In Washington, state government’s strength and the strength of the state’s 39 counties are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. State government’s success requires thriving, flexible, front-line implementation partners in counties. Counties’ success requires an active, resourceful, supportive partner in state government. **Here is how Washington’s 39 counties and Legislature can work together to make urgent progress on shared priorities in the 2021 Legislative Session:**

**Responding to the COVID Crisis**

- **Disease response.** Adequate funding for case investigation, vaccination, and public outreach/education.
- **Disease containment.** Adequate funding for coordination of care for people isolated in quarantine who need support beyond testing.
- **Behavioral health.** Adequate funding for the behavioral health system, including jails.
- **Affordable housing.** New investment in stabilizing housing situations for tenants and homeowners.
- **Government operations during the pandemic.** Modifying Washington’s existing Open Public Meeting Act and Public Records Act to preserve their spirit while ensuring compliance.
- **Local budget impacts.** Remove restrictions and allow flexibility for counties to spend certain funds without new unfunded mandates.

**Combatting Climate Change and Protecting our Environment**

- **Climate change.** Adequate funding and flexibility to adapt any new climate change impact reduction responsibilities to local conditions.
- **Salmon habitat.** Adequate funding for repairing or replacing thousands of fish-blocking culverts in our stream systems to ensure the state is in full legal compliance.
- **Forest health.** New resources for improving forest health, enhancing fire resiliency, responding and containing wildland fires, rehabilitating affected areas, and coordinating prescribed burns.
- **Waste management.** Restore lapsed funding for local garbage and recycling programs.

**Making Long-term Investments, Securing Long-term Solvency**

- **Road Maintenance.** Reliable, sustainable funding for county transportation budgets.
- **Capital investments.** New investment in county sewer, water, landfill, and building the infrastructure necessary to keep communities safe and functional.
- **Fiscal solvency.** New authority for counties to control their cost drivers and grow revenue sources that keep pace with increasing costs.

**Ending Racial Disparities and Social Inequities**

- **Health disparities.** Stable and adaptive funding for public health departments to increase capacity, modernize, and manage emerging threats and longstanding health impacts.
- **Public defense.** Adequate funding for trial court public defense costs to ensure the constitutionally protected right to a defense attorney for all.
- **Medicaid benefits while incarcerated.** Obtain a federal waiver to maintain Medicaid benefits for pretrial, incarcerated individuals.

**Growth management.** Greater flexibility in managing growth, and a new, reliable, sustainable funding source for planning requirements, and funding for any new ones.

**Water quality and water supply.** Dedicated funding for state programs that improve water quality or support and enhance water supplies to ensure counties’ effective implementation.