

Just in time learning

State legislative session starts January 12



What is it about?

Policy and money. But mostly money



The state legislature passes 3 budgets and makes laws for the state. It works in a 2-year cycle, called a biennium.

• YEAR 1

Longer session.
Pass 2-year
(biennial) budgets.
Update state laws



• YEAR 2

Short session. Adjust the budgets as needed. Update state laws

- More revenue? The state can fund more
- Less revenue? The state needs to cut or find more revenue
- Costs up? The state needs to cut or find more revenue

Budgets

Capital

Money to build and repair things. The state decides how much debt to incur to finance long-term projects.

Funded by bonds.



The Arc Legacy Center was funded, in part, by the state's capital budget

Transportation

Roads, ferries, transit, etc. Public safety (state patrol).

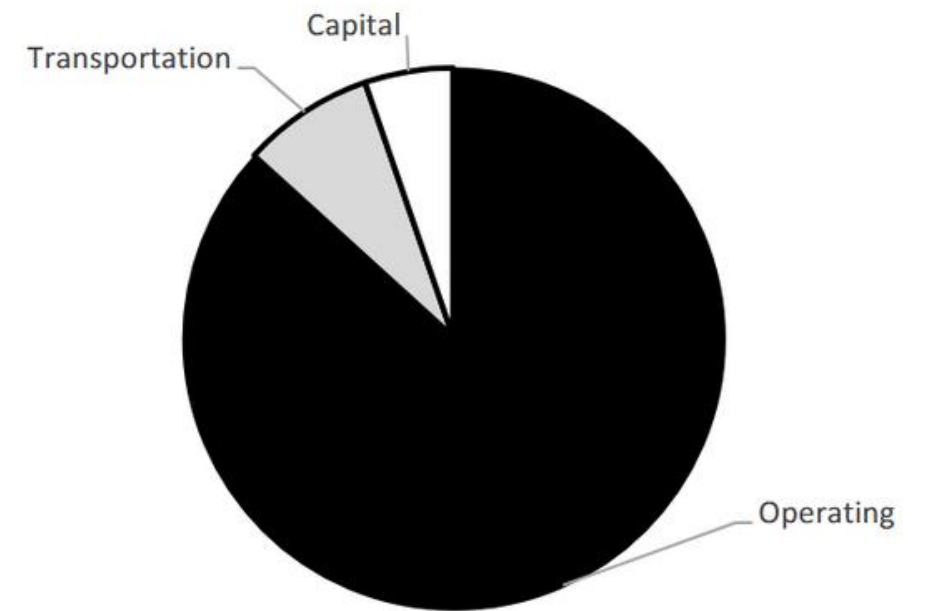
Funded by gas tax, vehicle fees, bonds



Operating

Pays for services the state provides, like Medicaid, social services, and education.

Funded by various taxes and fees.



	2021-23 Biennium	
Operating Budget	\$131 B	87%
Transportation Budget	\$12 B	8%
Capital Budget	\$8 B	5%
Total	\$151 B	

Supported Living, respite, and Parent to Parent are all funded in the state budget.

