

COMMUNITY PARTNER CONNECTION

Transforming Lives

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2021

DSHS Closes the Long Beach Community Services Office

page 1



IN THIS ISSUE

Long Beach CSO Office Closes page 1

Remote Service Access has Advantages for the Public and Staff Alike page 1

Region 1 updates pages 1-4

- > Greater Spokane County Meals on Wheels Revving Up Summer Events 1
- > BankWork\$ is a Success 2
- > Career Path Services Rolls out a New Pilot Program – Proactive Success Coaching 2
- > Comprehensive Healthcare 3
- > Best Foot Forward 4
- > Aging and Long-Term Care of Eastern Washington – New Programs and Services 4

Region 2 updates pages 5-8

- > Orion's Participant of the Year 5
- > Connection in the Time of COVID 5
- > Seattle Children's Hospital Community Resource Team 6
- > From Artist to Spaceship Builder 6
- > Volunteers of America Western Washington's Community Resource Centers – *A Story in Three Acts* 7
- > United Indians of All Tribes Foundation Family Appreciation Day Event 8
- > Meet Camp Corey Camper Cassidy 8

Region 3 updates page 9

- > Kitsap County Aging and Long-Term Care Focuses on Promoting Healthy Aging and Options for Older Adults 9
- > Greater Lakes Mental Healthcare 9

DSHS Policy & Program Updates pages 10-13

- > Basic Food Emergency Supplements 10
- > Certification Waiver for TANF, ABD, WFS and Basic Food 10
- > Pandemic EBT 10
- > Time Limit Extensions 11
- > Exempting WorkFirst Participation for Good Cause 11
- > Find Other Policy Related Changes/Updates 11
- > Disaster Cash Assistance Program 11
- > Suspending the WorkFirst Sanction Process, Including Home Visits 11
- > Community Services Division Programs and Services Video 12
- > CSD Offers New Technology Innovations 12
- > Mobile Community Services Office Responds to Fire Disasters 13

Partner Updates page 14

- > Keep Children Safe with Well-Child Checkups 14
- > Division of Child Support Works to Help Incarcerated People have a Successful Reentry 14

Long Beach CSO Office Closes

The Department of Social and Health Services' brick-and-mortar Long Beach Community Services Office closed permanently Nov. 30, 2020.

Washingtonians in the Long Beach area remain able to access services like food, cash and medical benefits and other supports online and over the phone.

"COVID-19 has dramatically changed the way we gather in public buildings," noted David Stillman, assistant secretary for the agency's Economic Services Administration, which administers public benefits. "Because of our commitment to customer service, we have been deliberate and forward-thinking when designing several ways for Long Beach area residents to access services through DSHS. We are confident our decades' worth of experience with virtual call center services and online access will help make this a successful transition."

DSHS' Community Services Division officials began meeting with county commissioners and community leaders in Pacific and Wahkiakum counties in September 2020 to discuss plans to close the Long Beach office. Like all DSHS offices across the state, Long Beach closed to the public in March 2020 at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The lease DSHS had with the Long Beach building expired at the end of November 2020; other building tenants including the Department of Children, Youth and Families and the Employment Security Department continue to conduct business from this location.



Remote Service Access has Advantages for the Public and Staff Alike

"In the case of our Long Beach office, we know that our staff have many of the same COVID-19 challenges as other Wahkiakum and Pacific county residents," said Karma Hendrickson, administrator for the Long Beach and Kelso offices. "They're also homeschooling children due to school closures and limited child care options. Moving to a virtual model makes sense for everyone involved in this part of the state."

Closure of the Long Beach CSO aligns with DSHS' long-term goal of providing services in more efficient, innovative ways, better meeting its customers' needs and reducing its brick-and-mortar footprint wherever it makes sense to do so. It also saved the state more than \$8,000 a month in lease costs and facility-related expenses in a time when Washington is also facing an unprecedented budget shortfall due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Long Beach is one of roughly a dozen closures being considered across the state over the next two budget cycles where closure makes sound business sense and does not unduly impact Washington residents or DSHS staff.

The money saved by closing this office will help reduce the deficit as well as retain necessary staffing and technology to continue to administer essential services and ensure Washingtonians have access to and are eligible for programs like Basic Food benefits, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Aged, Blind or Disabled services/Housing and Essential Needs Referrals.

People can access all DSHS' community services by calling the Customer Service Contact Center at 877-501-2233 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday or going online to [WashingtonConnection.org](https://www.washingtonconnection.org). Complete details about the current service delivery are available on the [DSHS website](https://www.dshs.wa.gov).

REGION 1 update

Greater Spokane County Meals on Wheels Revving Up Summer Events

Article submitted by Meals on Wheels – Spokane County

Greater Spokane County Meals on Wheels is gearing up for the summer with our Great Spokane Road Rally.

On July 10, 2021, GSC MOW will offer its annual Great Spokane Road Rally, which is a combination of an amazing race and a scavenger hunt. Teams start at a central location and have to find pit stops from the clues provided. Once at the stop, each team participates in a challenge.

For more information on all the events, GSC Meals on Wheels has going on, check out the website at www.GSCMealsonWheels.org/Events.



BankWork\$ is a Success

Submitted by Shelley McHugh and Sara Sheldon of Career Path Services

BankWork\$® started in 2006, by the Sheri and Les Biller Family Foundation in partnership with the JVS SoCal. The free eight-week program connects young adults from low-income, under-served communities to build meaningful careers in banking.

The curriculum for BankWork\$ was co-developed by bankers, employers and community-serving organizations and ensures success by teaching the fundamentals of the banking industry. The course also offers instruction for workplace professionalism; resume building; job interview practice; job placement assistance; and provides ongoing coaching and mentoring for advancing a career.

The South Sound BankWork\$ program, offered by Career Path Services, launched July 2018 with the first cohort graduating a few short weeks later in November.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, our partners at CareerWork\$ began implementing an online class, teaching professionalism and interviewing skills - called Work\$Ready.

The rollout was fast and the classes were successful. CareerWork\$ also began utilizing a custom Learning Management System, or LMS, designed specifically for BankWork\$. This allowed Career Path Services to present the BankWork\$ course online using the same in-person teaching tools.

The program's success relies heavily on student and instructor interaction to bond and learn from each other's work and personal experiences. Zoom was essential in maintaining this key component of the course. Having the course offered by LMS and Zoom opened the door for others to attend who normally may not have been able to due to classroom location. A win-win for all involved!

