



CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING TASK FORCE

JUNE 24, 2024

Present: Allison Bishop, Anne Granberg, Beverly Porter, Chelsea Johnson, Christina Jackson, Colton Kaltenfeldt, Jamie Desmul, Katherine Orlowski, Karla Anderson, Kristi Dominguez, Jason Oldham, Jon Scanlon, Megan Juenemann, Monika Mahal, Pamela Jons, Ray Deck, Sallye Quinn, Tilda Doughy

Not Present: Gregory Hansen, Jen Wright, Kayla Schott-Bresler, Lyn Salazar, Samantha Cruz-Mendoza, Samya Lutz, Sativa Robertson, Sterling Chick, Vesla Tonnesson

Topic	Discussion/Outcome
Welcome	<p>Introductions, land acknowledgment, housekeeping, and review of agreements.</p> <p><u>Land Acknowledgement:</u> I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are here today on the ancestral homelands of Indigenous Peoples who have lived in the Salish Sea basin and the North Cascades watershed from time immemorial, in particular, the Lhaq'temish (LOCK-tuh-mish) people who we recognize today to be the Lummi Nation, the Nooksack Tribe, and Semiahmoo.</p> <p>May we be mindful of the inherent owners of this land, our children, who are our future. Our future stewards of the land and advocates for the generation to come. May that truth guide our work and efforts to improve the well-being of all families and children, native and non-native, living in this beautiful county.</p> <p>This land acknowledgment is not meant to be a substitute for authentic relationship-building and understanding. It is meant to introduce us to one way we can show respect and honor for the sacrifices of the first people of this land.</p> <p>Please join me in expressing the deepest respect for our indigenous neighbors, and gratitude for the enduring stewardship of our shared lands and waterways. https://www.lhaqtemish.org/ -Lhaq'temish Foundation</p> <p><u>Agreements:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family and self-care come first. • Be kind and gentle with yourself and others and assume everyone is coming from a positive place. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Everyone has the best intentions. ○ Listen with an open mind and heart. • Be mindful of this space. Step-in and step-out/Step-up and step-back. Offer your truth and insights and listen to others' truths and insights. • Treat each other with honor and grace. We are all working under difficult circumstances. • Embrace diversity. Remember that we all come from different backgrounds giving us different perspectives and only when we embrace that diversity can we develop creative solutions to address the child and family well-being needs in Whatcom County. • What is said here stays here. • Have fun. <p>Fist to Five Consensus Tool – Amended 4.25.22</p>



<p>Approve Meeting Minutes</p>	<p>Minutes from May 28, 2024, were approved as corrected.</p>
<p>Agenda Overview, Meeting Input/Evaluation</p>	<p>Evaluation tool: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf59ubhijlyXFZQJa0pXGgQQ5HhwJ1jamGFzjQLXS6-zZC1hKQ/viewform</p> <p>The purpose of this Task Force was reviewed, as stated in the Ordinance. "The purpose of Whatcom County Child and Family Well-being Task Force is to continually review Whatcom governmental impact on children and family make recommendations for improvement for all departments."</p>
<p>Community Shares and Shout outs</p>	<p>Ray shared that Skookum Kids has posted a new Program manager position for their emergency shelter, The Landing. Interested candidates can find the role description and application instructions on the Skookum website.</p> <p>Beverly shared that the ARC of Whatcom County is currently training Super Sitters. The organization works with families of children with special healthcare needs and adults, focusing on childcare. Part of their work includes providing CPR training, discussing medical needs, and covering sign language, behavior, and communication difficulties. They are the only parent organization in the State of Washington that provides this training to young people.</p> <p>Katherine shared that the All Hands Whatcom Opioid Summit, sponsored by the Chuck Nut Health Foundation, is scheduled for the next two days. The summit will be held at Bellingham High School. Encourages everyone to attend and mentions that last-minute attendees are welcome.</p> <p>Jason announced their dad's group relaunch, now officially named "Welcome Thriving Fathers." The group meets every Tuesday at 6 pm at Cornwall Park, specifically at the Frisbee golf disc course, Hole On These meetings will continue throughout the summer.</p>
<p>Healthy Children's Fund Update</p>	<p>The Healthy Children's Fund subcommittee met to review the request for a proposal scoring template. Based on feedback, the template is being updated.</p> <p>Ann introduced Alyson Halverson, a new program specialist with a background in child welfare, child abuse prevention, and pediatric healthcare. Alyson previously worked as a community programs coordinator at the Opportunity Council. She will be working on supporting vulnerable children and has already been assigned several contracts.</p> <p>Another new program specialist, Janie Oliphant, started on the same day as Allyson. Janie will focus on housing and homeless prevention strategies.</p> <p>Vesla and Sarah met with the Stanford Rapid Survey team for a second interview. We are now finalists for the Rapid Survey project.</p>



