



How the Washington State Budget Impacts You

Education: The 2009-2011 budget cuts approximately \$1.8 billion from education funding, so all of the new programs and grants that were appropriated to education projects have been eliminated.ⁱ What does this mean for K-12 students and their teachers?

- “Larger class sizes”ⁱⁱ
- “No more after-school programs”ⁱⁱⁱ
- “Fewer nutritional meals made possible through the Local Farms and Healthy Kids Program”^{iv}
- “Fewer sports teams”^v
- “No paraprofessional training” or professional development for teachers^{vi}

Health Care: “The Basic Health Plan is a state-sponsored program providing low-cost health coverage through private health plans. This Plan was reduced by 42%, or \$222 million in the current budget.”^{vii} General Assistance Unemployable (GA-U) “is a state-funded program that provides cash and medical benefits for persons who are physically and/or mentally incapacitated and unemployable for 90 days from the date of application. GA-U funding was reduced by 18% or about \$60 million.”^{viii} What other services were affected?

- “Programs for the elderly and disabled were reduced or eliminated.”^{ix}
- Programs for individuals with substance abuse or mental health issues have been reduced.^x
- “Funding for family planning clinics was reduced by 10% or \$4 million.”^{xi}

Transportation: More people than ever are using metro buses and commuter vans.^{xii} Additionally, “sales revenues, the largest single source of funds for public transportation, have dropped substantially during the current recession.”^{xiii} The combination of increased transit use and decreased sales tax revenues have “resulted in a financial crisis for the system.”^{xiv} Do crowded buses and unavailability of commuter vans impact your life?



Children's Issues: Funding for the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program was cut \$2.3 million.^{xv} This means “that fewer preschool children will be prepared to enter the school system.”^{xvi} Additionally, funding for development of the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) was cut in three communities.^{xvii} QRIS is important, because it ensures “high quality child care from birth through preschool.”^{xviii} How else could your family be affected?

- Paid Family Leave (SB 6158) was scheduled to begin October, 2009, but has now been delayed until 2012.^{xix} This historic legislation is supposed to “grant Washington workers up to five weeks of partial wage replacement of up to \$250 per week upon the birth or adoption of a child.”^{xx}
- The budget for the Council for Children and Families was cut \$1.7 million, which means “loss of access to support for at-risk low income families to help their children get the best possible start in life.”^{xxi}

“How Does Washington’s Tax System Measure Up?”^{xxii}

Eventually the economy will make a positive turn, but is Washington’s tax system effective even in good times? Here are some basic facts that may encourage you to vote for policy change:

- “General Fund revenue under Washington’s present tax system is likely to grow 10 to 15 percent more slowly than the demand for state government services in the long run. This is the key to what is called the “structural deficit”.”^{xxiii}
- “Washington’s mix of taxes, with its heavy dependence on the retail sales tax, causes tax revenues to grow faster than the economy in good time and contract more downturns.”^{xxiv}
- “The high sales tax creates a significant incentive to shop out of state and causes problems for Washington retailers.”^{xxv}

How does this impact YOU? Are YOU ready to vote for reform?



ⁱ League of Women Voters of Washington (LWVWA) Civic Engagement Project (CEP), *Budget Impact on Education*, 2009.

ⁱⁱ *Ibid.*

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid.*

^{iv} *Ibid.*

^v *Ibid.*

^{vi} *Ibid.*

^{vii} LWVWA CEP, *2009-2011 Budget Impacts on Health Care*, 2009, p. 1.

^{viii} *Ibid.*

^{ix} *Ibid.*

^x *Ibid.*

^{xi} *Ibid.*, p. 2.

^{xii} LWVWA CEP, *King County Metro Bus and Van Transportation*, 2009.

^{xiii} *Ibid.*

^{xiv} *Ibid.*

^{xv} LWVWA CEP, *The Budget and Children's Issues*, 2009.

^{xvi} *Ibid.*

^{xvii} *Ibid.*

^{xviii} *Ibid.*

^{xix} *Ibid.*

^{xx} *Ibid.*

^{xxi} *Ibid.*

^{xxii} LWVWA CEP, *How Does Washington's Tax System Measure Up?*, 2009.

^{xxiii} *Ibid.*

^{xxiv} *Ibid.*

^{xxv} *Ibid.*