



## 2019 Washington State Legislative Session Summary

Each year, Food Lifeline sets out to work with legislative champions in Olympia and Washington DC on policies to solve hunger problems, protect successful safety net programs, and secure new investments for hunger relief efforts. We are happy to report progress in all these areas during the 2019 Washington state session.

Importantly, Food Lifeline recognizes our advocates and supporters, including partners that helped make this body of work possible: Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition, Northwest Harvest, Poverty Action Network, Racial Equity Team, Washington Anti-Poverty Advocates, Faith Action Network, United Way, Food Fighters Caucus, Opportunity for All Caucus, and Washington Food Industry Association.

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### Hunger and Health

**Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive.** We secured funding to continue programs at Washington State Department of Health that make it easier for SNAP and WIC households to afford more fruits and vegetables: *Complete Eats Fruits* and *Vegetable Coupons* that can be redeemed at Safeway grocery stores, *Farmers Market Match* ("Fresh Bucks") offered at local farmers markets across the state, and in health settings, and *Fruit and Vegetable Vouchers* that can be given by health professionals to patients with a qualifying health condition or who are food insecure.

**SHB 1587, Rep Marcus Riccelli; SB 5583, Sen Claire Wilson | Bipartisan vote? Yes | Total appropriation: \$2,500,000.**

**WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program.** Like above, we sought, albeit unsuccessfully, funding to increase the value of vouchers per client per season, specifically for clients in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program.

**Total appropriation: \$0.**

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### Hunger Prevention

**State Nutrition Programs.** Despite a tough budget environment, we sought to increase funding for: Emergency Food Assistance Program, State Food Assistance Program, State Family Assistance, Refugee Cash Assistance, Senior Nutrition Programs, and Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program.

**Current investment and benefit levels were maintained.**

**Postsecondary Student Assistance.** Addressing student hunger, this bill creates a grant program for community and technical colleges to provide monetary assistance to students experiencing unforeseen emergencies or situations. Additionally, this bill seeks SNAP waivers so that students can use their benefit cards on campus.

**2SHB 1893, Rep Debra Entenman | Bipartisan vote? No | Total appropriation: \$1,500,000.**

**Community Eligibility - Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.** We started this session with the intention of eliminating lunch co-pays for low income families participating in free or reduced-price school meals (HB 1892, Rep Melanie Morgan). That effort failed, but in its place, we secured budget proviso to fund a staff position within OSPI to increase utilization of Community Eligibility Provision - an election that allows schools serving low-income

communities to offer all students free meals, thereby eliminating co-pays altogether.

**Budget proviso: \$236,000 for biennium.**

**Adequate School Lunch Duration Study.** A pilot study was funded that will help schools determine what policy or other changes would be required to achieve 20 minutes of seated time for school lunches.

**HB 1272, Rep My Linh Thai | Bill failed, but project funded through budget proviso | Total appropriation: \$126,000.**

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## Food Systems

**Capital Budget Project.** Food Lifeline secured capital funding to expand freezer/cooler space at our Hunger Solution Center. The expansion is needed to handle more perishable foods and alleviate the expense of off-site storage. Special thanks to our project champions Sen Karen Keiser, Rep Mia Gregerson, and Rep Tina Orwall.

**SHB 1102, Capital Budget | Bipartisan vote? Yes | Total appropriation: \$1,004,000.**

**Washington State Food Policy Forum.** The forum engages stakeholders in agriculture, state agencies, and nonprofits to coordinate and advance food policy, programs & related issues in Washington. Among other things, the forum will promote “strengthening hunger safety net programs to ensure they are reaching low income people in need.” We secured operating budget funding to continue convening the forum over the next two fiscal years.

**ESHB 1109, Operating Budget | Bipartisan vote? Yes | Total appropriation: \$100,000.**

**Wasted Food Reduction.** This bill puts the state on a path to reduce wasted food by 50% by the year 2030. It calls for the state’s Department of Ecology to convene other agencies and key stakeholders in developing a plan to achieve this goal, to be submitted to the legislature by Oct 2020. Outlined strategies are preventing food waste, diverting edible, nutritious food to food banks, and composting, animal feed, or biofuels. It calls for a plan that must be designed to optimize activities and processes to rescue safe, nutritious, edible food. It must also recommend stable, predictable funding for capacity building and avoid placing burdensome regulations on the hunger relief system. The bill also provides funding for wasted food education in K-12 schools and to assess current hunger relief capacity statewide.