As we struggle to define the new normal, Career Path Services is proud to offer some hope to our community members looking to build a new career in banking. Learn more about the South Sound BankWork\$ Program at www.careerpathservices.org/bankworks.

Career Path Services Rolls Out a New Pilot Program - Proactive Success Coaching

Submitted by: Kelli Eller, Career Path Services

In July, Career Path Services launched a new pilot program, Proactive Success Coaching or PSC, which focuses on employment retention. The pilot will serve a maximum of 30 single parents in Spokane County as they transition from the WorkFirst program into permanent employment, with continued financial and social support for six to 12 months.

Through person-centered empowered mentoring, a qualified Proactive Success Coach will connect with an eligible participant to provide employment retention, social and emotional support designed to strengthen self-efficacy through problem-solving, skill-building, emergency planning and fiscal management. Participants will also establish an Individual Emergency Savings Fund or IESF. Financial wellness check-ins may continue for up to 12 months after employment starts. PSC will give participants the opportunity to build a nest egg of up to \$1,000 after six months of employment retention. Through the PSC model, participants

will learn how to build and rebuild their savings as they use it to meet budgetary gaps they may face.

Thanks to the support from the 2020 Women Helping Women Fund, BECU, Union Pacific Foundation and the Avista Foundation – only with their help is this possible!

“It’s not enough to simply give a person a lump sum of cash and expect that it will last forever,” states Sarah Featherly, Director of Transitional Jobs at Career Path Services. “We all have to learn how to rebuild our savings when we tap it for emergencies; otherwise, when the next emergency arises, we will find ourselves back at square one with nowhere to turn to but credit cards, loans or public assistance.”

As of December 2020, Career Path Services has enrolled 12 participants in the PSC program. They have the capacity to serve 18 more before June 30, 2021. If you are interested in learning more about the PSC program, eligibility or other services that Career

Path Services provides, contact Eastern Washington Branch Manager Kelli Eller at keller@careerpathservices.org or Director of Transitional Jobs Sarah Featherly at sfeatherly@careerpathservices.org.

Comprehensive Healthcare

By Tori Tarter of Comprehensive Healthcare

In April 2020, Comprehensive Healthcare was awarded the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic Expansion Grant in the amount of \$1.99 million.

Within the parameters of the grant and with the use of allocated funds, Comprehensive Healthcare will be able to increase access to services for individuals with serious mental illness and substance use disorders throughout the Yakima Service area over a two-year project.

“We were awarded these funds because we have a strong continuum of care, which is a requirement organizations must have in place order to compete for this grant,” said Jodi Daly, Ph.D., President and CEO of Comprehensive Healthcare. “This award is a result of our proven positive outcomes and reputation among others in the industry and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.”

While this grant is specific to Yakima County, Daly says these funds will help with sustainability and increase capacity across the organization. It will also provide Comprehensive Healthcare an opportunity to test out workflow processes before transferring aspects of the project to locations in other counties.

The activities within the grant began in September 2020, and since that time, we have been able to complete or make significant steps towards completion on a number of projects. A few examples of the projects and services under the CCBHC program include:

- Increasing access to Medication-Assisted Treatment. Since September, Comprehensive Healthcare has added the buprenorphine program and is in the process of renovating the MAT clinic to accommodate the increase in clients seeking assistance.
- Hiring two peer support specialists to assist individuals to successfully transition from inpatient treatment back into the community.
- Improving quality of care through enhanced specialty training. Training such as Family Behavioral Therapy Training and Veterans Training is now

underway, and LGBTQ+ training for all our clinicians started in January.

- To promote a community approach to improved mental health, and to reduce stigma, Comprehensive Healthcare will provide four Mental Health First Aid trainings, free of charge, to community members as well as train five staff to provide Critical Incident Stress Debriefings to community organizations and first responders following traumatic events.
- In a specific effort to provide more culturally appropriate behavioral healthcare to American Indian/Alaska Natives, Comprehensive Healthcare has hired a cultural liaison to provide direction on evidence-based treatment options and strengthen relationships.
- Hiring one counselor and two peer support specialists to provide services in the schools, including those located on the Yakama Nation. Three more counselors and two more peer support specialist will be hired to provide services.
- Comprehensive Healthcare will also report measures on 21 quality indicators to ensure that whole person health care is delivered consistently to all individuals.

The behavioral health agency will also partner with Pacific Northwest University on the evaluation and tracking of Comprehensive Healthcare’s progress throughout the project.

Comprehensive Healthcare has also engaged in a collaborative conversation with other CCBHC Expansion grantees in the state of Washington, meeting once a month. The WA CCBHC Collab Group, as we call it, has partnered to work on a presentation proposal on the CCBHC grant, which will be presented during the Washington Behavioral Health

Conference in 2021. In addition, through the National Council of Behavioral Health, Comprehensive Healthcare has the opportunity to be mentored by an organization that has been awarded the CCBHC grant as a demonstration state. The CCBHC mentorship program not only helps guide our efforts, but also provides an opportunity to hear best practices and provides a platform to ask questions and receive answers. This will help as we navigate the changes and process improvements for our clients and organization.

“We are thankful for all of our partners, especially to PNWU for their willingness to help us by monitoring our goals and ensuring our objectives are successfully accomplished, and for the CCBHC Collaboration Group for being our mentors through this project,” said Daly.

To learn more about the CCBHC Grant, you can visit samhsa.gov, or visit Comprehensive Healthcare’s website at www.comphc.org.



Best Foot Forward

Submitted by: Janet Dixon of Meals on Wheels – Spokane County

Step up to help vulnerable seniors in Spokane County at the 2021 Greater Spokane County March for Meals on March 5. Both the NorthTown and Spokane Valley Malls will be filled with walkers, prizes and fun from 8 - 10 a.m.

- Each walker will receive a swag bag.
- Trophies awarded for Most Participation, Most Enthusiastic, Most Laps and our new Youth category.
- Door Prizes awarded every 10 minutes.

Registration forms are available online at www.GSCMealsOnWheels.org or our headquarters located at 12101 E. Sprague Ave, Spokane Valley. The event will follow all state COVID-19 regulations including social distancing and mask wearing.



Aging and Long-Term Care of Eastern Washington – New Programs and Services

Submitted by: Savannah Reams-Taylor, Community Outreach Specialist

Aging and Long-Term Care of Eastern Washington continues to push forward in the face of the pandemic. While we are all facing great challenges, our agency continues to support our community through new programs and innovative solutions.