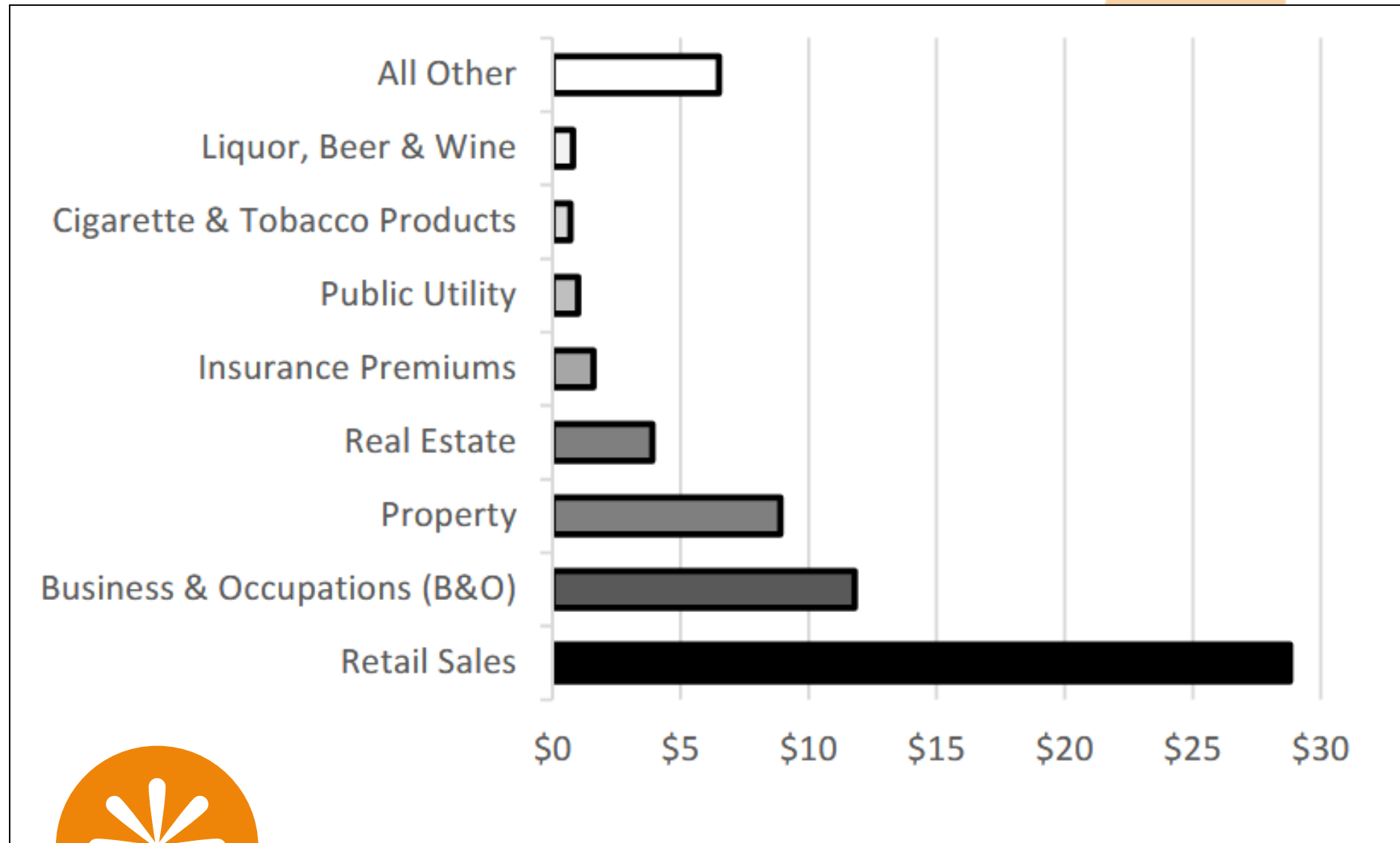
Revenue

“Revenue” includes state taxes and fees, and federal funds. It can even include private money.

Increasing revenue can be done by adding or increasing a tax or fee, or by ending a tax break.

The state also has a “rainy day” fund it can tap.

