



2021 State Session Update

Food Lifeline's advocacy continues as state lawmakers convene in an unprecedented virtual session. Below is a report on the status of our state advocacy agenda priorities after 50 days of the 2021 Regular Session. For reference, many of these priorities are included in [Governor Inslee's 2021-2023 budget proposal](#).

As of March 9, 2021

For more information on Food Lifeline advocacy, please visit: www.foodlifeline.org.

Click for Food Lifeline's [2021 State Advocacy Agenda](#).

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Note: Legislative sessions are dynamic. Information in this report is up to date at the time of writing. Not all information will be current at the time you see this. We'll make corrections and updates on an ongoing basis.

PUBLIC POLICY PLATFORM AREA: FOOD SYSTEMS

State Food System Resiliency

Food Lifeline Priority: ACTIVELY SUPPORT WSDA's full budget request for state food system infrastructure and market access grants for farms, food processors and food distributors. \$15M for Biennium

Status: On track (budget request). In addition, WSDA is receiving \$18 million in the Supplemental budget to fund hunger relief efforts until the Biennial budget is implemented on July 1, 2021. A portion of that request would go to this purpose.

Food Bank Redistributor Investments

Food Lifeline Priority: ACTIVELY SUPPORT measures to direct investment to regional hunger-relief organizations serving as redistribution hubs, to be used for facility, equipment, technology, and staff capacity improvements.

Status: Food Lifeline is looking to WSDA's budget requests to accommodate this priority.

Farm to Food Pantry

Food Lifeline Priority: SUPPORT budget request to expand this WSDA program that encourages produce donation and purchasing between local food pantries and small-scale farmers. \$700K for Biennium

Status: On track (budget request). Sponsoring this budget request: Senator Van de Wege.

Washington Food Policy Forum

Food Lifeline Priority: SUPPORT budget request to continue this public-private partnership created to promote Washington food system goals. \$600K for Biennium



Status: On track (budget request). Sponsoring this budget request: Senator Van de Wege.

PUBLIC POLICY PLATFORM AREA: HUNGER AND HEALTH

SNAP Fruit & Vegetable Nutrition Incentive

Food Lifeline Priority: ACTIVELY SUPPORT DOH's \$3 budget request for programs that help SNAP participants afford more fruits and vegetables. \$3M for Biennium

Status: On track (budget request). Sponsoring this budget request: Senator Lovelett.

Washington Produce Donation

Food Lifeline Priority: ACTIVELY SUPPORT measures to help fund large-scale procurement of donated Washington produce for hunger relief efforts statewide.

Status: Food Lifeline is looking to WSDA's budget requests to accommodate this priority.

PUBLIC POLICY PLATFORM AREA: HUNGER PREVENTION

Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP)

Food Lifeline Priority: ACTIVELY SUPPORT WSDA's EFAP budget request for food & operational expenses at local food pantries and food bank distribution centers. \$23M for Biennium

Status: On track (budget request). In addition, WSDA is receiving \$18 million in the Supplemental budget to fund hunger relief efforts until the Biennial budget is implemented on July 1, 2021. Approximately \$2 million of that request would go to EFAP, approximately \$12 million would go to food purchase, and approximately \$1.25 million would go to food bank warehouse and distribution costs.

Food Assistance to SNAP Households

Food Lifeline Priority: SUPPORT a one-time cash benefit and 5-month temporary food assistance program to help people who are transitioning from SNAP or FAP enrollment. \$989K for Biennium

Status: On track. The measure above was included in [HB 1151](#), Bolstering economic recovery, by Representative Leavitt. It passed the House on 2/25 by a vote of 82 to 16. It now goes to the Senate for concurrence. Secondary sponsors are Representatives Shewmake, Peterson, Bronoske, Entenman, Stonier, Bateman, Chopp, Frame, Hackney, Callan, Pollet, Gregerson, Senn, and Johnson, J.

Food Assistance Program

Food Lifeline Priority: SUPPORT funding to provide the maximum food benefit level for people (legal immigrants) who qualify for FAP. FY21 \$6.7M for Biennium



Status: On track. The measure above was included in [HB 1151](#), Bolstering economic recovery, by Representative Leavitt. It passed the House on 2/25 by a vote of 82 to 16. It now goes to the Senate for concurrence.

