

Washington State Historical Society

In compliance with the budget reduction exercise request from the Director of OFM, we are submitting our budget reduction proposal. We are willing to withdraw our decision package request to expand history education at WSHS by hiring a Native Education Specialist, hosting a teacher institute, and make field trips free for all students. We will conduct private fundraising for these programs at this time.

We would ask that the other activities in our decision package remain available for consideration:

- Activities associated with the America 250 commemoration are onetime expenses that are critical to the success of this commemoration. If these activities are not funded, there will be little to show for this important milestone in US history in Washington State.
- Our decision package also requests the creation of an operating grant program for heritage organizations – initially focused on America 250 programming, and later focused on supporting the programs and operations of heritage organizations around the state. This grant program will boost the sustainability of these small organizations, which are located in nearly every community across the state and serve people in every legislative district by expanding their access to informal history education, historic sites, and museums. As well, these grant funds will have a stimulus effect in these communities, as they are used to hire staff, or purchase goods and services.

We understand the State's need for budget reductions and fiscal responsibility. However, WSHS utilizes state funding for payroll and facilities costs. These funds do not cover all payroll expenses, and we have multiple staff who are paid using local and reserve funds. Facilities expenses are for utilities, supplies, and maintenance contracts. Any cuts we propose in these areas would involve eliminating or reducing staff, or reducing maintenance on our buildings, both of which would have significant impacts on our ability to offer services to the public and to care for state-owned buildings.

With the exception of personnel costs, WSHS funds its programming, exhibitions, and educational services through our earned and contributed income. On December 1 we are raising our admission prices, and soon after that we will be raising our facility rental prices as well in order to cover an already projected budget deficit for our agency this year. A reduction in state funding for our agency will result in a reduction in services given the rising cost of doing business and the challenging fundraising environment post COVID.



Jennifer Saunders
Director