter where they’re from, who they love, or what they’re paid – can live a life of economic dignity. This legislative session, lawmakers must pass a budget that moves us closer to this vision. They must prioritize funding for programs that have been cut at the state and federal levels. Additional cuts to the state budget will only exacerbate deeply rooted inequities among people who face systemic barriers to economic security. **Our 2026 legislative agenda highlights the need for new progressive revenue options and urges lawmakers to enact a budget and economic policies that support the well-being of our communities.**

OUR PRIORITIES

Enact progressive revenue options and reduce inequitable taxes to ensure our tax code better reflects people’s ability to pay.

Progressive revenue must be a top priority this session. In 2025, the legislature made \$8 billion in state budget cuts, and the federal government made massive cuts to health care and food assistance. Bold revenue solutions are essential to limit further cuts and maintain critical funding for services. Lawmakers must:

- ▶ **Address immediate affordability needs.** They must reject cuts to programs and services and refrain from enacting tax proposals that are inequitable and regressive. In addition, they should expand the eligibility and size of the Working Families Tax Credit and reform the property tax and other regressive taxes to better reflect people’s ability to pay.
- ▶ **Build long-term revenue sustainability.** In 2026, lawmakers have multiple progressive revenue levers to pull that would support the budget to meet community needs, including the Well Washington Fund (an employer-paid 5% payroll tax on wages above \$125,000) and the tax on financial intangible assets (also known as the Wealth Tax).

Enact economic policies that support and improve the well-being of all Washington communities.

Lawmakers must prioritize policies that advance racial justice and ensure that families and individuals throughout our state have access to opportunity and economic security. They can do that in the following areas:

Immigration justice

- ▶ Protect immigrant residents' access to health care coverage by maintaining current Apple Health Expansion funding.
- ▶ Support newly arrived people and asylum seekers in finding housing, work, and other essential services by continuing to fund the Washington Migrant and Asylum-Seeker Support (WA MASS) project.
- ▶ Defend individuals' ability to participate in our workforce, and keep immigrant families together by passing legislation that regulates state agencies' use and possession of Automatic License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology (which collects information that could be used by ICE to advance Trump's deportation agenda).
- ▶ Pass the Immigrant Worker Protection Act, which requires employers to make sure immigrant workers are aware of their rights and to alert them when their information is being requested for potential deportation activities.

Criminal legal system policy

- ▶ Pass legislation that eliminates court fees and increases access to fines-and-fees debt relief for people who cannot pay and who are disproportionately harmed by legal system debt.
- ▶ Ensure increased accountability of criminal legal system institutions.

Direct cash assistance

- ▶ Introduce and pass legislation that protects public benefits for Guaranteed Basic Income pilot participants.
- ▶ Expand the Working Families Tax Credit so that more people in our state can benefit from this cash boost. Lawmakers can start by removing an age restriction that unfairly excludes seniors and young adults if they do not have a dependent.

Principles for setting our agenda

In determining these policy priorities and other priorities that arise during session, we are guided by the following principles:

- ▶ 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 fund community priorities.