

Building on Washington’s successes by emphasizing diversity, equity and inclusion

While a number of publications have called Washington the best state in the nation and the one with the strongest economy, our successes are not enjoyed by all Washingtonians. Systemic barriers such as institutional racism prevent access to equal opportunities and hamper the advancement of too many Washingtonians.

The facts bear this out. We know that black and Native American babies face higher mortality rates. We know that students with disabilities and students of color have lower high school graduation rates than their peers. We know that women earn only 80 cents on the dollar compared to their male counterparts — and that women of color earn even less. We know that discrimination in the criminal justice system leads to disproportionate sentencing. We know that disparities in state contracting exist.

If we are truly to live up to our title as the best state, Washington must be the best for all Washingtonians regardless of their race, ethnicity, country of origin, immigration status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, age and military status.

Gov. Inslee knows that our state is a better place to live and work when we embrace workforce diversity, equity and inclusion through the elimination of barriers to growth and opportunity. This allows each employee to contribute their full measure of talent and builds our capacity to deliver innovative, effective and culturally relevant

services to all the people of Washington. Over the past several years, he has signed executive orders to develop employment plans for [veterans](#), hire more [individuals with disabilities](#), maintain safe and secure spaces for [LGBTQ public employees](#) and collect only necessary information to serve those who are [immigrants](#). His supplemental budget invests in a number of programs to make Washington’s workforce more inclusive, diverse and representative of the people it serves.

Operating budget investments

The Equity Office

Create an office to provide technical assistance to state agencies that request help to reach their inclusion goals. The office will hire eight staff, of whom two will be innovation officers, to assist agencies in using best practices and change management, and to promote systemic and cultural changes. In addition, the office will provide opportunities for community engagement in state government decision-making processes. The Equity Office will help agencies identify policies, procedures, practices, statutes, rules and budget

decision-making practices that may perpetuate inequities. The office will also design an online performance dashboard to measure agencies' progress in meeting diversity goals. (\$1 million General Fund-State)

Statewide diversity, equity and inclusion training

Create and offer a standardized curriculum so state employees receive uniform training on diversity, equity and inclusion. The online training, which will be created and delivered by the Department of Enterprise Services, will be offered statewide and at no charge to agencies with fewer than 3,000 employees. (\$800,000 Enterprise Services Account)

Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises

- Increase the pool of qualified Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises-certified businesses for public contracting. The more businesses that OMWBE can certify will widen diversity among contractors. (\$200,000 GF-S)
- Set up an electronic database to better monitor how much money is spent on OMWBE-related contracts starting with six of the state's largest agencies, which are responsible for two-thirds of the state's overall spending in the private sector, and two higher education institutions. (\$600,000 GF-S)
- Provide technical assistance to companies wanting to become OMWBE-certified. This is especially useful to smaller companies that lack the resources or time to apply for certification. (\$132,000 GF-S)

- Conduct outreach activities to minority businesses to encourage them to become OMWBE-certified. (\$216,000 GF-S)

Educator professional training

Designate funds already appropriated for professional development for educators in the 2020–21 school year for training on racial literacy and cultural responsiveness. This will help to close opportunity gaps for Washington students and promote diversity, equity and inclusion. (\$39.7 million, already appropriated)

Capital budget investments

Mt. Zion housing

Cover pre-construction costs for a 64-unit affordable housing project for seniors who have been displaced or are at risk of being displaced due to gentrification in the Seattle Central District. (\$250,000 bonds)

El Centro de la Raza building

Make life-safety seismic retrofits and ADA upgrades to improve the safety and accessibility of the facility, benefiting the 14,000 people served annually through its programs and services. (\$2 million bonds)

Seattle Central District Public Development Authority

Replace the roof and mechanical systems at the former Seattle Vocational Institute facility, which will serve residents of the Seattle Central District through services and educational opportunities. (\$10 million bonds)