Front and Centered COVID-19 Response Policy Priorities

Our state is facing a public health and economic crisis at an unprecedented scale. The impacts of both the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis are disproportionately impacting working and lower-income people and communities of color. Similarly, many of the solutions needed to recover from the health and economic impacts of COVID-19 will also ease the transition to climate justice. If Washington State takes bold and comprehensive action now, we can demonstrate pathways to a Just Transition, not only beyond this pandemic but to achieve our vision of a just, sustainable, and resilient society.

Front and Centered members across Washington State recommend these bold steps:

☑ Ensure that the individuals and communities disproportionately affected by the cumulative impacts of COVID-19 – those with existing health, environmental, and socioeconomic risks – are at the center of decision-making, resource allocations, and evaluation of COVID-19 response and recovery.

☑ Strengthen place-based communities and self-determination by supporting culturally-rooted community based organizations who respond to unique needs often overlooked by universal programs, including protection from loss of housing and investments in safe, affordable means for all Washingtonians to access what we need to live, work, study, and play without risking safety or increasing pollution.

☑ Invest in economic relief and recovery that leans into regeneration and wellbeing. Provide immediate free, no-barriers access to the COVID-19 health services and workplace safety measures necessary to protect worker health and safety. Create equitable, green revenue, and financing sources that support community scale, no-barriers support for basic needs and green job opportunities accessible to all.

☑ Transition from extractive resources toward universal access to clean water and energy efficiency by prohibiting utility shutoffs, expanding energy assistance and weatherization along with clean, community-produced energy, and strengthening regulations and enforcement on major sources of pollution to ensure clean air and water gets cleaner throughout recovery.

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Front and Centered is a statewide coalition of over 70 grassroots organizations rooted in communities of color, working at the intersection of equity and environmental justice toward a Just Transition.