- Because of the increased isolation of older adults and adults living with disabilities during the pandemic, Aging and Long-Term Care created the Check and Connect program. The goal of this program is to provide regularly scheduled wellness calls to reduce victimization and the feeling of isolation. Our team of volunteers calls clients up to two times per week to verify their well-being and refer them to available resources. Individuals can contact Community Living Connections at (509) 960-7281 to learn more. Remote volunteer opportunities are also available.
- Due to the pandemic, the Falls Prevention classes has seen many changes.
 - **A Matter of Balance:** A program to reduce the fear of falling and increase activity levels among older adults is suspended until an online version can be approved.
 - **FallsTalk:** An over-the-phone evidence-based falls prevention program is available. Several trained FallsTalk facilitators are working with individuals who experience loss of balance or who have fallen, especially if the falls have resulted in injury.
 - ALTC of Eastern Washington has continued to work with the Spokane Area Dementia Friendly Community or DFC to make our region more dementia-friendly. Through this work, Spokane was recently

recognized as a member of the Dementia Friendly America, or DFA network and was also named the Regional Lead Organization for Dementia Friends, a campaign that tackles the lack of understanding around dementia and aims to change people's perceptions about the disease.

Our vision is to provide the best home and community-based services to support healthy living and aging-in-place in the Spokane region. With these new programs and initiatives, our agency has not only continued to do so but also tackled the unique needs of older adults and adults living with disabilities during this challenging time. To learn more about any of these programs, call (509) 458-2509.



ORION

Orion's Participant of the Year

Ask anyone to describe their 2020, and the initial words you hear might be "challenging" or "difficult." While this sentiment rings true, we have also seen so much hope, resiliency and community.

Despite the rocky year and needing to rethink how we deliver our services, Orion worked with over 175 individuals in our employment programs, which range from skills training to job placement services and job retention supports and managed to assist 75 individuals into permanent community employment. Congratulations to each participant for their effort and dedication to their program, and the Orion team for their diligence in supporting each individual!

Celebrating an Annual Program Participant of the Year is an Orion tradition. This individual exhibits perseverance, dedication and is an overall inspiration to others. This year's winner exhibited those traits and much more! Prior to coming to Orion, Greg was unstably housed and unemployed. He realized he needed to gain new skills in order to find employment and that's when he enrolled in Orion's Manufacturing Training Program.

Greg's mentors and Training and Employment staff quickly realized how dependable, motivated and resourceful he was. Though he had never done manufacturing work, Greg had a great attitude and was willing to do any task - big or small. Each day, rain or shine, Greg would ride his bicycle over six miles to attend training. After he was placed into a job, due to no fault of his own, Greg returned to Orion services because the company was bought out. Then, his next job ended abruptly because the specific contract ended earlier than expected; however, because Greg demonstrated what an excellent worker he was, the company brought him back for a different position. Through it all, Greg kept a positive attitude, persisting through each setback. Congratulations, Greg, on being Orion's 2020 Program Participant of the Year!

If you would like to learn more about Orion and our programs, please visit: www.orionworks.org.

Connection in the Time of COVID



With many programs going remote in 2020, Neighborhood House was concerned about keeping our elders plugged into their social circles and services. Most of these clients have limited financial resources and speak a first language other than English. To keep elders engaged in programs that offer meaningful social interactions and connect them to healthcare resources, DSHS benefits and other crucial services during the pandemic, Neighborhood House staff, in our Family Caregiver Support Program, got creative with client engagement. We learned that there are many meaningful ways our staff can build community, provide opportunities for resource connection and reduce feelings of isolation in diverse communities during the pandemic. Here are a few of them:

- **VIRTUAL KARAOKE AND BINGO:** With opportunities to socialize severely curtailed, Neighborhood House staff discovered an accessible way to reach groups of elderly clients remotely. Using the service [Free Conference Call](#), Neighborhood House staff are successfully convening biweekly groups of clients to enjoy karaoke and bingo. Because clients only need a phone to participate, each meeting sees upwards of 25 clients joining the fun.
- **VIRTUAL TEA-TIME:** To engage our Somali clients, we scheduled virtual teatime for clients and staff to connect, socialize and provide support to one another. To make the event feel more special, Neighborhood House staff delivered a care package to clients' homes ahead of time with ingredients to make Somali chai. We purchased tea and spices from a local Somali market and even included a special tea glass. Sharing tea is an important custom for our clients, and it was meaningful to continue this practice in a virtual setting.
- **HOME DELIVERY OF CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE ITEMS:** As a thank you to clients for participating in Neighborhood House services, such as virtual support groups, staff purchased culturally appropriate food products and delivered them directly to clients' homes. Amharic speakers, for example received bags of teff (a fine grain) and Vietnamese speakers received citron honey tea. Staff selected products that were popular in each cultural community and purchased the items from local businesses. These small tokens of recognition had large benefits in terms of incentivizing client participation, affirming clients' cultures and bringing joy to clients during an isolating and scary time.

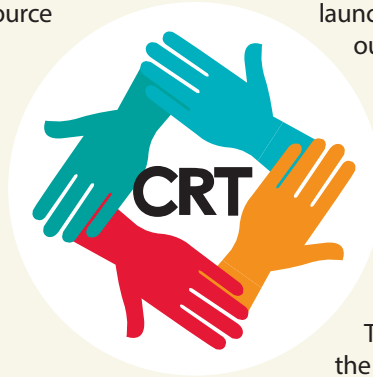
More about the Neighborhood House Family Caregiver Support Program

Neighborhood House's Family Caregiver Support Program, or FCSP, helps adults with disabilities and older adults (age 55+) who have unpaid caregivers. Program services include coordinating respite care, assistance with benefits enrollment, offering caregiver trainings, getting DME supplies and delivering meals. During COVID-19, we are assisting with other needs such as providing gas cards to caregivers. Neighborhood House's FCSP is unique because all staff are bilingual/bicultural and offer critical system navigation support for clients who may not be familiar with the U.S. healthcare and benefits systems. Staff can serve clients who speak Amharic, Arabic, Cambodian/Khmer, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tigrinya, Ukrainian and Vietnamese. For more information about FCSP or other Neighborhood House Aging and Disability Services, please contact Emy Haruo, Aging and Disability Resource Manager by email at emyh@nhwa.org or (206) 422-6493.