	<p>Central Consulting Casey, Osborne, Henman, Meredith, Chelsea, and Sarah are determining a set of questions to ask parents and caregivers to refine the subsidy program. They plan to conduct electronic and in-person surveys at current childcare facilities.</p> <p>A solicitation for a communications consultant was sent to the MRSC roster. Seven applications were received, and the positions are currently under review.</p> <p>Ann discussed the budget, including the spending authority received from the council, the budget amount allocated to different priorities, and the individual contracts within that spending authority. She acknowledged some discrepancies in the budget tables and promised to send out an updated version after the meeting.</p> <p>Ray emphasized the importance of reading the written report about the Healthy Children's Fund before the meeting to facilitate more productive discussions.</p> <p>Colton asked about the timeline for hiring a communications consultant and the degree to which the task force will work with this consultant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ann clarified that a contractor will fill the position and that the team will review applications and discuss the next steps on Thursday. • The targeted contract start date is August 1st, which might be optimistic due to council deadline dates. • Conversations with many stakeholders will be part of understanding messaging and needs. • The aim is to have messaging for different groups, including elected officials, parents and caregivers, and providers. • The finance division is working on an updated system to track spending better. <p>Jon mentioned that the county is hiring for the next finance director, which will add extra capacity in the finance department. He thanked Ann and Allison for bringing contracts to the council for sign-off. He has expressed interest in changing the code to improve things if the council is a blocker or delays things. He suggested that there might be ways to update some things in the code.</p> <p>Pamela raised questions about the budget lines and the need for more explanation. Suggested that there might be room for fronting some money to people first, as most grants are reimbursement-based and advocated for contracting reform and the need to get the language right.</p> <p>Katherine shared that the RFP template work they have been doing in the HCF subcommittee includes a focus on equitable procurement. This is in the context of their traditional RFPs vs smaller RFPs, termed "baby RFPs" by Colton. Katherine invited others to join them in their work on the RFP template.</p>
<p>Perinatal Support</p>	<p>Allison provided an overview of perinatal mental health support, home-visiting Doula services, peer support, and resource navigation. She emphasized the importance of supporting parents and noted that the term "perinatal" encompasses the period before, during, and after pregnancy.</p>



	<p>Allison discussed the milestones related to the Healthy Children's Fund and the focus on early childhood. She mentioned the formation of the Perinatal Mental Health Task Force in 2017.</p> <p>She highlighted the Healthy Children's Fund as a culmination of community-identified strategies. Allison discussed perinatal mental health as the most common complication of pregnancy and postpartum. She mentioned the need for more therapeutic screening and referrals and the lack of counselors with advanced training and cultural and linguistic matching.</p> <p>Allison briefly touched on the home visiting services available in Whatcom County. She mentioned that these services are income-based and vary depending on how many families they can serve.</p> <p>Allison discussed the pilot project for Doula services, which is expected to benefit roughly 80 families. She mentioned that Medicaid does not cover birth or postpartum Doula services.</p> <p>Allison discussed the development and implementation of a consistent countywide peer support system. She mentioned the National GPS (Group Peer Support) model for its scalability and replicability. She listed some of the peer support services available in Whatcom County.</p> <p>Allison discussed the expansion of SEAS (Single Entry Access to Services) to include perinatal parents. She mentioned that SEAS navigators have been trained in perinatal mental health and home visiting. She shared data on the number of referrals SEAS has received.</p>
<p>Food Access</p>	<p>Noelle Beecroft, the Whatcom County Extension SNAP-Ed Program Coordinator, introduced herself and the program. The program focuses on cooking and nutrition education for anyone who qualifies for SNAP, EBT, or WIC.</p> <p>Noelle discussed the policy systems and environmental change work around food system issues in Whatcom County.</p> <p>She shared her personal experience growing up on WIC and the challenges her family faced. Whatcom Grown Program</p> <p>Noelle introduced the Whatcom Grown program, a local food purchasing program for WIC-eligible parents in East Whatcom County.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program was piloted with parents from the Kendall Head Start. • The program provides an economic investment into the local food economy and introduces new, healthy foods to the community. • The program faced challenges with staff learning and buy-in and technical issues with the card system. • The program has succeeded, with 34 parents signing up and using the cards. <p>Noelle expressed hope for sustainable funding for the program and expansion to other stores and services.</p>



