

## ESD PEAR statement

Aug. 30, 2022

The future of Washington state is pro-equity and anti-racist. It is a future where, “Everyone in Washington has full access to the opportunities, power and resources they need to flourish and achieve their full potential.” This is the directive made by Gov. Jay Inslee in Executive Order 22-04, and the vision for the state’s pro-equity anti-racism (PEAR) initiative. But it is manifested through a true commitment to this work — not just in words but through our decisions and actions.

I am deeply committed to this vision for the future, as is our executive leadership team and the entire Employment Security Department (ESD).

Our agency’s programs are a cornerstone of economic security for Washingtonians. We provide services that connect job seekers and employers; help people build skills that improve their economic opportunities; provide paid leave and long-term care when individuals and families need it most; and help people pay bills when they are unemployed.

We know this assistance has not been equitably available.

Unraveling systems that have been both intentionally and unintentionally built to reinforce privilege, opportunity and power for some but not all will take time. ESD is committed to this work for the long haul. We also remain dedicated to finding every opportunity to make changes that will immediately benefit those currently being harmed by inequities in our programs and systems.

In addition to the commitments in our PEAR plan, ESD also commits to:

- **Centering the voice of community in the work we do.** This means building out a robust community engagement strategy to ensure we are removing barriers to our services and creating systems that work for the people we serve.
- **Engaging with our state and local partners to champion pro-equity and anti-racist work.** Building deeper, stronger and more trusting relationships with partners will increase community commitment to PEAR work.
- **Changing our agency vision to the PEAR vision** – so our values, decisions, strategies and culture all deliver tangible results: When people call us, they will hear our vision. When they browse our website and apply for benefits, they’ll see it in on the page and in the application.
- **Developing and continuously adjusting our agency’s strategic plan to reflect PEAR priorities** and the agency’s PEAR plan.

- **Embedding PEAR priorities and principles as we develop division-level strategic plans and the agency-wide budget.** This will help ensure pro-equity anti-racism work is represented at all levels of our agency's decision making.
- **Investing in our employees from historically marginalized populations.** This means: more career development and mentoring; accountability for leaders to listen to and build up these employees; removing barriers; and focusing on recruitment and retention to ensure our staff reflect the communities we serve.

I am excited about this work, and grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this change in state government. We know that people are being harmed right now by the status quo. What we do today, and each day, matters. ESD is committed to – and actively engaging in – the PEAR work and vision so that we can do our part to realize this more equitable future.



Cami Feek

Commissioner, Employment Security Department