Seattle Children's Hospital Community Resource Team

The Seattle Children's Hospital Community Resource Team, or CRT, is an unpaid internship currently comprised of 10 students who speak multiple languages (Japanese, Spanish, Vietnamese and Mandarin) who are seeking careers in health care.

We provide families with information on lodging, transportation, cell phone/internet or utility discounts, EBT/food stamps and information and technical assistance in regards to the hospital's telehealth program. Families are referred by their clinical teams and/or can self-refer via www.seattlechildrens.org, phone (206) 987-0060 or by email at CRT@Seattlechildrens.org. We are



launching a new program where families can access our services by using an iPad that is located in their inpatient rooms and the emergency department. The iPads will give families the opportunity of reaching out to us in five different languages, and we work closely with our food insecurity program that has a food pantry on our main campus.

Julie Povick, CHW, Manager of Patient Transportation and the Community Resource Team, administers the program and has been at the hospital for over 40 years. If you have a referral, questions or suggestions, contact Julie at Julie.povick@seattlechildrens.org.

From Artist to Spaceship Builder Manufacturing Student Pivots Career at Shoreline Community College

Submitted by: Shoreline Community College

Retraining for a new career in the midst of a pandemic is a fact many will face into the new year. Thanks to Workforce Education funding, that reality can be a lot less daunting.

Alex Langenstein is a student in the Advanced Manufacturing and Mechatronics program at Shoreline Community College. She is transitioning from a career as an illustrator, animator and artist to games to a career in mechatronics and is using Workforce Education funding to pay for her tuition.

Thanks to the program's hands-on training and state-of-the-art equipment, Langenstein has already landed a job as a mechanic on mask-making machines at Seattle-based outdoor recreation outfitter, Outdoor Research.

"She's one of the most important maintenance people in her plant because she knows how to program their robot," said Keith Smith, faculty in the Advanced Manufacturing and Mechatronics program at Shoreline. "She's one of only three employees who are FANUC-certified (the only national certification for robot operations), so she's been working around the clock getting the company's robot set up on a new job."



Langenstein is also one of only two people in the company who can machine parts.

"Alex really demonstrates why those two aspects of our program are so important," said Smith.

Langenstein was able to enroll in the Advanced Manufacturing and Mechatronics program tuition-free thanks to Workforce Education funding.

"Having financial support to pay for school took a massive weight off my shoulders. I could afford gas to get to school and work, I could eat more than once a day, so many things were much easier," said Langenstein.

Langenstein was pursuing a degree in the aeronautics and astronautics engineering transfer program, but said she didn't enjoy "doing too much theoretical math and not enough applied. Mechatronics has been amazing for getting hands-on time with different systems and has really been satisfying."

The robot rock star's ultimate goal is to build spaceships. She said the Advanced Manufacturing and Mechatronics program at Shoreline is "a great way to get hands-on training and experience. I haven't even graduated and I got a job working as a mechanic from what I've learned in this program."

Langenstein plans to stay at Outdoor Research while finishing her degree and then potentially move on to aerospace in the hopes of fulfilling her dream of building spaceships. Learn more about [Workforce Education funding](#) and [Advanced Manufacturing and Mechatronics](#) at Shoreline.



**Volunteers
of America®**

WESTERN WASHINGTON

Volunteers of America Western Washington's Community Resource Centers

A Story in Three Acts

Submitted by: Volunteers of America Western Washington

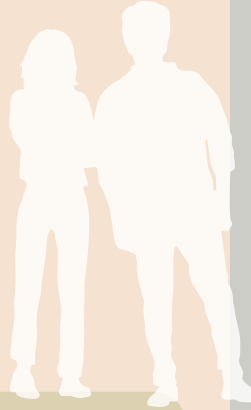
Volunteers of America Western Washington's Community Resource Centers in Arlington and Sky Valley serve hundreds of individuals and families each year, providing help with basic needs, food, employment counseling, connections to local resources and a variety of other support. Our CRC staff and volunteers are on the front lines, providing compassionate care to everyone who comes through the door.

Act I: **Andrew and Tanya**

Raden is 3 and Zoey is 1.

They're too young to remember when their dad blew out his back lifting cast iron pipes up three flights of stairs. Too young to understand that their family survived for a couple years of on Labor and Industries payments and Tanya's income as a dental assistant. Too young to know that the L&I money stopped over a year ago, that Tanya's dental office closed due to COVID-19 and money stopped coming in.

Andrew and Tanya didn't know where to turn. They called VOA's Sky Valley Resource Center and spoke with Dawnelle. She helped with rental assistance, so Andrew and Tanya don't have to worry about eviction. Raden and Zoey won't remember this, but Andrew won't forget that VOA was there when his family needed help.



Act II: **Dawnelle**

Dawnelle loved growing up in Sultan. Her family has deep roots there and everyone is either a cousin or a friend.

"Three-fourths of the town are relatives," she states with a grin. It was the classic small-town ideal, safe and familiar, nestled in picturesque Sky Valley.

Then her parents divorced, and she moved away. The next 30 years of life saw Dawnelle move to Alaska, and then to Arizona with her three kids, and then Richard called. Richard, the boy from Sultan whom she had had a crush on since the second grade. The time was right. She moved back to Sky Valley, to Richard, to home, but something had changed. Many had fallen on hard times. Her childhood babysitter was now homeless. Folks in her tight-knit hometown were sleeping under bridges – begging for food and asking for basic needs like shampoo, rain boots and deodorant. Dawnelle had to do something.

If families find themselves in need in Sky Valley, they will probably speak with Dawnelle. She is the Campus Resource Manager at VOAWW's Sky Valley Community Resource Center, and she finds no greater joy than helping her neighbors, including her old babysitter. From rental assistance and food to soap and toiletries, Dawnelle is ready to help the most vulnerable people get what they need.

"This community is my family," she says. "And, I want them to know we are here to help."



Act III: **Erika and Caroline**

After schools closed, Erika didn't know where to turn. Her girls were eating more at home, she was buying more groceries and she kept putting off paying her utility bill. She messaged Caroline at VOAWW's Arlington Community Resource Center, which found funds to keep Erika's lights on. Caroline has been her lifeline.

Erika wasn't supposed to be asking for help.

"I'm not one to ask for help. I've never needed to. Because these girls have grown so much, I need to get them some clothes that fit. Now, I can go to Walmart and get them the clothes they need. To get this help is amazing," she said.