<p>September report to Council</p>	<p>Colton announced that a report to the County Council is due in September. This report will serve as a task force-wide check-in.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colton will draft the report, which needs to be approved during the August meeting and sent to the council by September 13th for the September 24th Council meeting. • The report will be drafted from the end of this month into July and early August. • The recommendations from the comprehensive plan will be used as the framework for the report. • Colton invited anyone interested in helping draft the initial plan to contact him directly. • Colton plans to host an open office hours check-in session, likely on August 15th, for feedback on the draft before it gets on the agenda for voting. • Ray reiterated the report's importance, the need for its approval at the next task force meeting in August, and the need for more involvement by members in the drafting process.
<p>Healthy Children's Fund Report Card follow-up session</p>	<p>Colton announced that the Task Force had received an invitation from the County Council's subcommittee to continue the conversation from the last meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting is scheduled for July 23rd. • The task force needs to designate representatives to speak on its behalf at the meeting. • Ray mentioned that he and Colton will communicate with the volunteers to organize a meeting before the council meeting. • John offered to meet with the volunteers before the council meeting. • Colton asked for volunteers to participate in the meeting with the County Council. Katherine, Colton, Christina, Sally, Ray, Beverly, and possibly Tesla volunteered to represent the task force. The Task Force approved the designees. • John provided additional context for the meeting, stating that the council members felt the last meeting was short and that they were unable to discuss all the recommendations from the Task Force report. He also mentioned that the comprehensive plan update might interest the council. <p>John also acknowledged that the repeal of Prop 5 to run the ballot was postponed to July 9th and that the July Council meetings will focus on the Healthy Children's Fund.</p>
<p>Developing future agenda items</p>	<p>Ray pointed out that all the items on the agenda came up organically through subcommittees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Healthy Children's Fund update was received in written form in response to requests from the Healthy Children's Fund Subcommittee. This allowed for more detailed information about the Healthy Children's Fund to be provided before the meeting. • Allison's presentation on perinatal mental health work in the community was discussed. This topic was brought up by the Issues and Policy Subcommittee, which recognized that there was a lot of ongoing work in this area, some of which was funded by the Healthy Children's Fund • The food access agenda item was brought up through recommendations regarding the comprehensive plan.



	<p>Ray, chair of the Issues and Policy Subcommittee, explained that anyone interested in discussing a subject can visit the Subcommittee. This subcommittee works on getting agenda items ready for the whole task force. He emphasized that anyone can influence and shape the topics discussed in the meetings through the Issues and Policy Subcommittee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The subcommittee is currently working on the perinatal mental health topic and will meet in the next month to discuss universal basic income, a topic of interest in the community.
Public Comment	None offered.
Closing	The meeting adjourned at 5:07 pm.
Next Meeting	<p>Next regular meeting: August 26, 2024 <u>Location: Hybrid</u></p>





Whatcom Thriving Fathers

Activities each Tuesday
June–August!

Meet at Cornwall Park's
Frisbee golf course "hole 1"
6-8 pm

- Frisbee golf
- Hiking
- BBQ's and more!

WTF is a peer-
support community
for fathers to share
the joys and
challenges of raising
small humans!

Questions? Please contact us at
WhatcomThrivingFathers@gmail.com



A place for
ALL
Fathers!



Perinatal Support

Allison Williams, Community Health Specialist, WCHCS

June 24, 3:50 PM - 4:20 PM

Child & Family Well-being Task Force



WHATCOM COUNTY
**HEALTH AND
COMMUNITY
SERVICES**



Perinatal Support



- Overview
- Mental Health Support
- Home Visiting
- Birth and Postpartum Doula Services
- Peer Support
- Perinatal Resource Navigation

Why Perinatal Support?



“Maternal mental health needs to be seen as the start of infant mental health.”