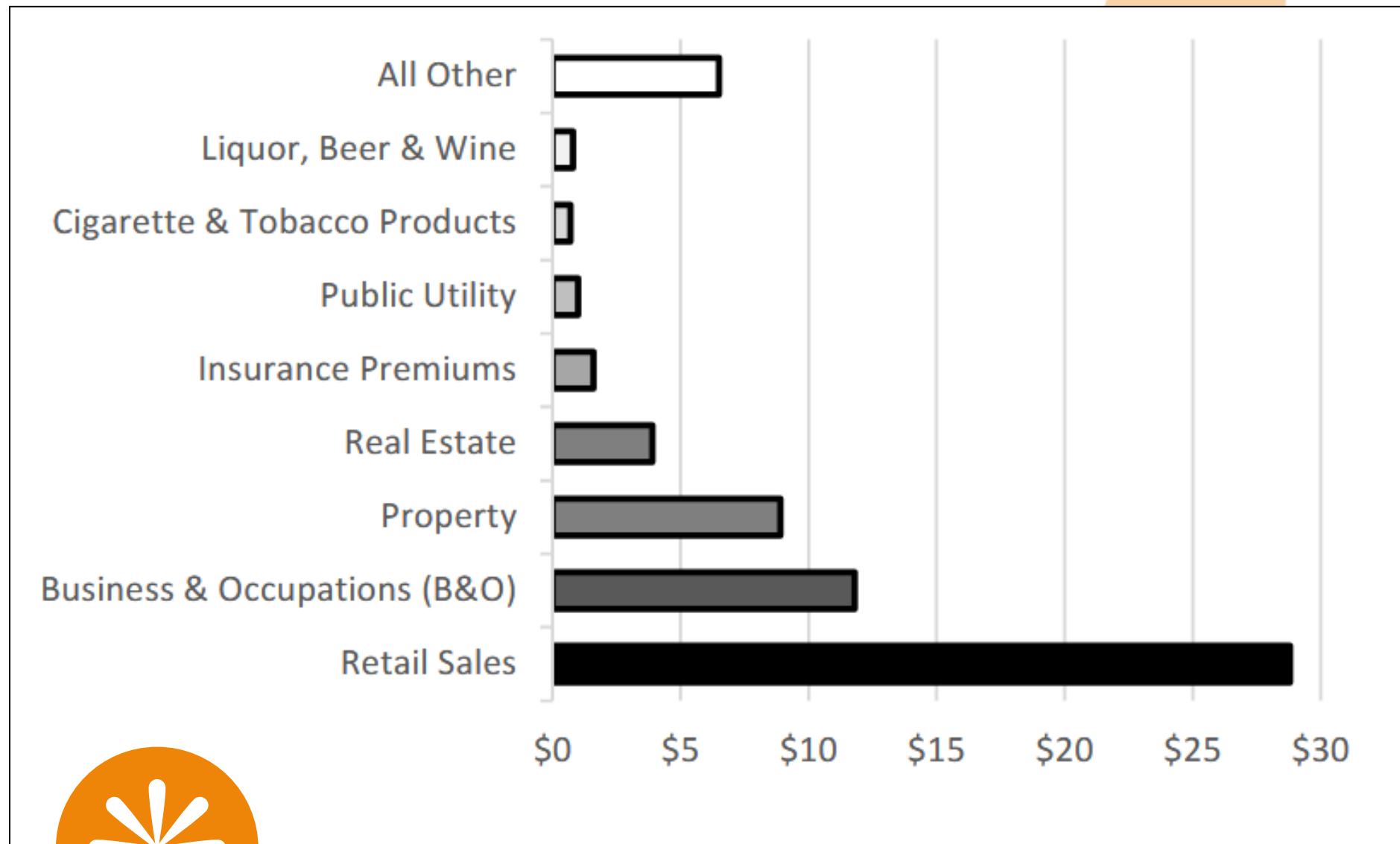
Unlike most states, Washington does not have an income tax. This means we rely on other taxes, like the sales tax.



