



## Community Collaborative Meeting

**August 13, 2025**

**Next meeting:** Q&A with Secretary Dennis Worsham, Just Futures update on Community Assemblies

Wednesday September 10, 3:30-5:00 p.m. PT

### Agenda

- 3:32 Welcome, Land and Labor Acknowledgement
- 3:35 Chris Lovings and Leah Brandenburg: Washington Dept. of Commerce
- 4:05 Lindsay Morgan Tracy, Innovator-in-Chief: Washington Economic Justice Alliance
- 4:35 Maria Courogen, ED Center for Access to Whole Person Care: Washington State Dept. of Health
- 5:15 Meeting Close

Meeting slides are available on WaPortal: <https://waportal.org/partners/community-collaborative/meeting-notes-and-slides>

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## Meeting Recap

### Opening

The session opened with the song, Higher Ground by Stevie Wonder chosen to set a tone of resilience and collective energy and also mark the upcoming 20th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. Thought Partner, Todd Holloway, welcomed the group described his visual appearance for accessibility, and acknowledged the Puyallup people and their stewardship. He asked participants to share a song that lifts their spirits. Songs included: Under the Magnolia Tree, Walking on Sunshine, Eye of the Tiger, Super Trouper.

### Washington Dept. of Commerce

Chris Lovings and Leah Brandenburg shared about their Community Engagement Team of 8 staff statewide). They act as “warm connectors,” using a No Wrong Door approach to navigate Commerce programs and partner resources, as well as connections to other agencies such as Department of Health. They live in the regions they serve (e.g., Chris in King; Leah in Clark) and



staff engage with community by attending local events, offering presentations to staff and communities, having 1-1 conversations to learn about needs and share resources, and connecting plans from local to state level (e.g., Community Health Improvement Plan → State Health Improvement Plan alignment).

Some of the divisions and examples they highlighted to share about the Department of Commerce include:

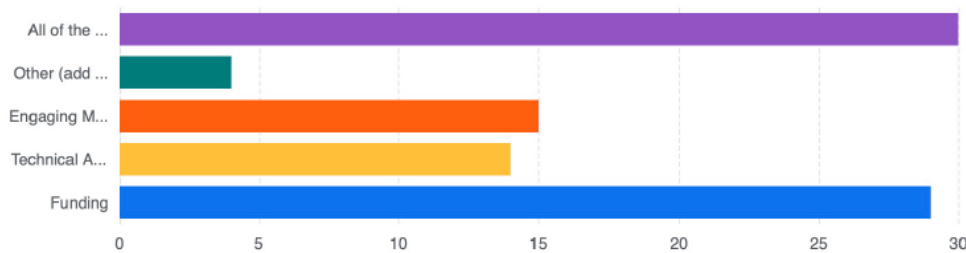
- Community Services Division: Community Action Agency funding; Office of Crime Victims Advocacy; Office of Firearms Safety & Violence Prevention; reentry grants; Community Reinvestment Project (CRP).
- Housing: Housing Trust Fund; Office of Homeless Youth; Apple Health & Homes; homeownership programs.
- Energy: Clean energy, transportation, resiliency, policy.
- Local Government: Community capital facilities (Building Communities Fund, Building for the Arts, Youth Recreational Facilities — expected to open mid-2026 per remarks); Washington State Broadband Office (Digital Equity Grants).
- Economic Development & Competitiveness: Small Business Credit Initiative; sector strategies; rural development; Small Business Resiliency Network (SBRN)—29 community-based orgs offering culturally and linguistically relevant small-business support.
- Funding navigation: The Commerce site “Funding” page (shows current opportunities and closing dates; each RFP lists a coordinator contact); [newsletters](#) for updates. Some open funding includes:
  - [Affordable Homeownership](#) applications (open through Sept 26)
  - [Multifamily](#) (state and federal funding)
  - [By-and-for Victim Services](#) (closing the day of the meeting)
  - [Community Reinvestment Project](#) reopening soon (noted as \$50–60M across four buckets)



## Poll: “How do you see us partnering with you?”

1. How do you see us partnering with you and your communities? (Multiple choice)

(54/54) 100% answered



**Q:** What kinds of events should we invite you to?

**A:** Anything community and/or internal-facing—presentations, ribbon cuttings, weekend events, staff briefings. Because engagement staff live in-region, they can connect organizations to the right Commerce or sister-agency resources—even when it’s not directly a Commerce program.