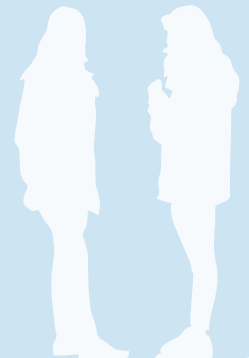
She was supposed to be living with Doug in the house they bought together in 2012. Two incomes. No kids. But life does not go easy on Erika.

Seeking safety and belonging, she left home at age 14 to stay with aunts and uncles, and then to Job Corps in Oregon. Her teenage years brought drugs, anger and fights. She broke a girl's nose and jaw in a bathroom. As an adult, she bounced around between Lake Stevens, Marysville and Everett.

Then Erika met Doug. He was generous and fun, loved racing cars and hunting. Would do anything for anyone. Three and a half years ago, Doug was diagnosed with an aggressive form of brain cancer. Within three and a half weeks, he was gone, and Erika was alone in the home they had bought together.

"I had watched him die. I didn't want to live," Erika said.

If not for her niece, maybe she wouldn't be alive today. Two months after Doug died, a family member asked Erika for help raising her niece. Erika took in one niece first, and then another. Today she has guardianship of both girls, ages 10 and 4, and is doing all she can to give them a good life.



VOAWW has grown to respond to surging needs during the pandemic and is on track to feed more than 64,000 households in 2020, and provide more than 4,000 households with over \$15.2M in rental assistance. Our CRCs provide the friendly faces, helping hands and warm coffee for anyone in need of help.

If you or someone you know needs food, shelter or support, visit our Community Resource Centers in Arlington or Sultan, call 211, or find out more at www.voaww.org.

United Indians of All Tribes Foundation Family Appreciation Day Event

Submitted by: Thaidra Alfred and Lu'isa Laulile

Every May is National Foster Care Awareness Month. In support of that awareness, our United Indians of All Tribes Foundation Indian Child Welfare Foster Care Program showed their support to our indigenous children who navigate through the system, whom we also serve. Four years ago, we began what is now known as Mini Powwow. In this event, children from cares within foster, adoptive or guardianship can dance in their cultural regalia, sing or drum. We also provide cultural protocols that are traditionally followed during our powwow for those who were unfamiliar with Native culture. We provide dinner to our families who arrive, along with a raffle, and an "honoring" to our caregivers within the program. Each year it grows in numbers and in 2019 it grew to a few hundred attendees. Sadly, due to COVID-19, we had to cancel this year.

As we waited, we wanted to still acknowledge and honor the existence of these children. Therefore, the idea of a drive-thru event was offered, and our planning began. On Oct. 4, 2020, we held our first Family Appreciation Day Drive-Thru event. It was held in our very own parking lot at Daybreak Star Cultural Center in Seattle. During the planning, we wanted to make sure we were able to have something fun for the children to enjoy, and keep it small for those who could be there to help support. We came up with four simple stations for our families.

The first two stations were for the children. Those stations had items such as a brand new backpack filled with school supplies, a new book (donated by long-time sponsor The Seattle Public Library) for them to choose and a goodie bag. The Seattle Public Library generously donated books by authors within the Native community and people of color. We wanted our children to relate or feel inspired by those who are a part of their community.

The third station was for caregivers. We honored them with a thank-you card, a bag with traditional Native medicines and a blanket. Our last station had two different meals for the families to choose from, either spaghetti or salmon. Both dinners came with sides, a roll and a yummy dessert. It is also traditional to offer fruit to your guests, so apples and oranges were available. We are so grateful to Andre, who leads the kitchen in providing our meals at United Indians.

Families arrived from all over the state. Even though everyone wore a mask, you could see the gleam of appreciation in their eyes. It took a team to bring this event together. We are blessed by those who responded to our media shout out for volunteers to share in what was such a successful event. Our sponsors such as CANOES, Laird Norton Foundation, The Seattle Public Library and Casey Family Programs also overwhelm us. Having such a team allows us to show our families we are here, and that we honor and acknowledge them.

Meet Camp Korey Camper Cassidy

Submitted by: Camp Korey

At Camp Korey, medical conditions are left at the gate. Campers build confidence, make friends, try new things and experience the joy of childhood, supported by inspirational counselors and a dedicated medical team, always 100% free of charge. Founded in memory of Korey Rose, who lost his battle to cancer at age 18, Camp Korey is a proud member of the SeriousFun Children's Network and provides a universally accessible, medically safe camp-based experience to families. Camp Korey has now served over 35,000 campers ages 7-17 battling more than 35 life-altering medical conditions through our year-round programming in and out of the hospital setting and onsite since 2005! Our year-round programming is designed to foster independence, resilience and personal growth, helping children see beyond the limits of their medical conditions and experience all that life can offer!



Learn more from a Camper: Meet Camper Cassidy

"I was born with a very rare condition called Conradi Hunermann Syndrome. Conradi Hunermann is a type of dwarfism that affects everything in my body. I am half-blind and half-deaf, I have a rare skin condition called Ichthyosis, limb length discrepancy in my whole right side (including my lung) causing me to have to wear a prosthesis. I am a part-time wheelchair user, and I have kyphoscoliosis, meaning my spine bends and twists. Over the last 17 years, I have had a grand total of 43 surgeries.

Growing up I was constantly in and out of the hospital every six months for surgeries on my spine, and I truly thought I was alone. I knew I had a very solid support system surrounding me, but it never felt like I had anyone to talk to who understood what I was going through.

Camp Korey has taught me many things such as loosen up sometimes, do not be afraid to be silly and have fun! Remember, you are not alone. For so long, I thought that no one understood me because I was too different – but camp helped me realize that there is always someone out there who understands and can relate to what you are going through. Be kind. Be a team player. I am not defined by my condition. Camp Korey reminded me that I have a full, fun life, and to not let my body stand in the way of what I can accomplish. There is no normal – I am unique and that is OK!

Camp Korey is a special place. Camp Korey gave me a place to call home, gave me friends when I did not have any, it gave me a summer to just be a kid. Camp gave me lifelong friends. Camp Korey gave me a family, and I will never be able to say thank you enough."

Volunteer

Behind every camp experience is a gift of time. Our volunteers are at the heart of our Camp Korey mission – giving their time, talents and support through onsite and at-home service opportunities. When you volunteer, you become a part of the Camp Korey family – a caring, supportive and compassionate community that comes together to enrich the lives of our campers. Contact our volunteer team at volunteer@campkorey.org or learn more at www.campkorey.org, info@campkorey.org or call (425) 440-0850.