Markita Mays, LCSW

Co-Director, EMBRACE Perinatal for Black Women

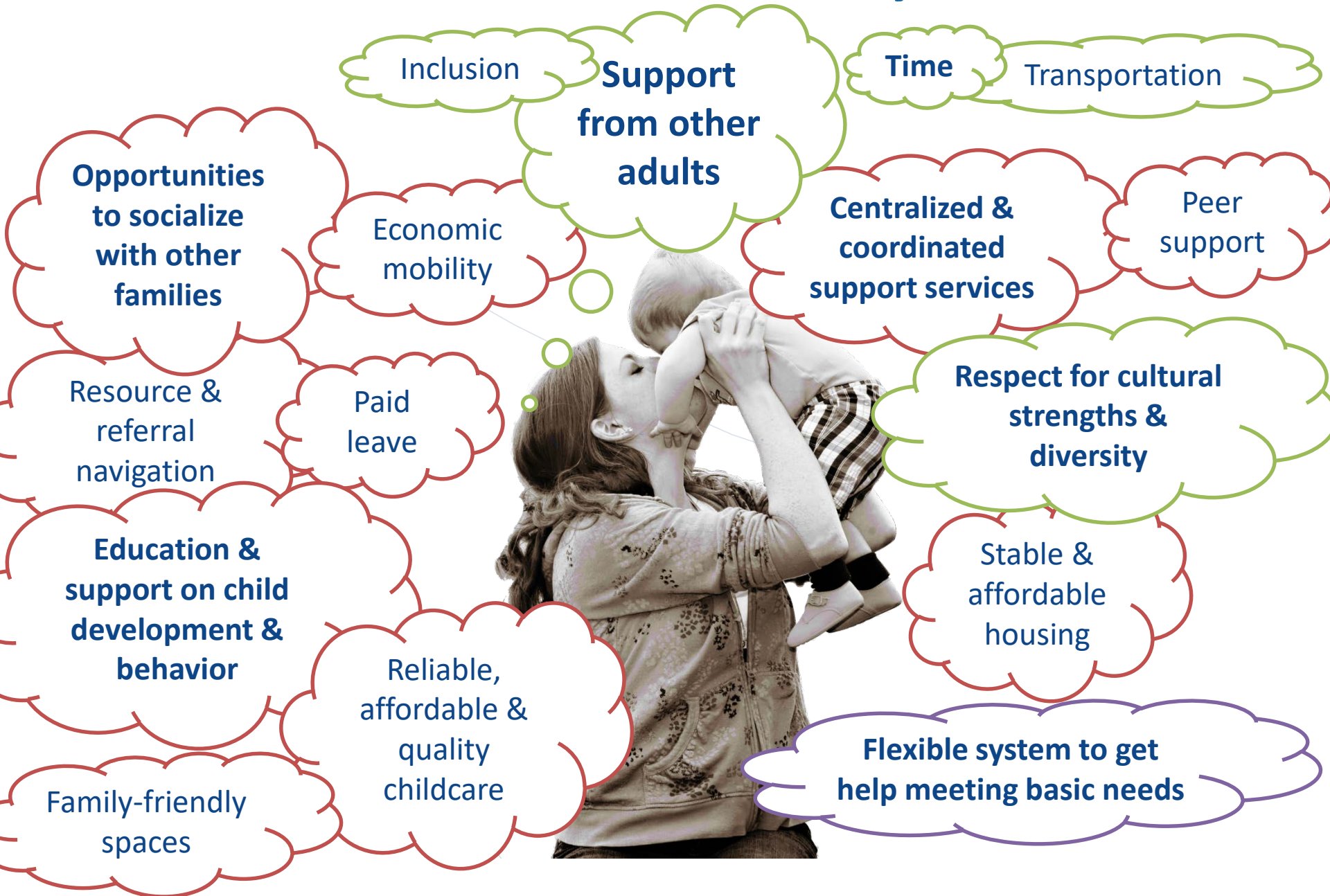
Taking on the role of mother or parent is a unique developmental task that requires a similar level of support to that provided to a developing infant or child.

Key Milestones



- 2012: Early childhood identified as a focus of 1st Community Health Improvement Plan.
- 2016: Whatcom County Health Board declares child well-being a top priority.
- 2017: [Generations Forward](#) formed & committed to early childhood action areas.
- 2017: Community-based [Whatcom Perinatal Mental Health Task Force](#) formed.
- 2020: County Council approves [Child & Family Action Plan](#) and creates [CFWBTF](#).
- 2021: Needs assessments identify gaps in services for children and families.
- 2022: Early childhood & family well-being identified as key [Healthy Whatcom](#) focus.
- Nov 2022: Voters approve Prop 5, establishing the [Healthy Children's Fund](#).

What Families Tell Us They Need



Perinatal Mental Health



- Mental health conditions are the most common complication of pregnancy and postpartum and a leading cause of maternal death
- Affects about 20% of mothers and birthing people of every culture, age, income level, and race
- Higher rates in groups experiencing marginalization
- Includes depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, psychosis, substance use disorder, and suicide

Whatcom County Experience



About 2000 births a year in Whatcom County

2000

20% of women will likely experience some sort of PMADs

400

Typically, about 15% of women experiencing PMADs seek support

60

This leaves 340 women who may be suffering and need help

340

Perinatal Mental Health Workforce



- Needs include:
 - Training on therapeutic screening and referrals
 - Advanced training in perinatal clinical counseling
 - Culturally and linguistically matched therapy
 - Insurance acceptance, especially Apple Health & Medicaid
 - Availability to meet the average treatment course of 6 months to 2 years
 - Internship program at Mobile Mama

Home Visiting Services



- Voluntary, family-focused services offered to expectant parents and families with new babies and young children to support children's physical, social, and emotional health and family well-being.
- Services use a holistic perspective of child and family development, focusing on child health and well-being, positive parent-child relationships, parent health and well-being, family economic self-sufficiency, and family functioning.
- A two-generation approach that supports parents as a foundation for a healthy community. When parents thrive, children can thrive.

