



*“These proposals begin the long process of tackling inequities that have plagued this state and country since our inception. We have seen Black, Indigenous and people of color historically and disproportionately impacted because of longstanding racial gaps and socio-economic factors — all of which have racism as a root cause.”*

—Gov. Jay Inslee

## **A historic commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion**

**Inslee puts forward significant investments to address systemic racism, eliminate racial disparities within state government and Washington communities**

*After multiple, horrific deaths that included George Floyd and Washington’s own Manuel Ellis, people across the nation rose up by the millions to protest systemic racism and demand change. To meet this challenge, we will take action against past injustices and lay the foundation for a Washington where everyone can thrive and live successful lives. The governor will respond to bias and discrimination with a bold and assertive package of proposals that address systemic racism.*

Gov. Jay Inslee’s budget and policy proposals demonstrate his commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion by funding a variety of efforts to eliminate racial disparities. These include fully funding an equity office as a tool to root out racism and other forms of discrimination in state government. His budget also includes funds to establish an office that investigates police using excessive force, to roll out new equity measuring tools, and to



introduce a financial literacy plan that can help reduce the racial wealth gap that COVID-19 has exacerbated.

The governor proposes funds to provide a safety net to immigration workers by maintaining the Washington Immigration Relief Fund. The governor will also focus on centering climate change proposals on environmental justice and health disparities for communities of color and low-income Washingtonians.

As he enters his third term as governor, Inslee is putting renewed emphasis on equity as a significant priority. He will work to eliminate the systemic racial disparities that exist in different aspects of life, and improve social equity across the state.

### **Establish office to investigate police using excessive force**

The governor proposes to create the Office of Independent Investigations to conduct investigations of police use of excessive force.

After the deaths of George Floyd and Manuel Ellis earlier this year, the governor created a task force to recommend how the state can be more accountable and improve the way it investigates police use of excessive force. These recommendations would ensure that such investigations are fair, thorough and independent.

The majority of task force members held strong views that the state must create a new, independent agency to conduct police use of force investigations. Members also agreed that this office must be rooted in an understanding of the country's deeply embedded institutional racism, the history of racism in policing, and how bias disproportionately impacts and harms people of color.

The task force told the governor that the new agency must conduct investigations with transparency, accountability and an anti-racist lens.

The governor will request legislation during the 2021 session to create the Office of Independent Investigations within the executive branch. An advisory board will provide input into the staffing and operations of the office. The director of the new office will work with the advisory board to develop the plans for implementation, including regional staffing and training. The budget includes funding for any prosecutions that result from these investigations. (\$26 million in General Fund – State).

### **Fund and task the new Equity Office**

The state Equity Office, created by the Legislature in 2020, will develop the state's five-year equity plan. It will help the state develop language-access requirements, remove barriers to accessing state services and decrease inequities across state government. With a staff of eight, the office will also help agencies develop and implement their own diversity, equity and inclusion plans. To promote systemic and cultural changes, the office will introduce best practices and change management to agencies, and design an online performance dashboard that measures agencies' progress toward diversity goals. Any government agency can request the office's help to reach its DEI goals. (\$2.5 million GF-S)

### **Maintain the Washington COVID-19 Immigrant Relief Fund**

The governor proposes additional state investments to the Washington COVID-19 Immigrant Relief Fund. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted Washington immigrant workers, a demographic that can't access many relief programs because of their immigration status. While the governor recently allocated \$62.6 million in federal CARES Act funds to the Washington Immigrant Relief Fund for economic support, the needs within the immigrant community far surpass the amount of funding that's currently available. (\$10 million GF-S)

The Employment Security Department and Department of Social and Health Services will conduct a feasibility study on how to replicate the state's unemployment insurance program and expand other safety net programs to individuals — regardless of their citizenship status. (Fiscal year 2021: \$35,000 Employment Administrative – State; fiscal year 2022: \$80,000 Employment Administrative – State, \$77,000 GF-S)

### **Establish Juneteenth as a legal holiday**

The governor supports honoring June 19 as a legal holiday and encourages local jurisdictions to do the same. This funding will cover the costs to maintain critical services during the new holiday each June 19.

