



2026 Legislative Agenda

The Front and Centered coalition, composed of diverse communities of color and low-income communities across the state, has been instrumental in advocating for policies that prioritize the involvement of frontline communities in developing environmental justice solutions. Our coalition will advocate for policies and investments that protect community members from environmental harm and build up the resilience of our communities.

This session is unlike most other legislative sessions. A decreased state revenue forecast, an affordability crisis, and budget cuts at the federal level are making it difficult for families to afford basic necessities. While we will continue to fight for environmental justice initiatives this year, our top priority will be protecting existing low-income assistance programs along with the funding of a statewide energy assistance program to help bring relief to our most needy and vulnerable Washingtonians.

Protecting the Social Safety Net

Food assistance, housing assistance, Medicaid/healthcare, and other social services are at risk of being significantly compromised due to state budget constraints. With high inflation and an overall high cost of living, these services are now more important than ever to preserve for low-income Washingtonians who depend on these services for survival. We therefore urge the state to protect the following programs and protect the most vulnerable in the 2026 legislative session:

- **Food Assistance:** Basic Food (SNAP) and State Food Assistance Program (FAP)
- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/State Family Assistance (SFA):** Provides temporary cash and medical assistance to families with children and pregnant women who are below a certain income level.
- **Apple Health (Medicaid):** The state's Medicaid program provides free or low-cost health coverage to eligible adults, children, and families.
- **Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) Referral Program:** Provides housing and other assistance to low-income adults who are temporarily unable to work.
- **Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP):** Helps low-income households pay for heating and cooling costs.
- **Child Care Subsidy Programs:** Provides financial assistance to eligible low-income families to help pay for child care.
- **Basic Food Employment & Training (BFET):** Helps those receiving Basic Food benefits gain skills and work experience.



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Cumulative Risk Burden (CURB) Pollution Act — House Bill 1303

Communities that have historically borne the worst effects of pollution due to redlining and institutional racism shouldn't continue to bear the ongoing harm being inflicted on their health, well-being, and even life expectancy today. Yet under current laws, the processes that permit businesses to pollute are not required to consider the effects of historical environmental racism and the cumulative health burdens that frontline communities face.

As part of the CURB campaign, our bill instructs the Department of Ecology to add an Environmental Justice Element and environmental checklist to the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). As permits are sought by different businesses and industries, we are ensuring that the environmental review process fully considers the project's potential adverse impacts to communities that are already facing high levels of pollution and increased health disparities. Ecology must also develop mitigation guidance for addressing potential environmental impacts. This effort seeks to build upon the success of the Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act which set goals for reducing existing health disparities and target investments to overburdened communities.

Energy Assistance — House Bill 1903

Access to affordable, reliable energy is essential for every household, yet rising energy costs and outdated policies leave many families struggling to keep the lights on. Over \$270 million in energy burdens weigh heavily on low-income and underserved Washingtonians, exacerbating existing inequities. A new Statewide Energy Assistance Program is urgently needed to provide sustainable, equitable solutions that ensure no family is left without critical energy services while promoting a Just Transition to clean energy for all. Our bill is built on a study commissioned by the legislature and conducted by the Department of Commerce (read the [complete report](#)).

Environmental Justice — Investing Public Monies

Ensure all state funds live up to the HEAL Act goal that 40% of environment-related funds create environmental benefits to vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, and prevent harm. This includes all state funds derived from carbon pricing, operating and transportation, capital funds, and all federal funds. Specific community priorities for climate investments include:

- **Improving Accountability:** When allocating investments dedicated to benefitting vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, it must be explicit, transparent, and not left to assumptions.
- **Sustaining Investments:** Protect important investments in community capacity building and participatory budgeting that need to be sustained and expanded.



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Revenue

While the legislature approved new revenue options during the last legislative session, it's apparent that Washington's tax system needs restructuring to become more fair and to keep up with existing and new services.

Front and Centered is a member of the Balance Our Tax Code Coalition, and our community members from all over the state are increasingly demanding big business and high-income earners to pay their fair share of taxes. Increasing prices and stalling economic growth are highlighting how an overreliance on taxes like the gas tax and sales tax—which are regressive and disproportionately impact low- and medium-income earners—leaves our state vulnerable to more and more budget cuts. There are many ways we can work together to tackle this problem, and we particularly support solutions that target a limited number of the wealthiest individuals and corporations while avoiding putting an undue burden on those who can least afford it.

Support Agenda

Fully Fund the Wildfire Response, Forest Restoration & Community Resilience Account

Fulfill the commitment made with the passage of House Bill 1168 in 2021 to invest \$125 million each biennium over eight years in critical wildfire resilience efforts.



Our Statewide Coalition

Front and Centered is led by communities of color, Indigenous peoples, and communities with lower incomes who are on the frontlines of the climate and environmental crisis. Our coalition of frontline communities advocates for **the right to a healthy environment for all** by **rooting out disparities**. We are convening, generating, and analyzing data; building alignment; and mobilizing our communities. We aim to advance a Just Transition for Washington State by **shifting power to frontline communities, stopping what harms us, and building the future we need**.