Home Visiting Services



Program	Agency	Estimated # of families served
Early Head Start	Opportunity Council	60
	Lummi Early Learning	30-up to 50
Family Spirit	Lummi Prevention Services	11-up to 12
Family Support Team Case Management	Brigid Collins	20
Maternity Support Services + Infant Case Management	Sea Mar	130, 154
	Answers Counseling	47, 7
Nurse-Family Partnership	WCHCS	65
Parents as Teachers	Lydia Place	60-up to 75
Parent-Child Assistance Program	Brigid Collins	61-up to 71

Doula Services



- Doulas are non-clinical professionals who provide emotional, physical, and informational support and advocacy before, during, and after childbirth. They also help navigate the healthcare system and connect with community resources.
- Community-based doulas specialize in culturally competent care that reflects their clients' values and lived experiences.
- They work in tandem with doctors, nurses, and midwives to provide care throughout the perinatal period.
- Key benefits of doula services:
 - Increased family satisfaction with the birth and care experiences
 - Increased knowledge about birth and parenting
 - Reduced likelihood of birth complications
 - Increased support for navigating systems of care
 - Reduced disparities in clinical outcomes

Doula Services



- Pilot project to provide birth and postpartum doula services to around 80 Whatcom County Medicaid-eligible families.
- Pilot will help prepare a cohort of doulas to participate in implementing reimbursement for birth doulas through WA Apple Health (Medicaid), funded by the state budget last year.
- Pilot includes the following:
 - Birth services include 3 prenatal visits, on-call closer to due date, labor and delivery, and 2 postpartum visits.
 - Families can also choose to have up to 16 hours of postpartum doula services.
 - Contracting with one of the doulas to coordinate referrals and contracting with two of the doulas to provide periodic training and monthly mentoring.

Peer Support



- Working to develop and implement a consistent county-wide peer support system using GPS as a foundational model to increase support and services for pregnant and parenting families.
- Widely used throughout mental health services systems to support positive mental health for parents and caregivers during pregnancy and the early years of parenting.
- GPS model provides trauma-responsive, healing-centered, de-stigmatizing, community-based mental wellness support.
 - Promotes resiliency, self-agency, and healing.
 - Increases social support and reduces isolation.
 - Promotes a sense of belonging and inclusiveness.
 - Promotes confidence, leadership skills, and professional expertise for peer support facilitators with lived experience.

Peer Support



- Whatcom Perinatal Mental Health Task Force: GPS perinatal peer support groups since 2018
- EMBERcenter: 1:1 parent peer support during pregnancy and first 3 years
- Generations Forward: all parents and dads only peer support
- Parent to Parent Support/Padres a Padres: emotional support and information to families of children with developmental disabilities, delays, and ongoing healthcare needs
- Guide by Your Side: unbiased emotional support and resources by trained Parent Guides to families with children with hearing loss

Perinatal Resource Navigation



- Since 2012, SEAS has provided free local resource navigation to families in Whatcom County with children under 21 with disabilities or developmental concerns.
- In mid-2022, SEAS expanded to provide resource navigation for all families with a child under 5 and expecting families.
- Total of 148 perinatal referrals from Feb-Dec 2023.
- 92 perinatal referrals Jan-May 2024 (33 in May alone).
- Peer support and therapy are key resources shared.

Questions?

Contact:

Allison Williams

Community Health Specialist

AWilliam@co.Whatcom.wa.us

360-319-2064



WHATCOM GROWN



Noelle Beecroft
WSU *Whatcom County Extension*
SNAP-Ed Program Coordinator Senior
M.S Agriculture student