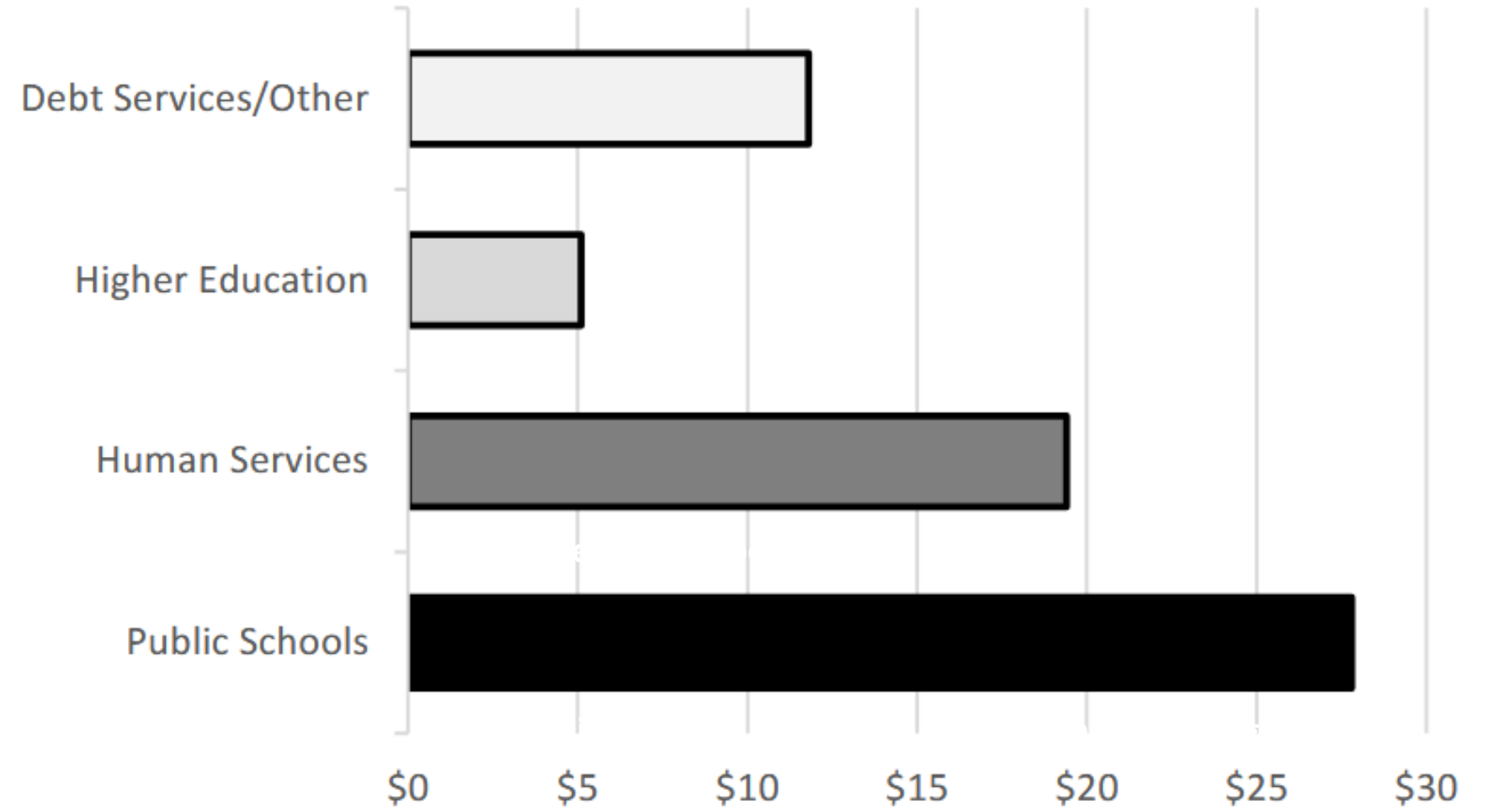
What is the B&O?

Since Washington does not have an income tax, we can't tax businesses on their profit. Instead, we tax gross receipts. This is the money a business makes and the value of its property.

There is no deduction for cost of doing business. There are different rates for type of business.



