

2025 Washington State Policy Priorities

MAINTAIN EXISTING SOCIAL SERVICES FOR THOSE MOST IN NEED

During the Great Recession, budget cuts severely impacted health and human services in Washington State, leading to increased homelessness, food insecurity, and untreated mental health issues. Many individuals and families are still recovering from these losses.

To prevent future harm, we must prioritize funding for essential services and implement structural changes to the tax code to ensure adequate revenue. A progressive tax system that places a greater burden on those with higher incomes will relieve pressure on low- and middle-income families.

Investing in health and human services is crucial for building a healthier, more equitable state. We must advocate for a budget that protects vulnerable populations and supports sustainable funding for vital services.

STABILIZE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES INVOLVED IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

- **Preserve SSI and other federal benefits for children in the care of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF):** pass and fund [SB 5488](#) to discontinue DCYF's practice of retaining public benefits entitled to children in its care due to a disability or the death of a parent.
- **Meet the legal assistance needs of kinship caregivers:** address staffing capacity gaps in the Legal Advice and Referral for Kinship (LAARK) program so that kinship caregivers get the support they need to keep children safe, explore guardianship, and keep children out of the formal dependency system. (\$567,000/biennium)
- **Resolve housing instability to reunite or keep families together:** pass and fund [HB 1177](#) to serve families for whom housing instability causes or prolongs their children's foster care placement.
- **Maintain the Rising Strong program:** Rising Strong is a holistic, family-centered shelter program offering on-site outpatient drug treatment, mental health services and life skills coaching --supporting the whole family staying together as a family unit while they begin to recover from substance misuse, heal from trauma and rebuild their lives. Additional state funding is needed for the program to continue. (\$4,853,438/biennium)

PREVENT SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES

- **Adjust the Home Visiting Rate and Continue the Contracted Home Visiting Slots for Families Experiencing SUD in High-Risk Communities:** *Additional funding is needed for the home visiting rate in order to meet the true cost of providing the service. (\$7,800,000/biennium) Provide ongoing funding for the contracted home visiting slots established through SB 6109 in 2024. (\$3,500,000/biennium)*
- **Implement community-based prevention services for families experiencing conflict:** *pass and fund [HB 1509](#) to shift Family Reconciliation Services (FRS) from a model delivered by DCYF to a culturally appropriate service delivered by trusted community organizations.*

IMPROVE ACCESS TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

- **Support Children’s Behavioral Health Workgroup (CBHWG) recommendations:** *Support the CBHWG’s recommendations related to growing and retaining the workforce (including funding for additional conditional scholarships) and addressing service needs and gaps to better ensure children, youth, young adults, and families have access to quality care when they need it.*

SUPPORT ITEMS

- **Maintain the Family Preservation Services (FPS) rate increase from 2024:** *the legislature allocated one time funding in 2024 to increase the FPS rate and help meet the growing need for this in-home service for families involved with CPS. (\$3,500,000/biennium)*
- **Establish a state housing program for youth in Extended Foster Care (EFC):** *13 percent (141) of young people in EFC experienced homelessness in SFY 2024. Young adults in EFC are in the care and custody of the state and the state has an obligation to ensure these young people are housed. Pass and fund [SB 5082/](#)[HB 1429](#) to provide housing to youth in EFC who are homeless and not eligible to receive a federal housing voucher.*

Additionally, Partners for Our Children works collaboratively with a number of organizations and actively supports the policy agendas established by The Mockingbird Society, the Child Welfare Advocacy Coalition, NorthStar Advocates, and others.

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