



## The Washington state Office of Equity

July 24, 2025 AI Summary

[Watch the LEVinar recording](#)

On July 24, 2025, the League of Education Voters hosted a compelling webinar spotlighting the [Washington state Office of Equity](#). The event brought together youth leaders and a state official to explore how government can transform itself to serve all Washingtonians—especially those from historically marginalized communities. The session was moderated by Arik Korman, CEO of the League and a parent of a high school student receiving special education services.

### The Office of Equity: A Systems Change Engine

TraeAnna Holiday, Communications Director for the Washington state Office of Equity, delivered a presentation outlining the office's mission, vision, and strategic initiatives. Created in 2020 through RCW 43.06D and operational since 2021, the Office of Equity was born from decades of advocacy and a vision for systemic transformation.

#### Core Mandates and Vision (from the slides):

- **Promote** equitable access to opportunities and resources that reduce disparities and improve outcomes.
- **Develop** policies that prioritize historically and currently marginalized communities, including tribes.
- **Eliminate** systemic barriers rooted in inequality and oppression.
- **Achieve** procedural and outcome fairness, grounded in dignity, honor, and respect.

The office envisions a Washington where everyone can flourish and achieve their full potential.

#### How the Office Works: Four Pillars of Impact

1. **Agency Accountability:** Partnering with state agencies to implement the IMPACT framework—a pro-equity, anti-racist approach to service delivery.

2. **Community Guidance:** Working with a Community Advisory Board (CAB) to ensure that diverse voices shape state policy and practice.
3. **Robust Communication:** Launching innovative campaigns to engage the public and promote transparency.
4. **Transparent Data:** Creating public dashboards to track progress and inform decision-making.

Examples include the state's first-ever [Homelessness Dashboard](#) and the [Community Reinvestment Dashboard](#), which tracks the allocation of \$200 million to communities most impacted by the war on drugs.

### **A Bold Pledge and a Call to Action**

The Office's pledge is clear: to make bold choices that advance equity until the office is no longer needed—when equity becomes the foundation of all state work. Their call to action invites every Washingtonian to:

- Make a personal equity pledge.
- Continue learning and unlearning.
- Share knowledge.
- Follow and engage with the Office of Equity on social media.

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### **Youth Voices: The Heart of Systems Change**

A panel of student leaders from across Washington shared their insights on equity, access, and civic engagement. Representing both urban and rural communities, the students included:

- **Abby Wu** (Pullman High School)
- **Jack Farrell** (Inglemoor High School)
- **Aisha Hamad Sallah** (Mariner High School)
- **Geraldine Donovan** (Seattle Prep)
- **Chiamaka Lekwauwa** (Rogers High School)

### **What Is Systems Change Work?**

Students defined systems change as long-term, sustainable transformation that addresses root causes and historical harm. They emphasized the need for:

- **Localized solutions** tailored to specific community needs.
- **Breaking stigmas** around issues like mental health and civic participation.
- **Government transparency** and accessibility, especially for rural and underrepresented communities.

### **How Can Government Be More Accessible?**

Students called for:

- **Excused absences for civic engagement**, modeled after Seattle Public Schools.
- **Youth advisory boards** and leadership opportunities.
- **Town halls in schools** with legislators.
- **More outreach** from both government and community organizations.

They stressed that youth are not just the future—they are the present—and deserve to be heard and respected.

### **What Issues Are Youth Most Passionate About?**

Each student shared a personal passion:

- **Jack & Chiamaka:** Mental health access and destigmatization.
- **Geraldine:** Rights of children of migrant workers.
- **Aisha:** Diversity, inclusion, and justice.
- **Abby:** Youth empowerment and outreach.

Their proposed solutions included increased funding, adult training, language access, and more platforms for youth expression.

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### **Final Reflections: A Shared Commitment**

TraeAnna Holiday closed the session with a powerful reflection on the importance of youth voice in shaping equitable systems. She emphasized that the Office of Equity is uniquely positioned to create platforms that amplify youth concerns and integrate them into government decision-making.

“We do not have enough channels that say we’re going directly to youth... This is a place where they really get to share their true selves.” — TraeAnna Holiday

Arik Korman echoed this sentiment, reminding attendees that listening is only the first step—action must follow.

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### **Next Steps and Resources**

- Visit the Office of Equity: [equity.wa.gov](https://equity.wa.gov)
- Learn more about the League of Education Voters: [educationvoters.org](https://educationvoters.org)
- Make your equity pledge: <https://bit.ly/3SMQb9v>

[www.educationvoters.org](https://www.educationvoters.org)