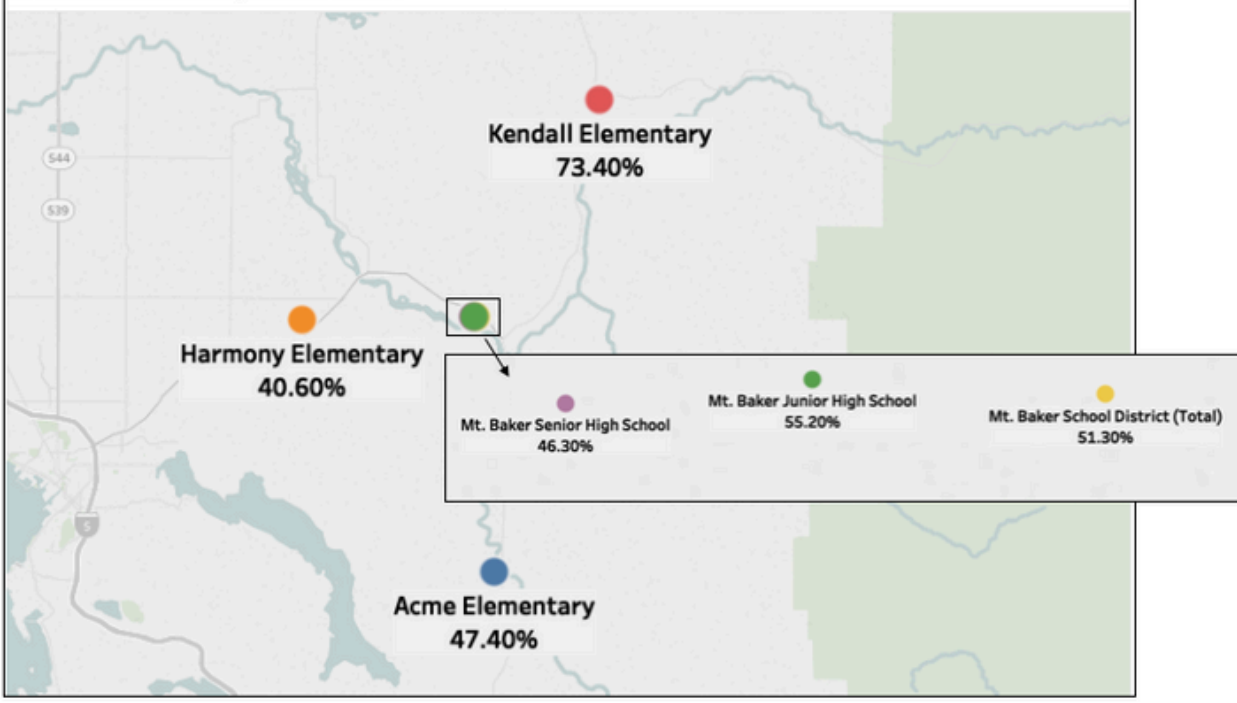


WSU EXTENSION
Whatcom County

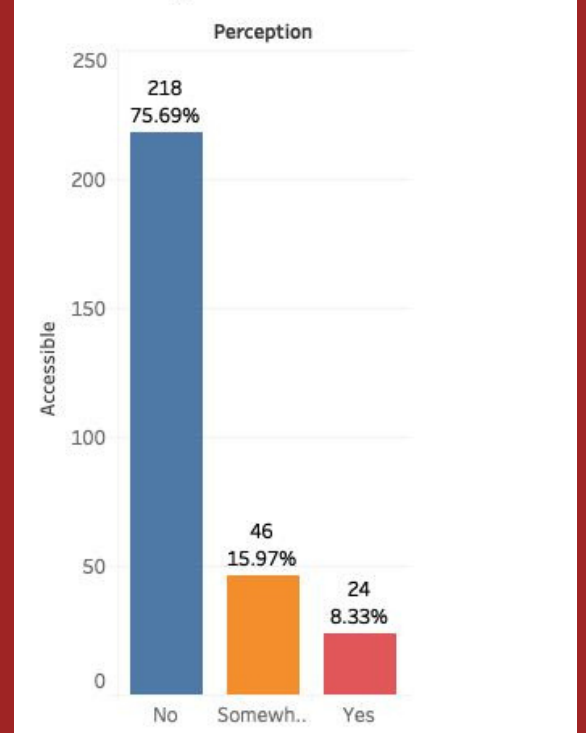


Background

Percent of Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch at Mt. Baker School District Schools, 2016-2017

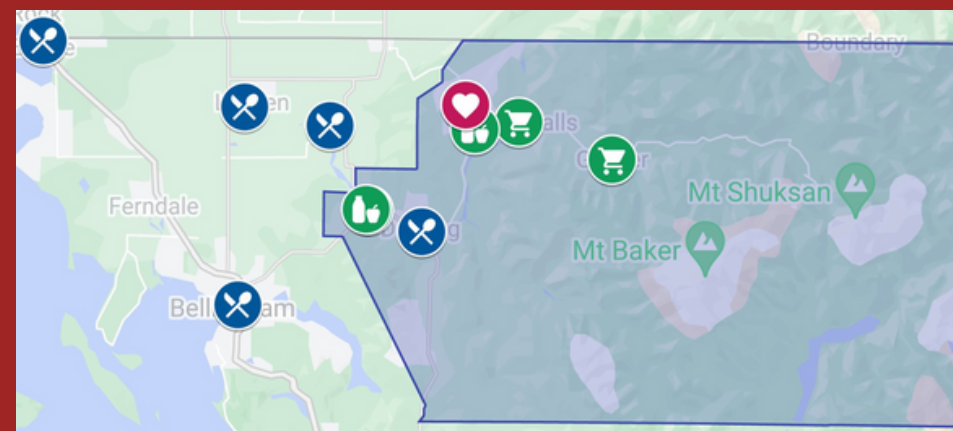


Do you think that food is accessible, convenient, and affordable in your community?



