



2021 Legislative Agenda

Anti-Hunger Priorities:

Support Food Banks (\$23.1 million)

Expand funding for **Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP)**, which is our state's core support for local food banks who have had record increases (30% - 300%) in demand for services. Through WSDA, EFAP provides flexible funds for local food bank coalitions to address local community needs – from food purchasing to distribution to storage.

Continue WSDA's **Farm to Food Pantry Grants**, which enable food pantries to buy directly from local producers to feed hungry people, largely in rural communities. Funds can be targeted to prioritize farmers of color, who are less likely to have access to COVID relief for agriculture, and tribal food programs, who have been hard hit economic disruptions.

Create **COVID-Response Food Bank funding** through WSDA to provide flexible, responsive funds for food banks to respond to emerging opportunities and targeted community needs, especially in communities of color and tribal communities, to address ongoing hardship and supply chain issues over the biennium.

Strengthen SNAP

Continue DOH's **SNAP Fruit and Vegetable Incentive Program** which matches funds by SNAP shoppers to purchase produce. This responds to the steep increase in SNAP clients, as well as preserves the Fruit & Veg Prescription Program for low income patients at community health clinics, which is not covered by Washington's federal grant. (**\$3 million**)

Improve Access to and Nutrition in School Meals

Eliminate the Co-pay for Reduced Price School Lunch (HB 1342) Kids do better in school when they don't have to worry whether they can afford meals. Some families struggle to pay for a child's reduced- price lunches: \$146/year for two children. Eliminate the co-pay for *all* low-income students so kids can focus on learning, instead of whether they'll be hungry at lunchtime. (*scheduled for floor vote!*)

Create **Farm to School to Kids grants** through OSPI & WSDA to enable school nutrition programs to buy from local farmers to improve the quality and appeal of school meals, and to distribute meals to families in more accessible, family-friendly ways. (**\$5 million**)

Anti-Poverty Priorities:

Expand funding at SBCTC for **Basic Food Education & Training program** to place navigators at each of our state's community and technical colleges to connect low income students with SNAP (Basic Food) and to support services to meet education and basic needs (tuition, fees, books/tools, housing, child care, transportation, etc.) – see 2019's [HB 1893](#). Navigators ensure students are able to complete their job training and education successfully, and BFET investments draw down federal match funds dedicated to direct support services for students. **\$6 million; draws down \$3 million in federal reimbursement)**

Strengthen TANF ([SB 5214](#)) by easing punitive policies created during the Great Recession that disproportionately affect families of color, and restoring time limit extensions for families facing hardship who comply with requirements, so families can get help from TANF when they need it. ([in Ways & Means](#))

Invest in housing and homelessness services with \$250 million for permanent affordable housing through the Housing Trust Fund and increase document recording fees to fund ongoing homelessness prevention and wrap-around services.

Prevent homelessness by protecting tenants with rent assistance ([HB 1277](#) – [in Approps](#)) and adapt eviction policies to prevent evictions without just cause ([HB 1236](#) – [in Rules](#)).

Modernize the 'standard of need' for cash assistance programs ([HB 1151](#)) to more accurately define poverty and set cash assistance support levels. The new standard is based on studies of actual living costs and accounts for inflation; includes costs of shelter, fuel, food, transportation, clothing, and necessary incidentals. ([passed Approps](#))

Our Ongoing Commitments:

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.

Protect Investments in Nutrition, Health & Economic Stability for People in Need

Our state has created innovative programs and proactive policies that help fight hunger and poverty in our communities. Our Coalition is committed to **protect and strengthen basic needs, anti-hunger, and anti-poverty programs for low-income people** so these programs continue to fight hunger and build stable pathways out of poverty.