

STATE ADVOCACY AGENDA 2026



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Supporting Stability and Economic Security for Pierce County Families

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Creating a stronger future for every generation

Protect Essential Services

Lifeline programs prevent crises, reduce long-term public costs, and help families remain stable and employed.

We urge the Legislature to:

- Maintain funding for **SNAP, food banks, and nutrition programs**
- Protect investments in **childcare and early learning**
- Ensure continued access to **behavioral health services**
- Support **HB 2364** to strengthen Washington's **Economic Justice & Well-Being** governance and accountability for implementing the 10-year plan to dismantle poverty-aligning **WorkFirst/TANF** with workforce, education, health, and revenue systems that affect ALICE households.
- Maintain state funding for **Naturalization Services** for immigrants and refugees by protecting **LEP Pathway ESL & Employment Services** for limited English Proficient (LEP) refugees and immigrants and continuing to fund state **Food Assistance Programs (FAP)** and FAP **Employment Programs** for refugees, immigrants, and asylum seekers.

Why it matters: These services support workforce participation, child development, and community stability while reducing reliance on emergency systems.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Expand access to safe and affordable housing - Housing instability is one of the greatest barriers to economic mobility in Pierce County.

UWPC supports:

- **HB 1195 / SB 5497** – Remove barriers to building permanent housing
- Increased investment in the **Housing Trust Fund** and funding for eviction prevention & housing stabilization
- **HB 2489** – End the criminalization of homelessness
- Protection of tenant rights and homelessness prevention programs

Why it matters: Preventing homelessness is significantly more cost-effective than emergency response and helps keep families connected to jobs, schools, and healthcare.

ECONOMIC MOBILITY

Equitable Access to Workforce Credentials

UWPC supports:

- **HB 2458/SB 6217** - ensures that students pursuing high-value certificates and credentialing programs receive the same level of state support as those pursuing traditional college degrees.

Why it matters: These pathways are essential for working adults, parents, and low-income students seeking rapid access to family-sustaining wages and economic mobility.

Protect and Maintain the Working Families Tax Credit

The **Working Families Tax Credit** is one of Washington's most effective tools for reducing poverty among working households. Preserving this credit ensures that low- and moderate-income workers—particularly ALICE families—can afford basic necessities such as housing, food, and transportation. Maintaining the WFTC strengthens economic stability, reduces reliance on emergency systems, and reinforces the value of work.

UWPC supports: The benefits cliff is one of the largest structural barriers keeping ALICE households from achieving long-term stability.

Address the Benefits Cliff to Support Economic Mobility

Washington must continue efforts to **reduce the “benefits cliff”** that penalizes families for earning more. Policies that align public benefits with wage progression help families advance without risking sudden loss of childcare, food, or healthcare.

Why it matters: Addressing benefits cliffs strengthens workforce participation, supports employers, and promotes long-term self-sufficiency.

Maintain and Strengthen Working Connections Child Care (WCCC)

Working Connections Child Care is essential to ensuring parents can work, pursue education, and remain economically stable. Maintaining funding and access to WCCC is critical to workforce participation, family stability, and the success of credentialing and training programs that move families toward self-sufficiency.

Why it matters: Child care is a workforce issue. Without reliable child care, businesses cannot retain employees, and families cannot advance.

FOOD SECURITY

Advance Food Security - Access to nutritious food is foundational to health, learning, and economic opportunity.

UWPC supports:

- **HB 2238** - Advancing food equity and food security

Why it matters: Cuts to food assistance increase hunger, worsen health outcomes, and shift costs to local communities and emergency systems.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Families thrive when early learning and support systems are accessible and aligned

UWPC supports:

- **HB 2371/SB 5961** – Transitioning the Washington Imagination Library to OSPI
- **HB 2099/SB 5907** – Expanding ECEAP eligibility for military families

Why it matters: Early learning improves lifelong outcomes, supports working parents, and strengthens military readiness.

PROTECT STATE CAPACITY

Protect State Capacity Amid Federal Cuts - With anticipated reductions in federal funding, Washington must act to preserve essential services.

We urge legislators to:

- Backfill cuts to housing, food, and prevention programs by protecting SNAP and Medicare from reductions
- Support fair, sustainable revenue solutions
- Prioritize investments that prevent crisis and reduce long-term costs

Why This Matters for Pierce County

- A large share of working families are ALICE
- Housing and childcare costs continue to rise faster than wages
- Demand for food, housing, and behavioral health services is increasing

ADVOCACY PARTNERS:

- United Ways of the Pacific Northwest (UWPNW)
- Statewide Poverty Action Network (SPAN)
- Low Income Housing Alliance (LIHA)
- Washington Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition (WAAG)
- Washington State Budget & Policy Center
- Pierce County Early Childhood Network (PCECN)
- South Sound Military & Communities Partnership (SSMCP)
- Pierce County Human Services Coalition