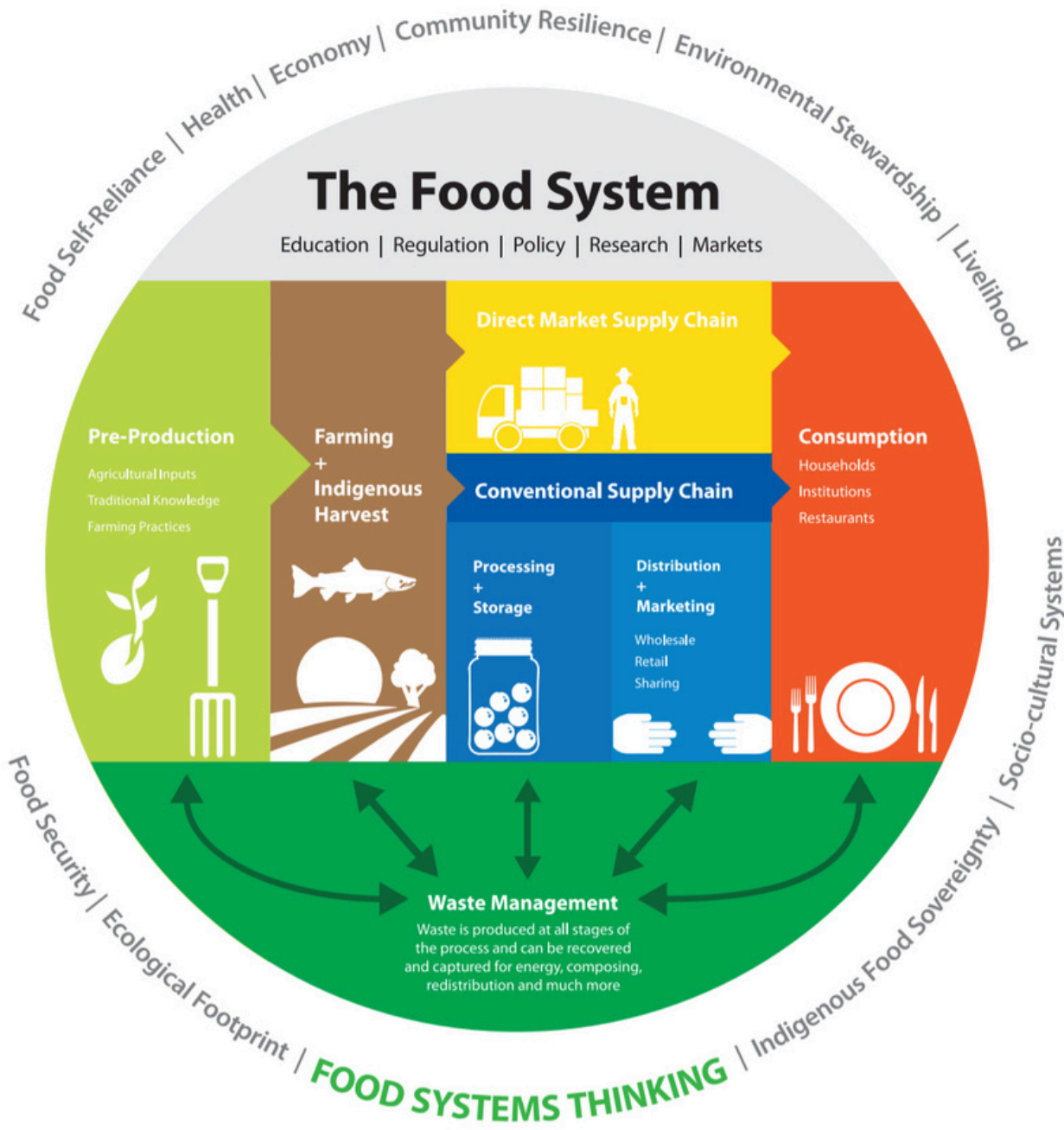
Income and Poverty, 2016-2017	Mt. Baker
Children eligible for free-reduced lunch per 100 students	51.3%
Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) Recipients	21.79%
Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), per 100 Child Recipients	5.53

East County Food Landscape



ALICE is an acronym for **A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mloyed – households that earn more than the Federal Poverty Level, but less than the basic cost of living for the county. While conditions have improved for some households, many continue to struggle, especially as wages fail to keep pace with the rising cost of household essentials (housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, and a basic smartphone plan). Households below the ALICE Threshold – ALICE households plus those in poverty – can't afford the essentials.

