

2026 Legislative Priorities

The **Washington State Community Action Partnership (WSCAP)** is the **largest non-state human services network in Washington**, uniting 30 Community Action Agencies that serve all 39 counties. In 2024, these agencies served over **750,000** low-income Washingtonians, and that number is expected to grow. This network advances economic mobility by helping individuals and families meet immediate needs such as **housing, employment, healthcare, and food** assistance while building long-term pathways to economic stability. Through prevention, innovation, and community-driven solutions, the work of this association strengthens local communities, drives equitable growth, and disrupts cycles of poverty.

These six legislative priorities are WSCAP's call to action for 2026. **Together, we can** invest in **food** security, **housing** stability, **energy** affordability, **healthcare** access, early learning, nonprofit capacity, and sustainable funding solutions. Advancing these priorities will strengthen Washington's economy, expand opportunity, and create lasting pathways out of poverty.

“Without Community Action, there is nowhere left to turn.”

Protecting Core Human Services through Flexible State Funding

- **What we're asking:** Human Services and Early Learning are core functions of state government and **must be protected**. We call for **no more cuts** to these essential services. Current funding cuts are already creating deep impacts for families and communities across Washington. Flexible funding sources, including the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), must be **protected and expanded** to allow local agencies to braid and blend resources, respond immediately to emerging needs, and implement community-driven, poverty-reducing solutions. **This funding is the golden thread** that holds the fabric of our state together, and when that thread is pulled, the lives of millions begin to unravel.
- **Why it matters:** When human services and early learning are cut, people are the first to feel it. Families lose access to critical supports, and local agencies lose the ability to act before hardship becomes crisis. **Flexibility is the difference between a system that reacts and one that protects**. Built-in accountability measures like those in CSBG ensure that funds are well-invested in identified community needs.
- **Impact:** Protecting human services and expanding flexible funding **protects people by ensuring help reaches them when and where it's needed most**. It gives local agencies the power to act quickly in a crisis, keeping families safe, housed, and connected to care. When communities have the flexibility to respond with compassion and precision, people are protected, lives are stabilized, and taxpayer dollars are saved.

Strengthening Food Security and Local Food Systems

- **What we're asking:** Pass a **statewide Food Security Bill** and increase funding for food assistance programs so food banks and pantries can meet rising demand. Invest in local farmers, food systems, and distribution networks that ensure equitable access to healthy, culturally relevant food across urban, rural, and Tribal communities.
- **Why it matters:** When people don't have enough to eat, families go hungry, children struggle in school, and seniors are forced to choose between groceries and medicine. Washington's food banks are serving record numbers on limited resources, and without stronger investment, hunger will continue to rise. Ensuring food access isn't about charity, it's about protecting health, dignity, and community stability.
- **Impact:** Strengthening food security **protects people and communities from preventable harm**. It keeps children nourished, helps parents stay healthy and employed, and allows older adults to live with independence. When Washington invests in food access, families stay stable, local economies grow, and taxpayer dollars are saved through reduced healthcare and emergency costs.

Housing Stability, Affordability, and Protection

- **What we're asking:** Invest in **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)** and **Other Model Supportive (OMS)** services, expand the Housing Trust Fund, and address rising insurance costs that threaten affordable housing providers statewide. Protect housing dollars from political interference and ensure resources are used to keep people stably housed.
- **Why it matters:** When housing is unstable, every part of life becomes uncertain. Families can't keep jobs, children lose school stability, and elders face the trauma of displacement. Rising costs, shrinking resources, and politicized funding decisions have made it harder for providers to keep people safe and housed. Housing isn't solely shelter, it's the foundation of safety, health, and belonging.
- **Impact:** Expanding affordable housing **protects people from homelessness and strengthens community wellbeing**. It allows families to rebuild stability, children to thrive in school, and communities to remain connected. Every home preserved or built is a step toward a stronger, safer, and more resilient Washington.

Protecting Essential Services and Community Stability with New Revenue

- **What we're asking:** Advance **fair, new revenue solutions** that provide sustainable, long-term funding for essential human services like food, housing, healthcare, and early learning. Modernize Washington's revenue system to protect families and communities from the effects of current and anticipated funding cuts.
- **Why it matters:** Cuts to essential services don't just affect budgets, they harm people. Families lose access to **food, housing, and healthcare**, and local agencies are forced to scale back support at the exact moment need is growing. A fair and modern revenue system ensures everyone contributes equitably so that every community can remain stable, safe, and self-sufficient.
- **Impact:** Progressive revenue solutions **protect people by keeping vital supports intact**. They ensure families can access the services that prevent crisis, reduce inequality, and promote long-term economic stability. When Washington invests fairly, families stay secure, communities remain strong, and opportunity expands for all.

Reducing Energy Burden with Energy Assistance and Weatherization + Health

- **What we're asking:** Support passage of a **statewide Energy Assistance Bill** and increase visibility around Washington's energy burden. Address **workforce and compliance challenges** within Weatherization + Health programs and balance data center requirements and exemptions so households - not corporations - are prioritized.
- **Why it matters:** When a family can't afford heat or electricity, it becomes a matter of health and safety. Children get sick, elders suffer, and households fall deeper into financial hardship. Washington cannot meet its clean energy or equity goals while families live without heat, light, or safe air. Energy access is not a privilege, it's what keeps people healthy, safe, and secure in their homes.
- **Impact:** Expanding energy assistance and weatherization **protects families from preventable harm and financial strain**. It keeps homes warm, reduces energy costs, and supports healthy living conditions. Investing in these programs saves lives, strengthens climate resilience, and ensures every Washingtonian can live with comfort, safety, and dignity.

Protecting Washington Residents from Federal Benefits Cuts

- **What we're asking:** Develop and make whole again **state-level solutions** that protect access to healthcare, food, safety, and legal defense for immigrants and vulnerable residents. Mitigate the **devastating impacts of federal SNAP and Medicaid cuts** to prevent widespread loss of essential support for Washingtonians already at risk.
- **Why it matters:** Federal cuts to SNAP and Medicaid don't just reduce budgets, they strip away people's ability to survive. Families lose food, healthcare, and stability overnight. Immigrants and low-income residents face even greater barriers to safety and wellbeing. When the federal government abandons its responsibility, Washington must step in to protect the people who call this state home.
- **Impact:** Protecting access to healthcare, food, and safety **keeps families secure and prevents deeper harm**. It means fewer children go hungry, fewer elders skip medication, and fewer people face medical or housing crises. When Washington safeguards these supports, lives are protected, dignity is preserved, and communities remain strong.