Kitsap County Aging and Long-Term Care Focuses on Promoting Healthy Aging and Options for Older Adults

As an Area Agency on Aging, Kitsap County Aging and Long-Term Care plans, coordinates and advocates for the development of a comprehensive service-delivery system at local levels to meet short- and long-term needs of older adults, adults with disabilities and family caregivers. Services are delivered with a focus on promoting healthy aging and options that support aging and older adults with disabilities to live independently and with as much dignity as possible.

In Kitsap County, the aging population continues to increase, with 2020 projections estimating 34% of all county residents will be 60 years of age or older. With input from a survey of community members and partnerships with faith communities, tribes, emergency responders, medical providers, local businesses and nonprofit organizations, services are delivered to meet the identified needs and interests within the local community. Kitsap Aging and Long-Term Care also conducts outreach in the community to share their supports and resources.

- Free services provided to residents of Kitsap County include **Senior Information and Assistance**, providing a variety of resource information for people age 60+ and their family caregivers including counseling, Meals on Wheels, legal information, telephone reassurance calls, energy assistance, connection to other existing community resources and problem-solving. This service also includes DSHS application assistance for programs such as Basic Food assistance, Medicare Savings programs, long-term care and Medicaid Alternative Care/Tailored Supports for Older Adults, etc.
- The **Family Caregiver Support Program** provides free individualized support for unpaid family caregivers to take care of themselves while caring for another adult. Clients collaborate with a case manager to design a care plan and services to help reduce stress and provide support through their caregiving journey.
- **Kinship Caregiver Support Services Program** provides referrals for services and limited financial assistance to eligible kinship caregivers (grandparents and relatives raising children) by assisting them to obtain the resources necessary to help stabilize the family. Grandparents raising grandchildren frequently use these services.
- **Dementia Specialist Consultation** is a unique service supported by funding from the local Kitsap County 1/10th of 1% Mental Health, Chemical Dependency and Therapeutic Court Tax Program. The dementia consultant is a retired registered nurse and geriatric mental health specialist providing free consultation with family caregivers and professionals caring for someone with memory issues and behaviors that are putting the person at risk for losing their current living situation (at home or facility). The consultant provides input on strategies to manage behavior, resources, education and recommendations for specific follow-up with someone's medical provider.
- **Additional free services for older adults and adults with disabilities include:**
 - Brain Health and Senior Drug Education.
 - Case management for Medicaid In-home Long-Term Care (COPEs and Community First Choice), Medicaid Alternative Care and Tailored Supports for Older Adults.
 - Long-Term Care Ombudsman for advocating and protecting the rights of people living in adult family homes, nursing homes and assisted living facilities.
 - Social isolation strategies and interventions.

Kitsap County Aging and Long-Term Care can be reached at (360) 337-5700 or (800) 562-6418. More information about services and local events is available at www.agingkitsap.com.

Greater Lakes Mental Healthcare *Serving our community in uncertain times*

Submitted by: Ron Messmer, Funding Case Manager and Washington Connection Advisory Council Member

The COVID-19 pandemic has created several challenges in providing mental health care to the community. Change is hard, and this year has asked us all for a lot of flexibility. Our clients have had to learn to embrace virtual therapy while needing to be present and available for their children.

Like so many, our clients are now acting teachers, recreation planners and after-school care providers. This isolation and lack of supports have caused new stressors that many clients have never had to cope with prior to COVID-19.

Therapists at Greater Lakes are seeing new clients, many new to poverty, with a need for assistance due to financial hardship. While grateful for the insurance and services, for some, the idea that they are in this position has put them in a deep depression. The way to the other side is learning new strategies to cope with stress, change and uncertainty.

Greater Lakes is facilitating virtual individual therapy, therapeutic groups, case management and resource referrals more than ever before. The broader community has stepped forward by meeting some

of those needs such as donations to food banks, but there has been a gap in financial assistance to meet all of a client's basic needs. That coupled with the uncertainty we are living with has many in our community struggling.

On a bright note, we have been fortunate to remain COVID-19 free in our in-patient evaluation and treatment center. We will continue to be there for the people in need of mental health services and ultimately come out of these challenging times on the other side.

Basic Food Emergency Supplements

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, called Basic Food in Washington state, helps people with low incomes make ends meet by providing monthly benefits to buy food.

Congress approved supplemental funding for recipients of food assistance due to the impacts of COVID-19. This means that some Washington residents who receive Basic Food benefits have received additional funds each month since April 2020. In Washington state, this means DSHS is giving additional benefits to approximately 277,000 households.

“Having the ability to purchase more healthy food is critically important during these unprecedented times,” explained Babs Roberts, director of DSHS’ Community Services Division. “We’re glad the U.S. Congress extended these emergency benefits to



Washington residents. This can help people reduce the number of times they need to go shopping for groceries and also limits the number of people in stores, helping keep us all safe and healthy at home.”

Recipients have been receiving the difference between their regular monthly benefit and the maximum amount for their household size. For example, a two-person household that typically gets \$200 per month in food benefits will receive an additional \$155 in emergency benefits, bringing the monthly total to \$355. Some households that already receive the maximum benefit amount have not seen an increase.

We continue to request the federal government for approval to issue emergency supplemental food benefits on a month-to-month basis. You can learn more about these supplemental benefits [here](#).

Certification Waiver for TANF, ABD, WFS and Basic Food

On April 29, 2020, DSHS extended certification periods for households with Eligibility Reviews due in the months of April, May and June for six additional months, extending these certifications through October, November and December 2020. Mid-Certification Review requirements for April, May and June were also waived, and benefits will continue through the end of certification periods while households meet all other eligibility requirements. This applies to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; Aged, Blind or Disabled and Housing Essential Needs; Working Family Support; and all Food Assistance programs.

After the passage of Section 4601 of the [Continuing Appropriations Act](#) on Oct. 1, 2020, DSHS again extended certification periods and waived Mid-Certification Reviews. Households with Certification periods ending in November and December 2020 extend two additional months (i.e., to January and February 2021). Certification periods scheduled to end in January and February 2021 extend four additional months (i.e., to May and June 2021). All cash and food Mid-Certification Reports required under WAC 388-418-0011 are waived from November 2020 to June 2021 while households meet all other eligibility requirements. Learn more [here](#).

