

What is Asset Building?

Asset Building is a collective term to describe services that help people build their own safety net and promote long-term stability. Asset Building Coalitions create collaboration among service providers focused on increasing knowledge about personal finance, increasing income through job training and access to resources, or increasing opportunities through education. Asset building and financial health are an integral part of a person achieving stable housing, advancing in one's career and education, and contributing to the overall economic health of our community. Notably at this time of year, Asset Building Coalitions around the state are key outreach channels for tax credits like the EITC and the newly enacted WFTC.

Asset Building Coalitions provide a common space of collaboration between community-based organizations, financial institutions, and local government agencies. The work of coordinating an Asset Building Coalition requires regular staff time and an understanding of local resource networks. Both requirements have grown more complex in recent years as resources like the Working Families Tax Credit have been made available and financial health services have greatly expanded. Increasingly, coordinating a coalition and building collaborative relationships between coalition members is a small part of a staff position and those tasks decline when community champions can't pick up the difference.

How are Asset Building Coalitions currently funded?

Asset Building Coalitions are primarily funded by a grant managed by the Washington State Department of Commerce. The Asset Building Support Grant distributes less than \$250,000 between 16 organizations, funding activities and services described in the 2007 Family Prosperity Act. With the current grant size, the Asset Building Support Grant provides less than half of a full-time position in most grantee organizations, leaving staff in the common position of being over-tasked and under-funded. We request to see an increase in funding from the state budget to cover a full-time equivalent in all Asset Building Coalitions statewide so that grantee organizations can better enact the change laid out in the Family Prosperity Act.

What does growth look like?

This legislative cycle the Washington Asset Building Coalition is requesting a budget proviso of \$1,000,000 for the Asset Building Support Grant through the Family Prosperity Act. With sufficient funding, organizations that host Asset Building Coalitions can cover the wage of a staff member focused on building the financial stability and long-term success of their neighbors. Through this position, communities across the state will have a subject matter expert on financial health services, a strong outreach method for poverty reduction resources like the Working Families Tax Credit, and a powerful advocate for inclusive financial products from local financial institutions.

Please join us in asking for a strong Coalition of Asset Builders in Washington.

Support this Budget Proviso fulling funding the Family Prosperity Act.

For the Washington State Department of Commerce

\$1,000,000 for fiscal year 2024 is provided to the Department of Commerce to fund activities described in the Family Prosperity Act of 2007. The Department of Commerce will distribute these funds to Asset Building Coalitions across Washington in order to support a full-time position that can coordinate financial health services and outreach efforts around poverty reduction resources like the Earned Income Tax Credit and Working Families Tax Credit.