



## Eastside Human Services Forum 2021 State Legislative Session Results

### Overview of Budgets

One year ago, our state faced a \$8.8B deficit. There was great concern about potential deep cuts to human services to balance the budget. With the influx of federal relief dollars, strong state revenue forecasts, and new revenue measures, the budgets that passed are robust and historic. Instead of devastating cuts to human services, significant investments have been made with equity at the center.

On the last day of the session, Washington legislators passed the 2021-2023 [operating budget](#) with \$59B in state funds and \$10.6B in COVID-19 federal stimulus funds. The Legislature also passed a \$6.3B [capital budget](#) and a [transportation budget](#) of \$11.8B that includes \$1B in federal funds.

### Continuing Impact of Coronavirus

Health considerations dictated by the pandemic meant this session – hearings, meetings with constituents, floor debates and votes – were conducted remotely for the first time in our history. Although there were some technical issues, it greatly expanded access to people across the state. Instead of traveling to Olympia for a possible two-minute testimony, people testified remotely from the safety of their homes. It is very likely that remote testimony will continue to be an option in future sessions.

The remote session resulted in only 335 bills being passed, the lowest number of a 105-day session since 1983. However, the bills that did pass included some bold legislation that has been in the works for years such as the Working Families Tax Credit that passed thirteen years ago and was finally funded this year.

### Budget Highlights

The following page offers budget highlights related to our 2021 priorities. Some of the expenditures are one-time because they are funded by federal relief funds.

### EHSF Priority Bill Results

We started with 27 bills or pairs of bills and 19 have been signed into law! For details, please see EHSF 2021 State Legislative Priority Bill Results.

Thank you for your advocacy!

Liz Mills  
Consultant, Eastside Human Services Forum

## **Budget Highlights Related to 2021 EHSF State Legislative Priorities**

### **Support Basic Needs and Health Services**

- \$52.2M to fund TANF 15% grant increase (largest increase since 1980)
- \$23.7M to fund SB 5214, TANF time limit extension and work requirement waiver through 6/22
- \$22.9M for one-time Pandemic Emergency Assistance for TANF & certain SNAP families
- \$8.8M to fund HB 1342 and eliminate school lunch co-pays
- \$989,000 to fund HB 1151 and provide transitional food assistance
- \$45M for foodbanks with a focus on BIPOC communities, and farmer-to-families food box program
- \$5M in Farm to School grants
- \$23.1M for the Emergency Food Assistance Program
- \$3M for SNAP Fruit and Veg Incentive Programs
- \$8M to State Bd for Community and Technical Colleges for emergency student assistance
- \$340M for COVID-19 Immigrant Relief Fund payments
- \$12M to fund one-time Disaster Cash Assistance as part of HB 1151
- \$261M to fund the Working Families Tax Credit

### **Making Homelessness, Rare, Brief and One-Time by Making Housing More Accessible**

- \$350M in the Capital Budget including \$175M for the Housing Trust Fund, \$120M to rapidly acquire properties for emergency shelter and affordable housing, \$10M to preserve affordable housing
- \$658M to extend the state's rental assistance program
- \$35M for local shelter capacity grants
- \$31.2M to fund SB 5160 and provide for legal representation in eviction cases
- \$130.7 funding for the Housing and Essential Needs program (\$27M increase)
- \$187M for foreclosure prevention

### **Support Older Adults and People with Disabilities**

- \$7.5M to backfill Area Agency on Aging case management workforce lost to COVID
- \$59.9M for a temporary rate increase to long-term care and providers for individuals with developmental disabilities

### **Strengthen Early Learning and Youth Services**

- \$400M for childcare stabilization grants
- \$303M to fund SB 5237, the Fair Start Act, with a variety of early learning and childcare initiatives
- \$24.9M to expand Early Childhood Education & Assistance Program (ECEAP) slots
- \$40M for community-based youth development programs such as expanded learning, school-age child care, mentoring, and school-based wrap-around programming
- \$6.7M to fund HB 1166 and SB 5030 and increase graduation rates
- \$245,000 to fund SB 5044 and reduce school expulsions

### **Other**

- \$411M for broadband infrastructure (capital budget)
- \$30M in digital equity investments including the digital navigator program
- \$16.1M to fund SB 5194 and improve equity and access in higher education