Pandemic EBT

P-EBT food benefits were available to families with children in grades K-12 who were eligible for schools’ free or reduced-price meal programs. This assistance was for the time period schools closed due to COVID-19 during the 2019-2020 school year. DSHS implemented P-EBT and partnered with the [Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction](#) to distribute these benefits starting June 28, 2020. The [Public Charge rule](#) does not apply to P-EBT benefits and will not impact immigration status.

Families receiving Basic Food through DSHS and with children who received free or reduced-price school meals did not need to apply for P-EBT. They automatically received these one-time benefits on their EBT cards and benefits were issued from June 28 through July 7. Families needed to apply for free or reduced-price school meals with their school districts by June 30, 2020 so they could receive P-EBT funds.

Families with children who were eligible and approved by their school district for free or reduced-price meals but who did not receive Basic Food benefits needed to apply for P-EBT by Sept. 23, 2020, which aligned the end of the program with the 2020 Federal Fiscal Year – Sept. 30, 2020.

DSHS is working with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to get federal approval for a plan to issue P-EBT benefits for the 2020-21 school year. If Washington state’s proposed plan is approved, families won’t have to apply for the program and benefits will be issued automatically to eligible children. However, it may take until March 2021 before benefits can be issued. In the meantime, if families haven’t already, they should apply for their school’s free or reduced-price school meal program and check to be sure the school district has the most current address on file for their children.



Time Limit Extensions

Effective April 1, 2020, DSHS expanded the TANF 60-month Time Limit Extension to support families experiencing hardships due to the COVID-19 emergency. Families who exhausted 60 months on TANF cash assistance and are experiencing hardships due to COVID-19 will not be denied benefits.



Find other policy related changes/updates [here](#)

Exempting WorkFirst Participation for Good Cause

Effective March 16, 2020, all WorkFirst participants are temporarily exempt from required participation. Clients can choose to continue participation and, to the extent possible, case management will continue but participation will not be required. Some employment and training services are available through virtual means, through the Employment Security Department, Community and Technical Colleges and Commerce contractors.

Suspending the WorkFirst Sanction Process, Including Home Visits

Effective March 16, 2020, DSHS temporarily suspended WorkFirst sanction reduction or termination penalties. WorkFirst services are offered each month; however, if a participant does not continue to engage in their activity, no adverse action will be taken as a result of non-participation. Participants have good cause for non-participation since it is due to an event outside of their control. This also suspends the need for a home visit by our staff as part of the sanction process. Clients who closed in sanction will not have to cure sanction before being eligible for the cash grant.

Disaster Cash Assistance Program

DSHS implemented the Disaster Cash Assistance Program, or DCAP, in response to two specified state of emergency declarations. DCAP was activated in April 2020 to address the statewide impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and in September 2020 in response to the wildfires devastating several counties. DCAP was available through Jan. 4, 2021 to all families and people without children who met the income and resource limits of the program and who are not eligible for other cash programs. Each week the governor and legislative leaders confer to determine whether the program would continue. Individuals did not have to meet citizenship requirements or provide a social security number.



Partnership in focus

Articles are written and submitted by our community partners with permission for the Department of Social and Health Services to publish.

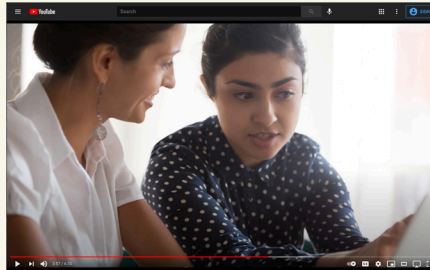


Are you a Washington Connection Community Partner? Does your organization have an inspiring community story or an upcoming event to share? Would you like to share your short story in this newsletter? Please contact Stephanie Hart at Stephanie.Hart@dshs.wa.gov for more information.

Community Services Division Programs and Services Video

The Community Services Division is excited to share with you a new video about CSD's programs and services. Titled **DSHS Community Services Division Programs and Services**, the video is approximately six minutes in length and highlights the programs we administer, such as Basic Food, medical assistance and cash assistance programs, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Aged, Blind or Disabled benefits. The video also explains how people can apply for assistance.

Please help us get the word out about this resource. You are welcome to view the [video](#) so you are aware of our programs and services, and we would appreciate you sharing it with your



networks and customers. We want all Washingtonians to know about our vital services and programs and how people can access them. Knowing how to access our services is even more critical during our current COVID crisis, as we know more people may be eligible for services.

This video provides information about how to contact us in our current, mostly virtual environment, and will be updated when we have any changes to our in-person services. It is currently available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). The English and Spanish videos can also be found on our [DSHS page](#) under A Guide to Services, and future versions of the video will be linked there.

Thank you for your commitment and partnership to help reduce poverty across our state and help communities thrive.

CSD Offers New Technology Innovations

The Community Services Division would like to share with you some very exciting news about technology enhancements to our customer service cadre of tools. These new tools focus on enhancing services to our customers contacting us through our call center toll-free number.

CSD started using the Proactive Outreach Manager, or POM, in September 2020 to notify customers of upcoming appointments and to remind them of incomplete eligibility and mid-certification reviews. POM is an interactive voice response, or IVR, system that provides for outbound calling; messaging; and, in some instances, can provide linkage to a live telephone agent. Each of these unique operations is referred to as a campaign.

CSD is currently executing three **campaigns**:

- In-person Appointment Reminder;
- Telephone Appointment Reminder; and
- Review Reminder

Each month a significant number of customers' benefits are negatively impacted by not fulfilling eligibility requirements such as required interviews and eligibility or mid-certification reviews. Many of these customers experience either a loss of or delay in benefits. POM provides an additional opportunity for outreach to these customers with the intent of avoiding an interruption in services.

Additionally, on Aug. 19, 2020, CSD announced that after 20 years of dedicated service, the Answer Phone was retiring and was replaced with a new Interactive Voice Response, or IVR, system called **Customer Connect**. Beginning Dec. 30, 2020, customers began to access the full enhancements that Customer Connect provides.



With Customer Connect, callers can securely access automated information about their benefits, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Features include:

- Verify case status, including benefit amounts, next benefit payment, benefit balances and when their next review is due.
- Retrieve messages left for them by CSD staff, including public benefit specialists, case managers or social workers.
- Confirm if CSD has received and processed a document they submitted.
- Check on appointment dates and times.
- Learn the answers of many frequently asked questions.

- Decide between self-service and speaking with an agent after hearing wait times during business hours.
- Request a call back.
- Set their own PIN for increased security.

Customer Connect and its associated enhancements represent a major improvement to the tools used by CSD to provide personalized, quality services to our diverse customer base.