Observing Juneteenth is one way we can recognize the horrors and brutality of slavery, and somberly reflect that the Declaration of Independence did not grant Black Americans liberty.

Juneteenth is the historic day in 1865 that commemorates and recognizes when Union soldiers told slaves in Galveston, Texas 1865 that they were free — nearly two and a half years after President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. The day also recognizes the resiliency of Black Americans and hope for a more equitable future. Black historian Henry Louis Gates, Jr. describes June 19 as one of the “most inspiring grassroots efforts of the post-Civil War period,” when Black Americans transformed June 19 from “a day of unheeded military orders into their own annual rite.” (\$5.6 million GF-S and \$1.7 million Non-General Fund-State).

### **Increase minority contractors**

The governor's budget includes funding for the Business Diversity Management System, which measures and tracks the state's progress toward equity in public spending and state contractors. The system also helps the state increase the number of minority-



and women-owned business that participate in public spending. This funding will help the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises finish implementing the system's final steps. (\$1.9 million GF-S)

OMWB will also launch the Washington State Toolkit for Equity in Public Spending to support state agencies and educational institutions. This will promote equity and create more diverse, innovative and efficient business solutions for agencies. (\$221,000 GF-S)

### **Support financial literacy**

The Department of Financial Institutions will work with financial education partners and financial institutions to help address racial wealth inequities. DFI will create a diversity, equity and inclusion staff position dedicated to working with financial institutions; federal, state and local government agencies; and community partners.

DFI's efforts will help underserved populations more equitably participate in safe, secure and affordable financial services (\$674,000 Financial Services Regulation Account).

# Insurance cost by credit score



Consumer Reports, "The secret score behind your rates"

## Ban insurance companies from using credit scores

One of the most common reasons why people struggle financially is from events outside of their control — unemployment, natural disasters and medical expenses. For many, the impact (financial or otherwise) is felt for generations. The pandemic has hit low-income Washingtonians and communities of color the hardest, and they will bear the repercussions for months and years to come.

This is one reason why the governor has joined the insurance commissioner to propose Senate Bill 5010, legislation that bans the use of credit scoring in auto, homeowner, renter and boat insurance. Credit-based insurance scores historically and disproportionately affect communities of color and low-income communities because of inequities embedded in our credit system. The Office of the Insurance Commissioner will oversee these efforts. (\$89,000 Insurance Commissioner’s Regulatory-State)

## Invest in environmental justice

Climate change is an environmental harm that threatens human health, and access to clean air, safe drinking water, nutritious food and shelter. Vulnerable populations and communities exposed to environmental pollution over decades experience a disproportionate, cumulative risk of harm. Without proactive policy intervention, these communities are less likely to adapt or recover from climate change impacts.

In 2020, the Environmental Justice Taskforce found that Washington will only achieve environmental equity when no single group or community faces disadvantages as they deal with the effects of the climate crisis, pollution, environmental hazards or environmental disasters. The taskforce recommended how the state can improve government accountability to communities; incorporate environmental justice into government structures, systems and policies; invest more equitably; and improve environmental enforcement.

The governor's 2021 policy and budget proposals put environmental justice and equity at the center of the climate agenda and take the first step toward implementing the recommendations of the taskforce. The proposals will:

- Improve air quality and climate resilience in the most impacted communities by putting a cap on greenhouse gas emissions and supporting project investments that make communities more resilient to climate change impacts.
- Ensure that the benefits of the clean energy transition are equitably distributed so that vulnerable populations aren't left behind.
- Give overburdened communities a voice with a formal advisory role in climate governance by creating a permanent Environmental Justice and Equity Advisory Panel.
- Incorporate environmental justice into environmental and economic development agency staffing and programs, and require that investments in climate change projects, programs and activities undergo an environmental justice analysis.

