

RAISES FOR ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICE WORKERS



2022 Workers' Recovery Agenda

Recognize and honor the workers who've provided uninterrupted public services amid the pandemic by making sure they are fairly paid.

During the first year of the pandemic, forecasters were unsure of how the economic disruption of COVID-19 was going to impact state budgets. Some projections estimated losses as high as \$8 billion. Washington state employees agreed to forego cost of living adjustments in an effort to do their part.

Since that time, state revenues have quickly recovered. Meanwhile, similar COLAs and pay adjustments for workers in our K-12 schools, colleges, and universities have been inadequately funded. Many other critical workers — who are privately employed but paid with state dollars — in behavioral health, child care, and home care have shown up to work every day during this pandemic, but have received few if any pay increases despite increased demand for their skills and a significant increase in the cost of living.

The State Legislature should honor the public services provided by these essential workers by taking these steps to ensure they are fairly paid for their critical work:

- Ratify and fund state employee mid-contract MOUs. The Office of Financial Management said these MOUs “represent our continued partnership with labor to invest in our state workforce during a global pandemic. Our improved economic and revenue forecast allows us to address compensation needs and recognize the hard work and commitment our employees have shown throughout the pandemic.”
- Fund K-12 raises at a rate that matches real cost of living to retain the current work force.



- Fund Higher Education COLAs to ensure pay meaningfully keeps up with inflation.
- Fund Teamsters 117 interest arbitration award for Department of Corrections.
- Increase Medicaid behavioral health rates so workers can build a career in that field.
- Support child care workers by funding Cost of Care Enhancement rates and Fair Starts for Kids Working connections rates.
- Increase wages for home care and nursing home workers.

In addition to raises for essential public service workers, the WSLC is supporting a range of issues that address economic opportunity and justice. Learn more at www.wslc.org or www.TheStand.org.

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