



## 2022 Legislative Agenda

### Anti-Hunger Priorities:

#### **Expand Free School Meals for Washington Kids ([HB 1878](#) / [SB 5798](#))**

During the pandemic, nearly 1 in 3 Washington families have struggled to put food on the table, and households with children have been among the most at risk for hunger. Congress provided options so schools could provide free breakfast and lunch for all students since COVID began. Washington can continue serving free school meals to thousands of students by expanding participation in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) in all high need, high poverty schools eligible to participate. This bill would ensure that all schools eligible to use CEP are adequately funded to serve healthy, free school meals to all their students.

#### **Create a statewide, multilingual online tool for school meal applications and household income data for low income students ([HB 1833](#))**

The pandemic has made it clear that low income families in all schools need a single family-friendly, multilingual, online option to apply for school meals – or to provide family income data in schools that don't require meal applications. This data is critical because it is used to provide a wide array of federal, state and local education resources to low-income students and their schools. Fund OSPI to create a simple, accessible, flexible tool for families and schools.

#### **Extend funding for food banks and community-based emergency food programs**

Research by UW and WSU shows 27% of Washingtonians have been food insecure since COVID began. Our food banks and community-based hunger responses to this crisis continue to face unprecedented need from people in need, as well as pressures from skyrocketing food prices, supply chain disruptions, fewer food donations. Fund WSDA's Food Assistance programs to ensure food banks and community organizations have enough food and sufficient capacity to meet needs. (*\$70 million in Governor's supplemental budget*)

#### **Expand the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program for 7,100 more seniors**

Low income seniors are at high risk for hunger and the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program provides hungry seniors with vouchers to purchase local, healthy produce at farmers markets. Our state hasn't increased funding for this program in years and the program can't meet the overwhelming demand. Adding funding feeds hungry seniors and supports local farmers and farmers markets. (*\$400,000 in Governor's supplemental budget*)

## Anti-Poverty Priorities:

### **Extend Basic Food Education and Training services to immigrants receiving Food Assistance**

Washington's nationally-recognized Basic Food Education and Training program provides job training, support services and education opportunities for people who receive federally-funded SNAP benefits. Eligible immigrants who receive state-funded Food Assistance should have equal access to these supports that help lift families out of poverty and into living wage jobs.

*(\$560,000 in Governor's supplemental budget)*

### **Strengthen TANF for families with children living in deep poverty**

- End the 60 month time limit for TANF for children and very low income families who face hardship (e.g. homelessness) or are meeting all program requirements ([HB 2048](#))
- Lift the cap on family size for TANF support from 8 people to 10 people in a family
- Fix last year's bill on time limit exemptions during high unemployment ([HB 1755](#))
- Provide a diaper benefit for TANF families with a child under age 3 ([HB 1947](#) / [SB 5838](#))
- Extend Transitional Food Assistance to more families leaving TANF ([SB 5785](#))

### **Create a Guaranteed Basic Income pilot ([HB 2009](#))**

Creating the Evergreen Basic Income Trust ensures very low income people have money to meet their needs in a way that provides flexibility, dignity and autonomy. GBI programs are proven to have positive impacts on poverty, mental health, housing stability, and more.

### **Expand permanent affordable housing and ensure housing justice for all tenants**

Invest \$500 in the Housing Trust Fund to protect and expand permanent affordable housing – and prevent landlords from denying housing solely based on a tenant or family member's previous record ([HB 2017](#)).

### **Ensure DSHS provides multiple access points for assistance to people in need ([HB 2075](#))**

DSHS' local Community Service Offices and call center must be available and accessible for people in need of services to meet their basic needs. Providing multiple access points – online, by phone and in person - ensures programs are responsive and accessible to all people in need.

## Our Ongoing Commitment:

### **Sustainable Revenue for a Healthy, Hunger-free Washington**

Create a more **fair and balanced state tax system** by closing outdated tax loopholes, increasing transparency in tax breaks, and finding new and sustainable sources of revenue to ensure services are available to help people out of poverty and to invest in the foundations of a healthy, prosperous and hunger-free Washington.