



FAMILY POLICY COUNCIL

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The Family Policy Council is a family-community-state partnership that involves communities in preventing interrelated social problems: child abuse and neglect, youth substance abuse, violence, suicide, substance abuse, dropping out of school, teen pregnancy/male parentage, and child out-of-home placements. The Family Policy Council is the governmental system in Washington that brings together the strengths of the private, public, non-profit, faith and philanthropic sectors to form a more effective and responsive system to improve child and family outcomes. The Council partnership includes Community Public Health and Safety Networks, which are local special purpose districts throughout Washington. The Council employs a public health approach¹ in its efforts to build stronger, safer, and healthier families and communities.

AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

Improve state and local policies that affect children and families

1. Bring policy issues that require cross-system solutions to the attention of the public as well as public officials, and provide a forum to coordinate the multiple efforts of agencies and communities.
2. Provide education and technical assistance to improve leadership and capacity for solving major problems.
3. Promote full implementation of Family Policy Principles: family-oriented services; recognition of different cultures; collaboration and coordination between agencies; innovation and flexibility; local planning; community-based programs that emphasize prevention; better customer service; measurable results.
4. Review community efforts, including state and federally funded services to:
 - a. Determine whether the mix of programs and other supports are likely to produce reductions in the rates of problem behaviors, and if not, develop theory, collaborative agreements, and necessary improvements;
 - b. Determine whether greater local flexibility in budget or policy (decategorization) would improve outcomes, increase public will, extend public investments, and result in more culturally relevant and customer oriented services.

Help each community build their own unique pathway to preventing seven interrelated social problems

- Oversee the development of Family Policy Council Community Networks, a statewide system of collaborative public entities established to involve communities in reducing social problems.
- Provide funding, technical assistance and education for Community Networks and their partners, including community-based staff of the five member agencies of the Family Policy Council. Community Network formula awards from the Family Policy Council range from \$65,000/biennium to \$370,000/biennium.
- Award 'Readiness To Learn' grants to establish school-community linkages to support children and ensure their readiness to learn each day. Readiness to Learn is not a budget activity of the Family Policy Council; it is administered by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Because the Family Policy Council brings together resources from non-governmental sectors, every \$1 budgeted for the Family Policy Council is currently matched by \$6 or more from other sources.

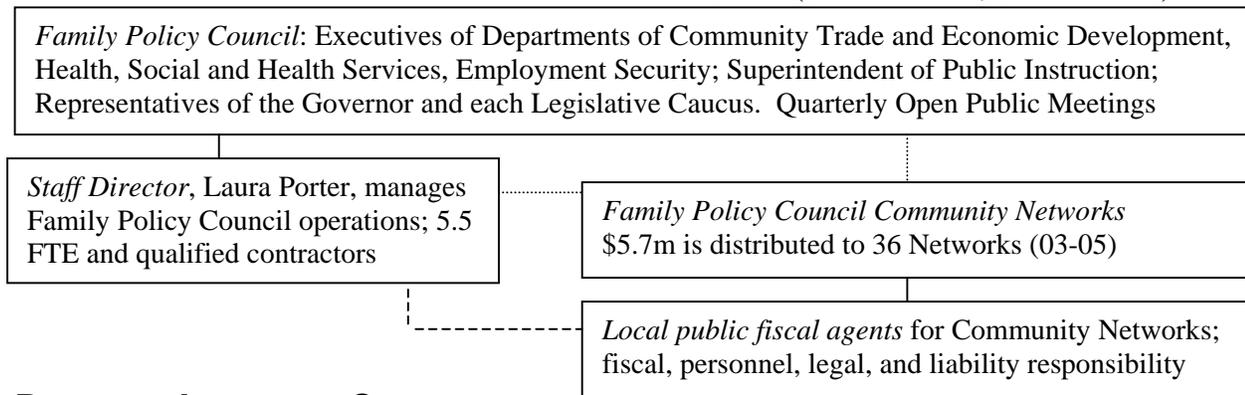
STATUTORY REFERENCES

RCW 70.190 – Family Policy Council; RCW 43.41.195 – Community networks—Fund distribution formula; RCW 13.40.510 – Community juvenile accountability programs - Establishment - Proposals – Guidelines; RCW 28A.215.150 – Intent -- 1994 c 166; 1987 c 518; RCW 43.70.555 – Assessment standards, department of health; RCW 69.50.520 – Violence reduction and drug enforcement account; RCW 74.14A – Services for emotionally disturbed and mentally ill children, potentially dependent children, and families-in-conflict (.020); Policy updates (.025); and Blended funding projects (.060); RCW 74.14C –Family preservation services.

¹ Public Health is what we as a society do collectively to assure the conditions in which people can be healthy. A public health approach goes beyond the health status of individuals, to strategically address multiple determinates of population health.

ORGANIZATION CHART

BUDGET \$6.6m (\$4.2m VRDE, \$2.4m PSEA)



PRESSING ISSUES OR CHALLENGES

Citizen Participation in Preventing Social Problems

During 2002 through 2004, the Family Policy Council conducted interviews and surveys of hundreds of Washingtonians concerning their interest in and ideas about helping families and children to thrive. We got a powerful reply. Community leaders spoke passionately about the importance of preventing childhood trauma and strengthening families. Residents in Washington are ready and willing to act upon their conviction to end child abuse and neglect, and prevent youth drug abuse, suicide, and school failure. Exemplary work is already being done in Washington. The next step is to deliberately build infrastructure to take full advantage of, and connect the strengths among, citizen, business, and faith community knowledge, interest and efforts to help families to thrive.

The Family Policy Council's research revealed a deeply concerned yet discouraged citizenry, who believe that their own government erects barriers to extending public resources with neighbor-to-neighbor and other informal types of support. When told that Washington State officials were interested in working with community residents and professionals, emotions ran high. One business owner responded: "This gives me faith in the system, confidence, joy – and being involved would give me a sense of accomplishment in my life."

BUSINESS EXAMPLE

Where communities have focused on building cross sector and neighborhood involvement to reduce abuse, violence, and despair, findings are impressive. In Snohomish County an apartment complex owner learned that providing mentoring and homework help for children not only improved academic achievement and school attendance, it also improved safety in the complex and reduced apartment turnover, thus increasing profits. Now the private owner pays for youth and family support, and by doing so, extends government resources and results.

Re-activation of Family Policy Council Community Networks

Chapter 70.190 RCW authorized the Family Policy Council to establish Community Public Health and Safety Networks, a statewide system of quasi-governmental special purpose entities. Established in the mid 1990's, Washington's system of Community Networks covers the entire state and ten Tribes, with a total of 53 Community Networks.

Until FY 2001 all 53 Community Networks received state funding through a formal contractual relationship with the Family Policy Council. A 25% budget reduction, coupled with a budget proviso directing the Family Policy Council to focus remaining dollars on best performing Community Networks, reduced the number of networks with funding, oversight, and support from 53 to 36. The budget proviso ratified Legislative and Executive agreement that current budget level of \$6.6m is inadequate for supporting more than 36 Community Networks. The result of the Legislature's action is that many communities, some with very high rates of social problems, do not have equal opportunity to use their legally authorized special purpose entity to reduce major social problems because the Community Network is not supported by the state.

The Family Policy Council is working to rectify this problem by inviting community leaders to apply for re-activation of their Community Networks. Four communities have applied, and demonstrated readiness to manage an effective Community Network. A Policy Decision Package for (\$342,673) was submitted by the Family Policy Council to fund Community Networks in Columbia County, Pacific County, Stevens County, and Vashon/Maury Island in the 2005-2007 biennial budget.

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