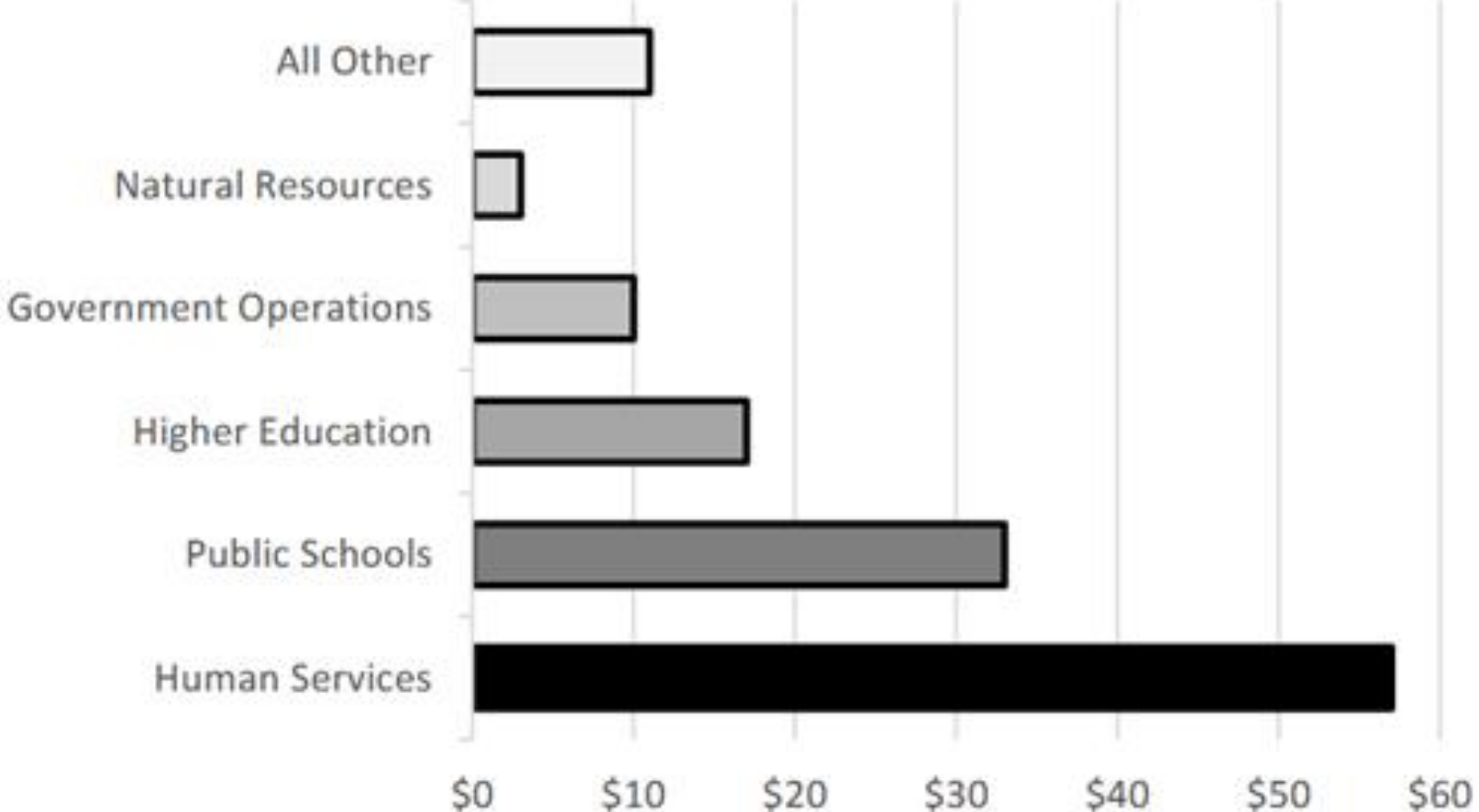
Where state funds go



2021-23 Biennium

<i>Public Schools</i>	\$28 B	43%
<i>Human Services</i>	\$19 B	30%
<i>Higher Education</i>	\$5 B	8%
<i>Debt Services / Other</i>	\$12 B	19%
Total	\$64 B	

How it looks after federal funds are added



	2021-23 Biennium	
<i>Human Services</i>	\$57 B	44%
<i>Public Schools</i>	\$33 B	25%
<i>Higher Education</i>	\$17 B	13%
<i>Government Operations</i>	\$10 B	7%
<i>Natural Resources</i>	\$3 B	2%
<i>All Other</i>	\$11 B	9%
Total	\$131 B	



Federal impact

Medicaid comes with a federal match. The amount depends on the state poverty level.

Washington gets a 50% match from the Federal Medical Assistance Program, or FMAP. This is the minimum. We are in the lowest rung because we have very wealthy individuals, pushing up our per capital income.

The federal government assumes wealthy states don't need as much assistance because they can tax their wealth. But we don't.

Washington has an upside down tax system where the wealthy pay a much lower percentage of their income than poor people do.