## Links:

- [Regional Team Members](#) – WA Dept. of Commerce (regional contacts map)

**Commerce Regional Community Engagement Unit**  
*We help connect communities to Commerce and navigate resources*

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**Washington State Department of Commerce**

Visit us [www.Commerce.wa.gov](http://www.Commerce.wa.gov)

Unit webpage:  
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WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

- [Contracting with Commerce](#)
- [King County CHIP](#)
- [Brownfield’s Revolving Loan Fund](#)



## Contact Information:

- Chris Lovings: Commerce, King County ([Christopher.lovings@commerce.wa.gov](mailto:Christopher.lovings@commerce.wa.gov))
- Leah Brandenburg: Commerce, Lower SW Region ([leah.brandenburg@commerce.wa.gov](mailto:leah.brandenburg@commerce.wa.gov))

## Economic Justice Alliance

**Presenter: Lindsay Morgan Tracy, Innovator-in-Chief**

**Overview:** Lindsay shared details of the multi-sector collaboration responsible for implementing the 10-Year Plan to Dismantle Poverty. The Economic Justice Alliance (EJA) coordinates radical collaboration across lived experts, community organizations, tribes, academia, labor, legislators, and agencies to implement Washington’s 10-Year Plan to Dismantle Poverty, with action, alignment, learning, and accountability at the core.

## Key points:

- The aim is to combine evidence-based practices with new innovations through partnerships between public, private, and community organizations. This ensures communities lead the design.
- EJA maintains an [Action Tracker](#), tracking over 275+ tracked actions (policy, program, budget) in the past 3 years.
- There is a goal to connect poverty reduction and environmental justice efforts by developing shared indicators of progress and building pathways toward wellbeing for people and place
- WA’s model is being highlighted nationally and internationally as best practice, such as Wellbeing Governments initiatives and interviews conducted by the United Nations.
- [Being Well in Washington Dashboard](#) and narrative-building initiative underway.
- Just Futures (RWJF-funded) update on Community Assemblies will be shared during the Community Collaborative meeting next month.

**Q:** Medicaid requirement changes will hit rural residents and small business owners hard—are you partnering with HCA?

**A:** Yes. EJA, HCA, and Employment Security are co-developing fact sheets and localized, humanized data (family types, county impacts) for actionable decision-making. Drafts are iterative and being updated as federal guidance shifts. For example, [Impacts on Washingtonians’ economic and physical wellbeing from the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act”](#)

## Breakout Session:

Short breakouts covered the following prompts:

1. Specific recommendations for better inter-agency collaboration



2. Iterations to collectively track progress on well-being (social/health/economic/environmental)
3. Other insights/ideas

Participants highlighted the value of open dialogue between community and government while calling for stronger cross-agency collaboration. They emphasized the need for more sensitive and actionable data practices, flexible funding (such as micro-grants), and community co-creation of priorities. They also urged agencies to reduce silos, improve accountability and address broader needs like mental health, rural access to care, and health-related social needs.