Food & Cash Assistance Benefit Reviews

Food Lifeline Priority: SUPPORT pausing safety net benefit reviews until June 2021 for Basic Food, TANF, State Family Assistance, and Aged, Blind or Disabled programs. \$2.9M for Biennium

Status: On track. The measure above was included in [HB 1151](#), Bolstering economic recovery, by Representative Leavitt. It passed the House on 2/25 by a vote of 82 to 16. It now goes to the Senate for concurrence.

School Meals

Food Lifeline Priority: SUPPORT measures to improve access and availability of school nutrition programs, like Farm to School grant funding for local produce purchasing.

Status: On track. [HB 1342](#), Eliminating lunch copays for students who qualify for reduced-price lunches, by Representative April Berg, passed the House on 2/12 by a vote of 95 to 1. Already the state picks up the cost of copays for K-3 grades. This bill would extend that to all grades. Secondary sponsors are Representatives: Gregerson, Berry, Wicks, Chopp, Valdez, Morgan, Sells, Fitzgibbon, Orwall, Santos, Ryu, Peterson, Rude, Maycumber, Shewmake, Stokesbary, Ormsby, Lovick, Stonier, Bergquist, Bateman, Lekanoff, Callan, Frame, Riccelli, Pollet, and Harris-Talley.

A budget request for **Farm to School** grant funding is on track. Its sponsor is Senator Wellman.

PUBLIC POLICY PLATFORM AREA: POVERTY

Working Families Tax Credit/Recovery Rebate

Food Lifeline Priority: ACTIVELY SUPPORT a direct cash assistance tax credit of at least \$500 for lower income workers disproportionately harmed by the pandemic.

Status: On track. It is currently on the House floor awaiting action. [HB 1297](#), Concerning working families tax exemption, by Representative Thai [Companion bill: [SB 5387](#) by Senator Nguyen]

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Food Lifeline Priority: SUPPORT measures to improve critical TANF resources and support offered to families with children living in deep poverty.

Status: Off track. Amendments to the bill have drastically reduced its scope and potential impact. [SB 5214](#), Concerning economic assistance programs, by Senator Nguyen. To remedy this, a budget request is being proposed that would increase the TANF grant amount by 15 percent. This would put things back on track.

State Housing Trust Fund & Rental Assistance

Food Lifeline Priority: SUPPORT measures to increase & preserve affordable housing and assistance for renters at risk of eviction.



Status: Several bills related to affordable housing are moving. See appendix.

PUBLIC POLICY PLATFORM AREA: EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE

Racial Equity

Food Lifeline Priority: MONITOR for SUPPORT, policies aimed at dismantling institutional racism and inequitable and unjust systems that create and perpetuate determinants of hunger.

Status: On track. See appendix for bills related to race equity.

Washington State Office of Equity

Food Lifeline Priority: SUPPORT fully funding the efforts of the state office of equity.

Status: This is a budget request and is on track.

Digital Equity

Food Lifeline Priority: SUPPORT measures to promote equity in digital broadband access to help more people connect to important safety net services, or educational and work opportunities.

Status: Currently in House Rules: [HB 1460](#), Closing the digital divide by establishing excise taxes on telecommunications services to fund the expansion of the universal service programs in Washington (Universal Service Expansion), by Representative Gregerson. Off track, died in Committee: [HB 1450](#), Procuring, and supporting the use of, appropriate computers and devices for public school students and instructional staff by levying a tax on wireless devices (Keeping Students Connected), by Representative Gregerson. See related bills in Appendix.

PUBLIC POLICY PLATFORM AREA: TAX, BUDGET, AND NONPROFITS

Capital Gains Tax

Food Lifeline Priority: SUPPORT measures to rebalance Washington's regressive tax code while providing more revenue for community investments.

Status: On track: [SB 5096](#), Concerning an excise tax on gains from the sale or exchange of certain capital assets, by Senator Robinson. This bill passed in the Senate on 3/6 by a vote of 25 to 24. It now goes to the House Finance Committee. [HB 1496](#), Creating a more progressive tax system in Washington by enacting an excise tax on sales and extraordinary profits of high valued assets, by Representative Tana Senn.