Location	FMAP Percentage
Idaho	66.91%
Montana	61.47%
Oregon	57.75%
Texas	59.83%
Washington	50.00%

Source:
KFF.org



Balanced budget over 4 years

In the budget, there are things that must be funded, like Apple Health/Medicaid, K-12 schools, prisons, debt. And there are things that are optional. Disability community services are optional. This is why EVERY YEAR we need to make the case that they are necessary.

We have a state law that says the 2-year operating budget needs to balance AND the next 2-year budget cycle needs to balance, based on current projections.

Projections are estimates. Basically, the state says, to the best of our ability this is what we think these same services will cost in 2-4 years, and this is how much revenue we are assuming the state will collect.

Sometimes the state has extra money, but doesn't want to commit to spending it for more than 2 years. So they don't allow the service they are funding to become an "entitlement."



Policy bills



Regulating things and changing or adding services usually costs money. When money is tight, the legislature is much less inclined to change or adopt new policy.

Examples of policy:

- What the rates should be for Supported Living
- Whether to allow students to be isolated and restrained
- Whether to expand preschool

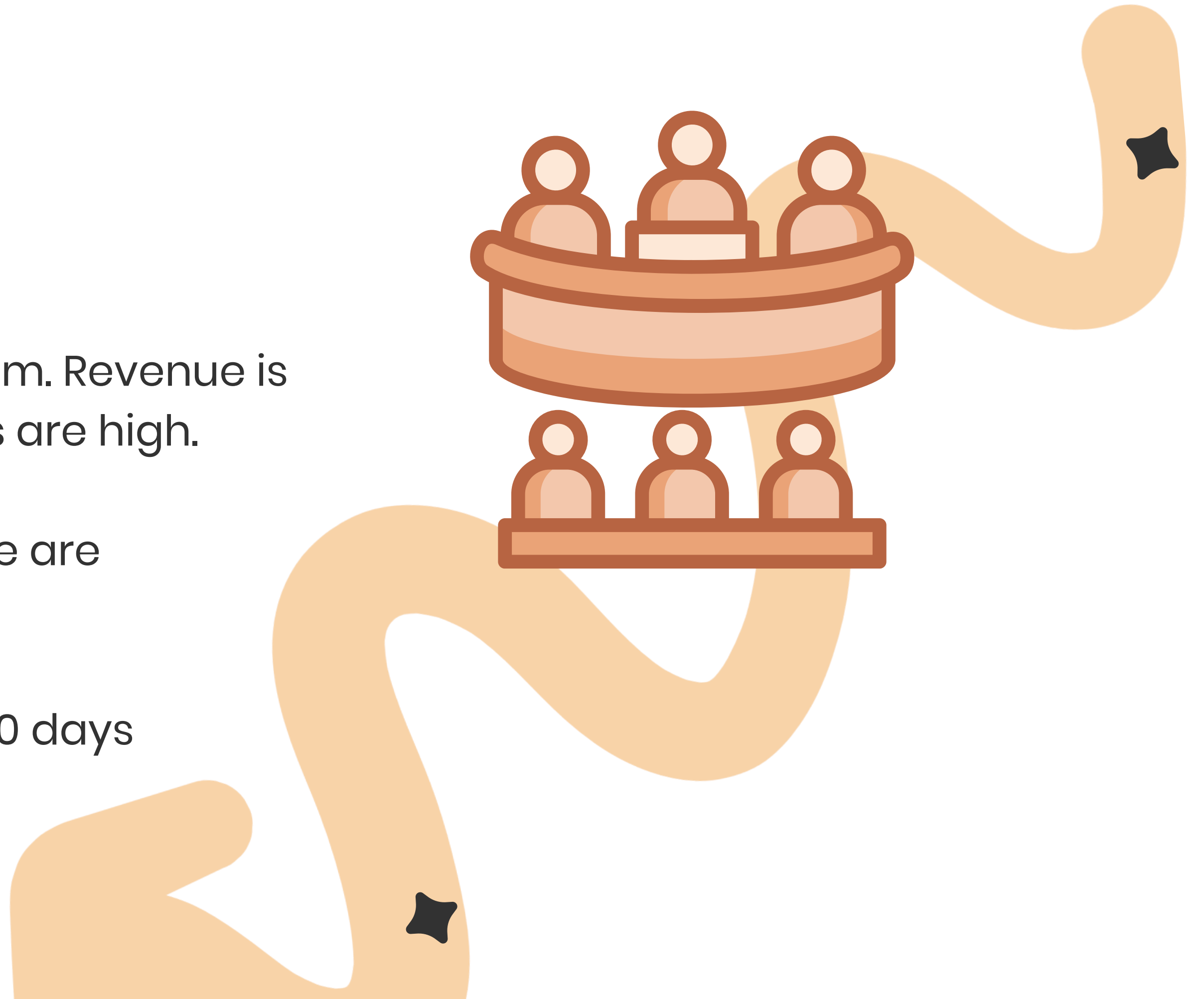
There will be policy bills in 2026, but everything loops back to the operating budget. Lawmakers often say they like a policy idea. But they won't pass it because it costs money and they don't know if they can keep paying for it.