[See the full summary of report backs and themes.](#)

## Background:

- [Economic Justice Alliance meeting slides](#)
- [Video of the lived experts who helped shape the 10-Year Plan](#)
- [Being Well in Washington Dashboard](#)
- [2024 Impact Report](#)
- [Impacts on Washingtonians' economic and physical wellbeing from the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act"](#)

## Contact Information:

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## Rural Health Transformation Program

**Presenter: Maria Courogen, Executive Director, Center for Access to Whole Person Care at Washington DOH**

Recent federal legislation reduces funding for Medicaid and marketplace plans, impacts compound across certain populations and providers and systems will also face significant payment shortfalls. The \$50B national Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) is intended to offset some of these cuts, but with a focus on “transforming” rural health care. There will be an estimated \$10B total in federal funds across 5 years that states can apply for. We expect that 50% of the funds will be distributed equally among approved states; the other 50% will be discretionary for CMS, with rural criteria and (likely) political considerations.

If all states apply and Washington is approved, this could result in approximately \$100M/year. Some of the considerations include:

- Spend-down urgency: Funds must be spent quickly; unspent dollars will be reclaimed and redistributed.





- Eligibility breadth: Beyond hospitals to a rural ecosystem (CAHs, FQHCs, clinics, EMS, allied organizations) working together to expand access.
- Focus signals: Technology (telehealth, ambient listening/scribing, remote monitoring), prevention/chronic disease, rural workforce with “grow-your-own” pipelines to train/retain locals.
- Sustainability is required: Avoid strategies (like across-the-board rate increases) that collapse after five years. Emphasize models that can carry forward (e.g., new APMs, tech-enabled productivity/retention).

## Anticipated Timeline:

- The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has announced the application deadline for the Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) is early November; state applications must be approved by end of 2025.
- Development window: State will have 4–6 weeks post-announcement to submit.
- Governor’s Office will submit; DOH, HCA, and DSHS are collaborating; Tribal consultation is being led by the Governor’s Office.
- Fall public webinar to reflect community input and propose priority areas.
- Funding decisions: Hopeful for early 2026, with initial funds requiring rapid deployment.

## Requests of the Community:

- Submit ideas and gap statements by Friday Sept. 26 to help shape Washington’s application (all ideas welcome; not all will be included). [How to provide input](#)
- Emphasize rural gaps you experience first-hand (care access, workforce, language access, tech, transportation, etc.).
- Consider sustainable models (e.g., tech that reduces burden and improves retention; home monitoring; workforce pipelines; community-based workforce for benefits navigation and eligibility recertification support).

**Q:** How do we square *sustainability* (e.g., CHWs/peers) with a 5-year funding cliff?

**A:** Likely a bundle of strategies including TA on payment models/APMs for low-volume rural providers; technology that reduces documentation burden (e.g., “ambient listening” scribing); remote monitoring; combine pieces that can persist beyond the five-year window.

**Q:** Language access concerns?

**A:** No specific statewide solution to share yet; technology-enabled language access could be a sustainable activity to propose for RHTP.

Todd underscored urgency and thanked Maria for joining on short notice so the Collaborative could mobilize within the short RFI window.



## Links:

- HCA will update the [RHTP webpage](#) as they hear from you and learn from CMS.
- [Rural Health Transformation Program meeting slides](#)
- [Rural Health Transformation Program overview](#)
- [How to provide input](#)
- [University of Washington, ITHS Primary Care Research Network](#)

## Contact Information:

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## Closing Quote

Stevie Wonder, *Higher Ground*: “Don’t you let nobody take you to a low level. Just keep on and keep on until you reach higher ground.”

**Note:** We are working to find balance in the benefits and costs associated with translation. If you would like to share this or any part of our materials with an audience in another language, please email [Community.Collaborative@doh.wa.gov](mailto:Community.Collaborative@doh.wa.gov) and we will work with you to translate into the language(s) needed.

Estamos trabajando para encontrar un equilibrio entre los beneficios y costos asociados con la traducción. Si desea compartir esto o alguna parte de nuestros materiales con una audiencia en otro idioma, por favor envíe un correo electrónico a [Community.Collaborative@doh.wa.gov](mailto:Community.Collaborative@doh.wa.gov) y trabajaremos con juntos con usted para traducir al idioma o idiomas necesarios.