### **Invest to close the digital divide**

Students having access to technology has been essential to their learning success during the pandemic. The governor's budget includes funding to support residential broadband connections for families across Washington who cannot afford connection services in their area. (\$79 million Near GF-S)

The state will also contract with a nonprofit entity to support a Digital Navigator Program in 10 regions across the state, with two navigators in each region. These navigators will provide one-on-one digital skills support to individuals seeking work, families supporting students in K-12, individuals who are English language learners and older Washingtonians. (\$6 million Near GF-S)

### **Advance equity on school campuses**

The governor proposes to support creative efforts that advance equitable outcomes for community and technical college students. The state will establish a new center for diversity, equity and inclusion that sets up collaborative reviews of the curriculum, and removes equity barriers to student success. This money will also fund technology grants and faculty stipends to conduct those curriculum reviews on college campuses. These grants will convert technical and laboratory-based instruction to an interactive online format. (\$23.3 million, Workforce Education Investment Account)

Eastern Washington University, Central Washington University, The Evergreen State College and Western Washington University will get funding for DEI inclusion efforts. In addition, the funding will expand recruitment and outreach efforts to historically underserved students and faculty, increase student supports and mental health counseling, establish a new Native Pathways Program and Ethnic Studies Program, and establish a new student center. (\$9.9 million, Workforce Education Investment Account)

### **Remove barriers to financial aid**

The governor proposes to continue funding the Aim Higher Free Application for Federal Student Aid initiative. This will help families and students connect to state and federal grants and loans, such as the FAFSA, to help pay for college and improve Washington students' post-secondary outcomes. Washington has one of the lowest application completion rates in the country. (\$1.1 million, Workforce Education Investment Account)

### **Support community-based organizations**

The governor proposes to fund community practices across the state that will advance racial equity in the state's funding decisions and future investments. The Department of Commerce will work directly with community leaders and organizations to support

these robust strategies and fund community capacity building assistance. Community priorities will be part of the program’s design, and this will help equalize voices and remove barriers. (\$1.1 million GF-S)

### **Improve equity outcomes for foster and homeless students**

The governor proposes to provide grants, mentorship and student support services to college students or apprentices who experienced foster care or homelessness. The Passport to Careers Program serves students who lack family and financial support to complete their educational pathway – many of them coming from foster care or homelessness. This program provides financial and academic support to help these students complete their college or apprenticeship credential. (\$8.4 million, Workforce Education Investment Account)

### **Support career development**

The governor proposes \$3 million from various transportation accounts to continue and expand WSDOT’s pre-apprenticeship program. This program awards groups that provide outreach, pre-apprenticeship training and supportive services to underrepresented populations in the construction



trades. With an emphasis on individuals in juvenile rehabilitation and foster care communities, the program will provide organizations with funding to support:

- Pre-apprenticeship training in one or more highway construction trades.
- Support services that may include assistance with transportation, child care, basic tools and housing. Typically, women, minorities, veterans, and other disadvantaged individuals need these barrier-reducing supports to enter and succeed in apprenticeships.
- Mentorship and retention training.
- Cultural competency training to foster and encourage a safe and welcoming worksite for every person working Department of Transportation construction projects.

### **Expand outdoor recreation equity**

#### *Statewide outdoor school*

The governor proposes \$90,000 for Western Washington University to explore the possibility and benefits of expanding outdoor residential school programs. This will more equitably serve fifth and sixth grade students statewide. The study explores the COVID-19 impacts on institutions that provide participants with outdoor learning. Recommendations will center on using physical activity and exposure to natural settings to improve health disparities and accelerate learning for historically underserved populations. (\$90,000 of the GF-S)

#### *Access outdoor recreation*

State Parks and Recreation Commission will facilitate a work group with the Commission on African American Affairs to identify inclusion barriers. The group will also develop recommendations to increase the number of Black Washingtonians who participate in the state park system and other outdoor recreation spaces and public parks. (\$85,000 GF-S)