What to expect

This is year 2 in the biennium. Revenue is short and costs of services are high.

Both cuts and new revenue are on the table

It is a short session – just 60 days



Path to passage

Bills can be introduced in either House or Senate. They must pass both chambers.



Process repeats in other chamber.
House bills go to Senate;
Senate bills go to House



Reconciliation.
House and Senate must agree on what the bill says. If what passed one chamber differs from the other, then legislators must negotiate changes, or the bill dies



Law. House and Senate leaders sign. The governor can then sign the bill into law, or may veto all or part of it. If the governor fails to act on the bill, it may become law without a signature.



FEB 17: Bills must pass chamber of origin
MARCH 12: Last day of session



Things will move QUICKLY



Big issues for 2026

- No cuts to services
- Progressive revenue
- End isolation and reduce restraint of students

We will also be watching for:

- A plan to build up community supports and phase out IDD institutions



Who represents you?

At the state level, each of us has 1 senator and 2 representatives.

These people are elected to represent your interests. You are their constituent. They need to know what is important to you.

You can call them or send them an email. You can meet them or their staff.

Find your legislative district:

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/districtfinder/>



Scan me

The Arc Legacy Center is located in Legislative District 33.

- Senator Tina Orwall
- Rep. Edwin Obras
- Rep. Mia Gregerson



Don't forget committees

The legislature divides itself into committees. These committees consider proposed legislation (“bills”). If a bill affects you, committees ALSO need to hear from you. You can sign in on a bill (pro or con), testify, or send in written testimony.

During session, we send out weekly updates on bills are being heard by committees. We include a link to where you can sign in on a bill, sign up to testify, or send in written testimony. We also include a link to where you can send a comment to your legislator.

BOTH are important.



Committee hearings:

There is a short window of time. Act right away. The comment period closes 24 hours after the hearing.

Goal: Get a good bill passed.

Comment to YOUR legislator:

You can do so any time during session. You can do this many times.

Goal: Let them know the bill has support. People care.

What to say

Who are you?

What is your issue?

Why do you care?

Why should the legislator care?

What do you want the legislator to do?



Scan me

Download the
messaging tool:

<https://bit.ly/speakup101>



What can you do?

[Become a member!](#) It's free.