**E2SHB 1114, Rep Beth Doglio | Bipartisan vote? Yes | Total appropriation: \$600,000.**

**WSDA Regional Markets.** This program, which includes the Farm to School initiative, provides department of agriculture staff consultation and technical expertise to small farmers looking to expand into “direct markets” such as schools or farmers markets. It also helps schools and other institutions who are looking to purchase Washington grown fruits and vegetables.

**ESHB 1109, Operating Budget | Bipartisan vote? Yes | Total appropriation: \$500,000 ongoing.**

**Retaining Productive Farmland.** This bill, aimed at farmland preservation, would have instituted an agricultural land assessment process so that as the state acquires property, it could evaluate its significance to agriculture.

**SHB 1733, Rep Mia Gregerson | Bipartisan vote? Bill failed | Total appropriation: \$0.**

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## Poverty

**State Housing Trust Fund.** The legislature provided a record investment to increase support for building or maintaining affordable-housing units. The Housing Trust Fund provides loans and grants to entities like local governments, housing authorities, nonprofit organizations and federal-recognized tribes for affordable units.

**SHB 1102, Capital Budget | Bipartisan vote? Yes | Total appropriation: \$175,000,000.**

**Working Families Tax Credit.** Washington state has one of the most regressive tax systems in the country, with lower-income people paying higher rates than wealthy people. This proposal intended to ease the tax burden on working families by giving a portion of sales tax money back to them - between \$50 to \$970 in refunds to low-income workers and families who qualify.

**HB 1527, Rep Debra Entenman | Bipartisan vote? Bill failed in committee | Total appropriation: \$0.**

**Housing and Essential Needs.** This program helps ensure that temporary disabilities don't force people onto the streets, by providing emergency rent & utility assistance and by providing access to some of life's most basic household and sanitary needs. We lobbied for additional funding and helped secure a **\$14.5 million increase** to prevent homelessness – enough to help approximately 1,000 more temporarily disabled adults.

**ESHB 1109, Operating Budget | Bipartisan vote? Yes | Total appropriation: \$71,500,000.**

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.** This assistance program is for families with children in deep poverty. It provides for things like housing and basic needs. We entered session wanting to improve access to TANF by easing harsh sanction policies, eliminating permanent disqualifications, allowing time-limit extensions, and integrating the mandatory orientation into a recipient's evaluation. The final version of the bill will eliminate permanent disqualifications and adds a time-limit extension for families experiencing homelessness.

**2SHB 1603, Rep Tana Senn; SB 5684, Sen Joe Nguyen | Bipartisan votes? No | Total appropriation: \$5,020,000.**

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## Equity & Social Justice

**Keep Washington Working.** Establishes statewide policy supporting Washington's economy and immigrants' role in the workplace and ensures their access to state services. This bill protects immigrant workers by creating a workgroup comprised of labor, immigration rights advocacy, business and government agencies in a statewide effort to provide stability to the workforce in the agriculture sector. It also restricts state agencies from aiding immigration enforcement and prevents local police from enforcing immigration laws, unless a judge approves.

**SB 5497, Sen Wellman | Bipartisan vote? No | Total appropriation: \$775,000.**

**Washington State Equity Office.** We helped secure funding to create a state office to coordinate equity initiatives across state government. Although the policy bills failed, budget proviso will provide funding to start this effort.

**HB 1783, Rep Gregerson; SB 5776, Sen Manka Dhingra | Bipartisan vote? No | Total appropriation: \$300,000 in budget proviso.**

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**Total Appropriations: \$254,141,000**

**For more information:**

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**Note:** This report will be updated and corrected as new information becomes available. Information is dated: 5/30/2019.  
"Bipartisan vote" is not an exact measure but intended to capture the trend in voting.