DSHS customers receiving or applying for cash, food and medical programs can now submit verification documents by email. Yep – you read that right! The department released a mass-email campaign beginning September 2020, inviting

customers to participate in this enhanced service. Clients can call the Customer Service Contact Center at 877-501-2233 to receive an invitation to participate in the secure email portal. Find more information [here](#).

Mobile Community Services Office Responds to Fire Disasters

Submitted by: Javier Ruiz, Mobile CSO Administrator



East Mobile CSO Staff (from left to right): Sergio Lopez, supervisor Brandon Woodruff; Fran Castillo in Malden.



The East MCSO truck located at smoky Bridgeport.

such as on-site support for a Community Services Office that might experience an unexpected loss of power for an extended time.

This year's responses required an added layer of safety precautions due to the current pandemic, placing extra emphasis on personal protection equipment and effective social distancing. In

Available services consisted of Disaster Cash Assistance, Emergency Food

Assistance, replacement of Basic Food benefits, EBT card replacement, information and referral, and other regular program services. Many residents expressed appreciation and gratitude for the Mobile CSO staff being there to help during such a difficult time of need.

It was another busy fire season for Washington state in 2020, which isn't necessarily all that unusual. However, this last September over Labor Day weekend, national headlines were made as fires encroached on the city of Malden and devastated the small rural town.

Malden is located approximately 37 miles south of Spokane. About 80% of the town's homes and buildings were destroyed, leaving many homeless and without access to immediate personal resources. Undoubtedly, this disaster impacted the community and its residents immensely.

The Governor's Office officially declared the Malden wildfire a disaster area. With this emergency declaration, the Mobile Community Services Office was called to respond and provide DSHS emergency support services on location.

Typically, the Mobile CSO spends most of its time delivering services and doing outreach to under-served communities where the nearest local Community Services Office is too far away. In addition, it also serves as emergency support and assists with disaster recoveries with the goal of maximizing continuity of access to DSHS benefits.

Local law enforcement lifted the emergency evacuation in Malden on Wednesday, Sept. 9, and began allowing residents to return to the community and assess the damages. Staffed with a team of four, the Mobile CSO was on site that afternoon – ready to assist the public.

In addition to this year's emergency response to the Malden wildfire, the Mobile CSO deployed to Bridgeport, Omak, Inchelium, Cusick and Sumner to assist those communities also impacted by wildfires.

The Mobile CSO also has the unique ability to assist with non-disaster emergencies within the department,

such as on-site support for a Community Services Office that might experience an unexpected loss of power for an extended time.

For more information on the Mobile CSO, please visit our website at www.dshs.wa.gov/MobileOffice and be sure to like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/dshsmobileoffice.



West MCSO Staff and volunteers in smoky Sumner.



Sumner deployment (left to right): Volunteer Amanda Buckley; WMCSO staff Angelina Whitworth; volunteer Nancy Muñoz; and WMCSO supervisor Melissa Knox.

Keep Children Safe with Well-Child Checkups

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, well-child checkups and vaccination rates have taken a drastic hit. Right now it's more important than ever to encourage families to keep their children on a regular schedule for well-child checkups.

Following the provider's recommended plan for well-child checkups ensures problems are found and treated early. These exams are covered by all health insurance plans and include things not done during sick child visits including:



- Vaccines.
- Family health history.
- Shots or tests needed.
- Hearing or vision screening.
- Blood lead screening.
- Eating or sleeping problems.
- Oral health.
- Behavioral health.

Well-child checkups help ensure children stay up to date on their vaccines. It also helps protect others, especially the very young and individuals with weak immune systems. Missing routine vaccinations can put children behind schedule and prolongs the period they are at risk of contracting diseases.

Slowing or stopping access to immunizations increases the risk that we could see an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease, such as measles or whooping cough.

Clinics are taking extra precautions to ensure the safety of their patients during COVID-19. Some ways clinics are doing this is by:

- Moving all well-child visits to the mornings and sick-child visits to the afternoons.
- Car check-ins, so no one is waiting together in the lobby.
- Separating and designating rooms for well-child and sick-child visits.
- Requiring all visitors to wear cloth face coverings or masks.
- Limiting visitors to only one parent and child per visit.
- Sanitizing rooms between each patient.

Learn more about well-child visits in our [Well-child checkups for your child or teen brochure](#).

Adding more outbreaks on top of COVID-19 not only would put more people at risk for infectious disease, but it also could overload the health care system. First Lady Trudi Inslee reminds us [in this video message](#) of the importance of staying up-to-date on vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

About Washington Apple Health (Medicaid)

In Washington state, Medicaid is called Apple Health. Apple Health provides preventative care, like cancer screenings, treatment for diabetes and high blood pressure, and many other health care services to almost 2 million residents. You can apply for free or low-cost Apple Health coverage year-round. For most people, Washington Apple Health is free, but some families may have to pay a monthly premium. View eligibility requirements and how to apply online at hca.wa.gov/apple-health.

Division of Child Support Works to Help Incarcerated People have a Successful Reentry

In February 2021, DCS will implement a new law to abate child support for incarcerated parents who are reentering the community. A successful reentry can have a positive long-term impact on the formerly incarcerated parent as well as their children and other family members.

Incarcerated parents commonly complete their sentences with significant child support debt. The debt can be a barrier to housing, employment and much more. Beginning in February, parents who are confined for at least six months will pay reduced child support initially and then have incremental increases in their support over time. This gives them time to find gainful employment, stable housing and pursue resources they might need to be successful.

Our long-term goal is to support parents in providing sustainable, meaningful support for their children. This family-centered approach will benefit the whole family for years to come.

This proposal benefits families with an incarcerated parent by limiting the accumulation of child support debt during incarceration. Incarcerated parents owe more than \$52,000,000 in child support debt, averaging \$14,500 per individual. These parents pay on average 5% of their orders each month when they are incarcerated.

DCS is often unable to collect this debt after people leave prison or jail due to the barriers formerly incarcerated parents face. Evidence

has shown that by decreasing the amount of uncollectible debt, formerly incarcerated parents will have an increased likelihood of successful reentry and consistent child support payments after reentering the community. This proposal is in line with Governor Inslee's Executive Order 16-05, Building Safe and Strong Communities through Successful Reentry.

For questions about child support abatement, please contact Brittney Considine, Brittney.considine@dshs.wa.gov, or Matt Parascand, matt.parascand@dshs.wa.gov.