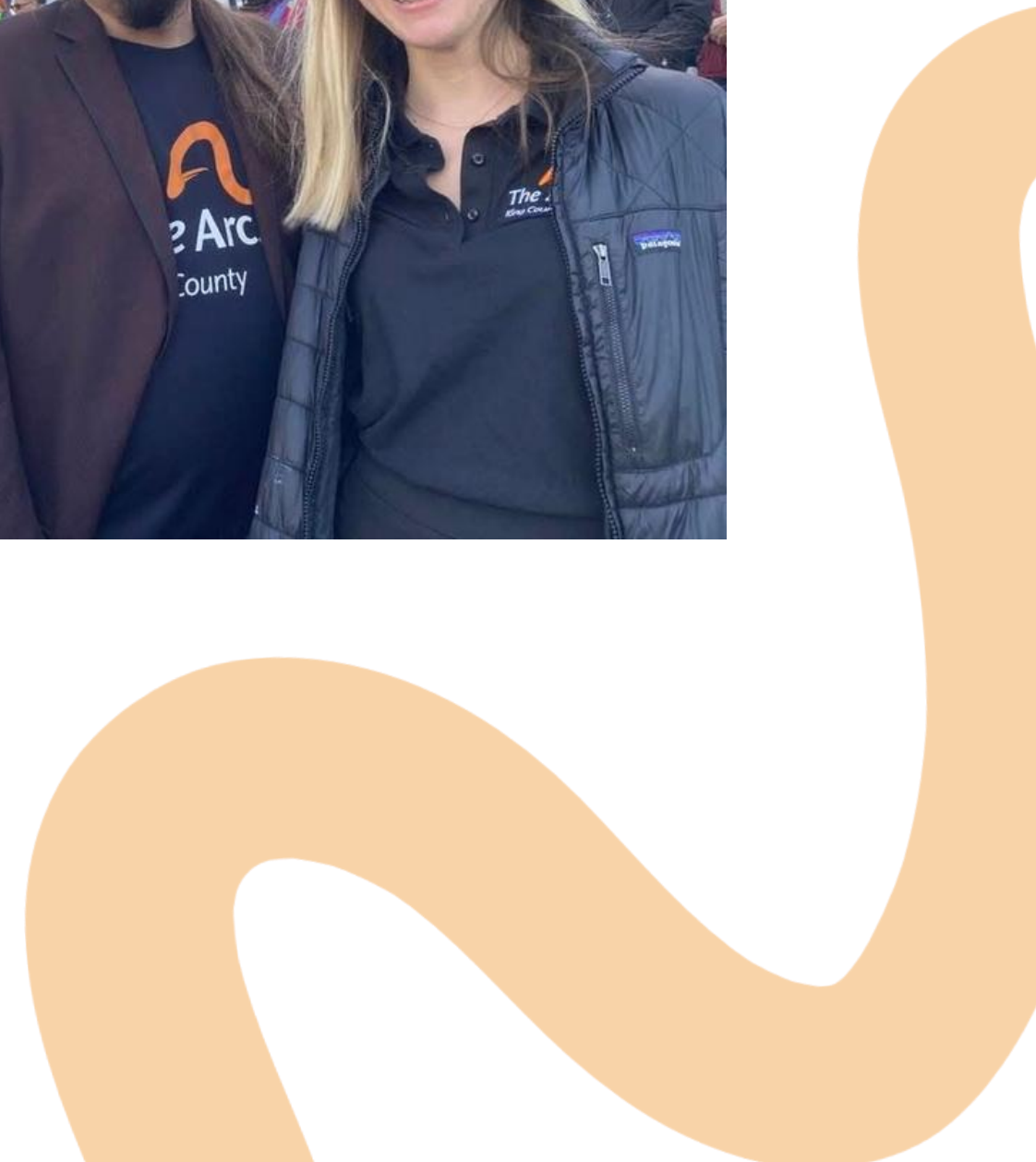
[Sign up for our advocacy newsletter](#)

Sign in on bills

Send comments to your legislators.

Call your legislators.

Rallying is good. It tells legislators that people care. But rallies are effective ONLY if they know you went. Make sure you TELL your legislators that you went. Meet with them. Let them know WHY you attended, and what you want them TO DO.



Advocacy Days



These are learning opportunities, organized around themes. Most advocacy organizations have 1 advocacy day. The Arc has them every Wednesday, 10 am to 11:30 am, during the state legislative session.

All but 2 will be online. The two with rallies will be hybrid - streamed and in-person in Olympia



Register for Advocacy Days here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/ld7Dld9ySYyiwiyIRy47nw#/registration>

Advocacy Days

1/14

Protect our services and rights

1/21

Protect community living. RALLY!

1/28

Protect supported employment. RALLY!

2/4

Protect family-support

2/11

Protect access to housing

2/18

Protect education

2/25

Protect our workforce

3/4

What can you do now?



Register for Advocacy Days here:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/ld7Dld9ySYyiwiyIRy47nw#/registration>

Your voice matters