Monthly Costs and Credits	Single Adult	One Adult, One Child	One Adult, One In Child Care	Two Adults	Two Adults Two Children	Two Adults, Two In Child Care	Single Adult 65+	Two Adults 65+
Housing - Rent	\$763	\$738	\$738	\$738	\$944	\$944	\$763	\$738
Housing - Utilities	\$163	\$258	\$258	\$258	\$310	\$310	\$163	\$258
Child Care	\$0	\$394	\$1,051	\$0	\$788	\$2,261	\$0	\$0
Food	\$555	\$942	\$845	\$1,018	\$1,712	\$1,512	\$512	\$939
Transportation	\$406	\$540	\$540	\$647	\$1,057	\$1,057	\$342	\$519
Health Care	\$148	\$395	\$395	\$395	\$596	\$596	\$528	\$1,056
Technology	\$86	\$86	\$86	\$116	\$116	\$116	\$86	\$116
Miscellaneous	\$212	\$335	\$391	\$317	\$552	\$680	\$239	\$363
Tax Payments	\$316	\$682	\$803	\$407	\$910	\$1,185	\$376	\$642
Tax Credits	\$0	(\$217)	(\$217)	\$0	(\$433)	(\$433)	\$0	\$0
Monthly Total	\$2,649	\$4,153	\$4,890	\$3,896	\$6,552	\$8,228	\$3,009	\$4,631
ANNUAL TOTAL	\$31,788	\$49,836	\$58,680	\$46,752	\$78,624	\$98,736	\$36,108	\$55,572
Hourly Wage	\$15.89	\$24.92	\$29.34	\$23.38	\$39.31	\$49.37	\$18.05	\$27.79



The Food System

Education | Regulation | Policy | Research | Markets

Pre-Production

Agricultural Inputs
Traditional Knowledge
Farming Practices



Farming + Indigenous Harvest



Direct Market Supply Chain

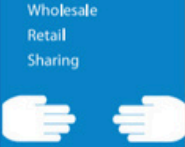


Conventional Supply Chain

Processing + Storage



Distribution + Marketing



Consumption

Households
Institutions
Restaurants



Waste Management

Waste is produced at all stages of the process and can be recovered and captured for energy, composting, redistribution and much more

FOOD SYSTEMS THINKING

Food Self-Reliance | Health | Economy | Community Resilience | Environmental Stewardship | Livelihood

Food Security | Ecological Footprint | Indigenous Food Sovereignty | Socio-cultural Systems



Crossroads Grocery, Maple Falls

EBT foods - but no sweets

12k into local food economy

150 a family

targeting WIC parents

increase healthy choices and introduce new foods

34 parents signed up

Steps to implement Whatcom Grown

1. Lots of meeting with Kristen from Island Grown, modeled after her program
2. Get a Committee together. NABC, FCFP, WSU SNAP-Ed
3. Gauge grocery store interest and review expectations
4. Find funding - NABC, wanting to support local Ag
5. Find target audience - WIC because no WIC retail here
6. What cards work best
7. Distribution of funds and card loads - held at PSFH after loading
8. Staff training
9. Integration of local foods
10. Distribution of cards with instructions
11. Continue to order food and assist store with display
12. Data track

Best practices

- MOU with grocery store
- Data tracking for sustainability and transparency
- Clear boundaries on what can be ordered
- Expectations for staff and users
- Staff training
- Putting the least amount of strain as possible on grocery stores, meet them where they are at

Biggest Challenges

- Staff learning and buy in
- limited capacity for small grocers
- picking a card!
- integration with the PSE System, if it was all local, it'd be easier
- Large time commitment

Biggest Wins

- 12k in funding the first year; 34 parents signed up
- PSE change for food ordering, hyper local
- boosts local economy, new market opportunity
- flex for parents food budget
- introduction of new foods
- lower environmental impact
- strengthening community
- healthier food selection

Future Hopes

- Funded outside of NABC. County?
- A card that can be used at many different stores, not just 1.
- Can be used for CSAs and farm stands
- low barrier for stores
- sign up at a WIC office



Noelle.beecroft@wsu.edu

281-896-5775



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