### ***Physical Activity and School Facilities Task Force***

The governor proposes \$175,000 for the Recreation and Conservation Office to lead a task force that consider ways the state can improve equitable access to K-12 schools' fields and athletic facilities, and local parks' agency facilities. The task force will consider joint

use agreements, partnerships, scheduling practices with local parks agencies including facility rental fees, and other strategies. The goal is to increase physical activity for youth and families. (\$175,000 from the Youth Athletic Facility Account-Non appropriated)

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## **Capital budget highlights for equity**

*The governor proposes reevaluating two significant capital funding grant programs and investing in several community-based organizations.*

### **Create a more equitable grant process**

The governor proposes \$400,000 for the Department of Commerce to develop targeted equity strategies that are informed by community engagement, outreach and research. Commerce will create an equity work group to identify investments, programs and policy changes. This work will bring about a better understanding of the statutory, administrative, and operational barriers that exist in state capital programs. It will also recommend changes to reduce disparities and disrupt the displacement and gentrification of underserved communities. (\$400,000 capital bonds)

The governor proposes funding for the Recreation and Conservation Office to lead a public stakeholder process for reviewing a subset of the state grant programs it administers. The group will assess the equity outcomes that these programs provide and recommend how we can increase the success of projects that serve highly impacted communities and vulnerable populations. (\$400,000 capital bonds)

### **Capital projects**

#### ***Asberry House***

Dr. Nettie J. Asberry, possibly the first black woman in the United States to earn a Ph.D., purchased Asberry House in the Hilltop neighborhood of Tacoma over 115 years ago. Grant funding will help the Tacoma City Association of Colored Women's Clubs acquire the historic home. From her home in the Hilltop neighborhood, Asberry taught music and Black history to local youth. During her life, she founded the Tacoma CWC and helped found the first NAACP chapter on the West Coast. Acquiring the Asberry Home symbolically reclaims and celebrates her life's work and contributions for the Black community. (\$800,000, capital bonds)

#### ***Miller Park in Yakima***

Miller Park, located in Northeast Yakima, is the only green space and park within walking distance for many children and their families in a densely populated area. This project includes playground equipment that follows federal standards from the

# Capital investments



Americans with Disabilities Act, a picnic shelter, improved lighting and walkway, and a prefabricated restroom facility. The Governor’s Office received letters from nearly 20 community members who requested this park improvement project. The proposed budget item reflects the vision for how an improved park will positively impact their neighborhood. (\$625,000, capital bonds)

### ***Africatown Land Trust***

Africatown Land Trust receives funding to purchase the Keiro Center site, a former nursing home in Seattle’s Central District. A developer bought the property after the nursing home fell on hard times. Africatown Land Trust intends to turn the property into affordable housing. (\$13.8 million, capital bonds)

### ***Rainier Valley Food Bank***

The governor’s proposal includes funding for a new community food center through Seattle’s Rainier Valley Food Bank, which will redefine the role the food bank plays to help address food justice and equity, and expand wrap-around services.

The center will offer a commercial kitchen, a grocery-store-style area, and a flexible gathering space for

workshops and community-led organizing. Storage and staging space will help the food bank expand home delivery and ‘backpack programs’ for students who need food. The current food bank location is severely limited by their 1,200-square-foot space. Despite these operational challenges, grocery shopping and delivery has expanded from 300 households to 1,300 households a week during the pandemic. The food bank has also seen a 46% increase in students receiving groceries for their families through the food bank’s backpack program. (\$1 million, capital bonds)

### ***McKinney Center***

Funding will help the Central District Community Preservation Development Authority restore the McKinney Center for Community and Economic Development. This facility was formerly known as the Seattle Vocational Institute and the state transferred it to the CDCPDA earlier this year. The project will also receive operating budget funds to help with general operating costs. (\$480,000 General Fund-State and \$1 million Capital Bonds)