



# Advocacy and Legislative Priorities Washington State - 2009

**ISSUE: Mental health services in Washington State continue to experience significant funding gaps despite efforts to increase and enhance services to marginalized members of our communities.**

- Lutheran Community Services Northwest opposes expanded and exclusionary eligibility requirements, which are creating significant barriers for individuals and families to access services.
- Lutheran Community Services Northwest advocates for culturally and linguistically competent services which are strength-based to include the natural support systems inherent in every person's life.

**Action:**

- Support full funding for implementation of the Recovery Model including culturally appropriate peer support services.
- Recognize the importance of culturally and linguistically competent services and support increased funding for interpreter services.
- Support 1/10 of 1% sales tax increase to fund mental health and substance abuse needs in Snohomish County and monitor the implementation of this sales tax in King County, as intended, to provide additional funding for service gaps.

**ISSUE: It is more cost-effective to provide home care and supportive services to the elderly and persons with disabilities than it is to provide institutional care.**

- Lutheran Community Services Northwest supports quality services to ensure that our state has the capacity to meet emerging long-term care needs. Vendor reimbursement rates for home- and community-based services have not kept pace with rising costs.

**Action:**

- Direct the legislature to support a market-driven vendor rate increase to protect home- and community-based services to our elderly and people with disabilities.
- Support investments in respite and adult day service activities that enable family caregivers to continue to provide quality care for their loved ones.

**ISSUE: Adequate funding is required to support safe, stable permanent homes for children in the foster care system in Washington State.**

- Lutheran Community Services Northwest has been a leading provider of foster care and adoption services in Washington State, providing high quality services for all children in its care, yet, despite escalating costs, it has not received an increase in its contract rates in several years.

**Action:**

- Direct the legislature to examine the vendor rate for providers of foster care and adoption services with the goal of creating a sustainable contract rate for agencies providing these vital services.

**ISSUE: Washington State ranks 10<sup>th</sup> in the U.S. in the number of foreign-born residents and over a half-million have arrived in this state in the last decade. These individuals and families are significant assets, as both current and potential resources to our economy, our schools and our communities, yet they face significant challenges to successful integration.**

- Lutheran Community Services Northwest advocates for the removal of institutional barriers to citizenship, English acquisition, education, and workforce development by supporting Washington's New Americans Policy which will help refugees and immigrants successfully transition to life in our state's communities.
- Lutheran Community Services Northwest believes in essential human rights for all individuals in our communities who are pursuing citizenship.

**Action:**

- Allocate sufficient funds to implement Washington's New Americans Policy, making an investment for our society that will have a proven return.
- The federal government must implement clear, fair and humane enforcement practices for its immigration policies that are neither arbitrary nor violate human rights.