Food Lifeline Priority: MONITOR any legislation impacting the regulatory or tax environment for nonprofits.

Status: Ongoing



Related Bills

Refers to legislation that has been introduced and is similar to Food Lifeline's agenda priorities, but that we may have not taken a position on. In some cases, our support for a bill not specifically on our agenda may be expressed through our involvement in a coalition.

State Housing Trust Fund & Rental Assistance

Related bills:

[HB 1069](#) – Concerning local government fiscal flexibility (rental assistance) by Representative Pollet. On 2/25, passed House 56-42.

[HB 1236](#) – Protecting residential tenants from the beginning to end of their tenancies by penalizing the inclusion of unlawful lease provisions and limiting the reasons for eviction, refusal to continue, and termination (tenant protections), by Representative Macri. On 2/9, referred to Rules.

[HB 1277](#) – Providing for an additional revenue source for eviction prevention and housing stability services (Eviction prevention and housing stability) by Representative Ormsby.

[SB 5160](#) – Addressing landlord-tenant relations by providing certain tenant protections during and after public health emergencies, providing for legal representation in eviction cases, and authorizing landlord access to state rental assistance programs (landlord-tenant relations/tenant protections) by Senator Kuderer. On 2/25, placed on Second reading.

[HB 1220](#) – Supporting emergency shelters and housing through local planning and development regulations (supporting emergency shelter and housing) by Representative Peterson. On 2/25, in Rules.

[SB 5117](#) – Concerning rental vouchers to eligible offenders (rental vouchers to eligible offenders) by Senator Nguyen.

Housing

Related bills:

[HB 1054](#) – Establishing requirements for tactics and equipment used by peace officers, by Representative J. Johnson. On 2/27, passed House 54 to 43. It's now awaiting a hearing in Law & Justice.

[HB 1267](#) – Concerning investigation of potential criminal conduct arising from police use of force, including custodial injuries, and other officer-involved incidents (Investigations of the police re conduct), by Representative Entenman. On 3/3, bill passed House by a vote of 57 to 39.

[HB 1203](#) – Concerning community oversight boards, by Representative J. Johnson. On 2/22, bill was referred to Rules.

[SB 5051](#) – Concerning state oversight and accountability of peace officers and corrections officers (Oversight and accountability), by Senator Pedersen. On 2/25, the Senate passed this bill 26 to 19.



[SB 5259](#) – Concerning law enforcement data collection, by Senator Nobles. On 3/1, passed by a vote of 46 to 2. The bill is sent to the House.

[HB 1202](#) – Addressing meaningful civil remedies for persons injured as a result of police misconduct, including by allowing for an award of attorney fees in addition to damages and injunctive and declaratory relief (Civil liability for suing), by Representative Thai. On 2/24, placed on Second Reading.

[HB 1310](#) – Concerning permissible uses of force by law enforcement and correctional officers (Use of deadly force), by Representative J. Johnson. On 2/22, referred to Rules.

[HB 1140](#) – Concerning juvenile access to attorneys when contacted by law enforcement, by J. Johnson. On 3/2, passed House by vote of 56-41.

Digital Equity

Related bills:

[HB 1212](#), Promoting the fair servicing and repair of digital electronic products to increase access to appropriate and affordable digital products, support small businesses and jobs, and enhance digital connectivity in Washington state (Right to Repair), by Representative Gregerson.

[HB 1336](#), Creating and expanding unrestricted authority for public entities to provide telecommunications services to end users (Public Broadband Act), by Representative Hansen. On 2/23, passed House 60 to 37.

[SB 5242](#), Supporting media literacy and digital citizenship (Media literacy & digital citizenship), by Representative Liias. In Rules.

[SB 5175](#), Concerning the authority of the community economic revitalization board (CERB), creating an appropriated loan and grant program is created for financing broadband infrastructure projects, by Senator Nguyen. On 2/18, on Second Reading in the Senate.

Capital Gains Tax

Related bills:

[HB 1406](#), Wealth tax by Representative Frame [Companion [SB 5426](#) by Senator Hunt]

[HB 1465](#), Making the estate tax more progressive by exempting small estates, reducing estate taxes on medium estates, increasing the estate tax on larger estates, and addressing equity in homeownership and homelessness, by Representative Orwall.