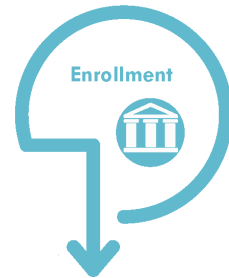


Expanding Partnerships to Reach Adult Learners

Strategic Challenge: ENROLLMENT

The Council's Strategic Action Plan included the following:

Outreach to recently unemployed workers without a college credential, focused on BIPOC communities, by building partnerships with employers, community organizations, state agencies, local government and others outside of higher education.



Magnitude of Opportunity

Washington's adult population provides a compelling demographic for reaching our attainment goals. Among the working-aged population, nearly one million adults are not enrolled and without a credential, 40% of whom have experienced some college.¹ Over 37% of Washingtonians are non-white as (see Figure 1). However, Black, Indigenous and People of Color have significantly lower rates of attainment (Figure 2).¹

Figure 1: Washington Population by Race/Ethnicity

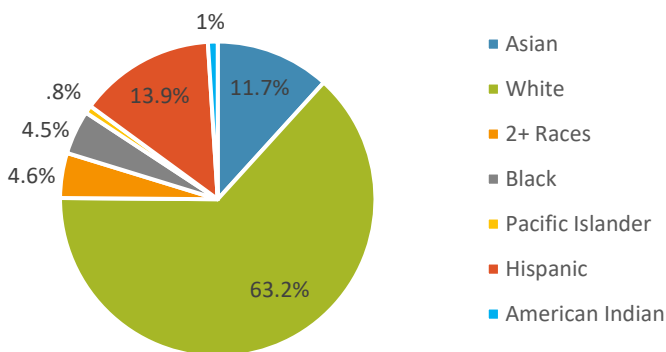
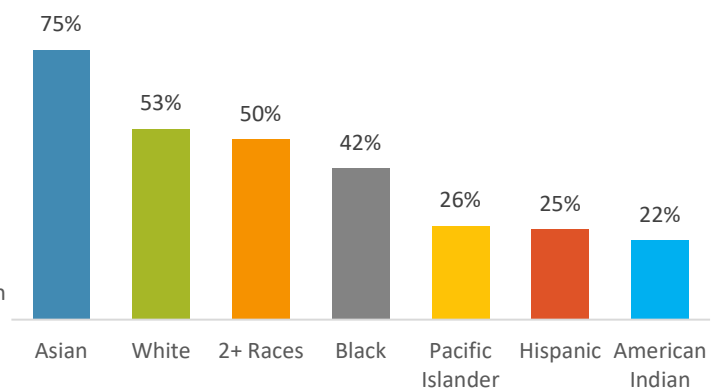


Figure 2: Postsecondary Attainment Rates, Race/Ethnicity Age 25-44



Source: WSAC Analysis of One-Year American Community Survey data 2019, U.S. Census.

WSAC Efforts in 2020

With over 273,000 adults receiving unemployment benefits, reaching adults is more critical now than ever. In March 2020, the Washington Student Achievement Council launched a statewide adult reengagement initiative, the College & Career Compass, funded in part by Lumina Foundation. We did not anticipate launching this new digital tool at the start of a public health and economic crisis – but we intensified our outreach efforts, reaching 149,000 users to date. This effort is even more important now. While the Washington unemployment rate has doubled compared to last fall, the public enrollments show a precipitous drop. The decrease was concentrated in the two-year sector where enrollments fell by 19%, nearly double the rate of decrease nationwide. And American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, and Hispanic enrollments fell by more than 20 percent.ⁱⁱ

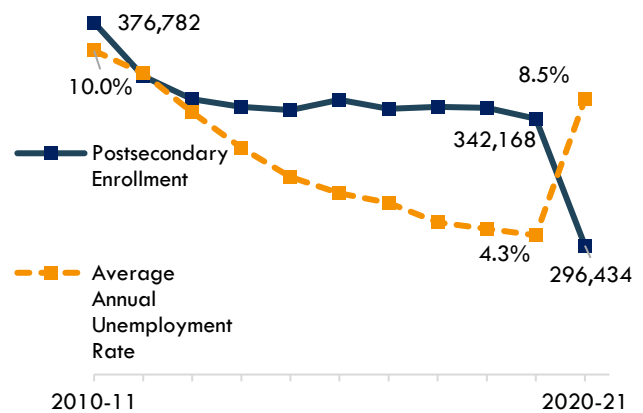
College & Career Compass Highlights



The [College & Career Compass](#) is a statewide adult reengagement initiative that included the development of a modern design, mobile-first interactive digital tool. The site includes a) a program search – 4,000+ programs from 55

campuses with filters for location, delivery mode, etc., b) guidance content – original interactive content addressing unique barriers related to affordability, preparation, enrollment, pathways, and supports, and c) lead generation – connecting users with campus advisors. Marketing efforts

have included 400,000 emails to former financial aid students, parents of K12 students, and adult learner prospects from a consumer marketing data base, as well as social/digital media reaching over 235,000 unique users. The outreach campaign has been adjusted to acknowledge the current crisis, and include new content addressing how to be a successful online learner, how to receive unemployment benefits as a student, and resources for certain student populations.



Centering Equity as We Shape Priorities

WSAC’s strategic action plan to raise educational attainment places equity as the core challenge to consider within all strategies. We used our equity lens to develop the objectives for the Compass initiative and determined that **expanded partnerships** and **inclusive pathways** are needed. We need to strengthen workforce connections and have an immediate impact on motivating adults to return and complete and reach those most impacted by the current crisis. After the development of the tool, the balance of Lumina funds was used to execute several equity-focused pilot projects reaching unemployed workers:

1. North King County – Reaching Recent Unemployed Workers. Shoreline Community College and United Way of King County Benefits Hub are reaching underserved populations with expanded financial guidance, peer outreach, and community supports.

2. Pierce County – Offering Coaching to Adults in the Region. Nine cross-sector campuses, InsideTrack and CollegeAPP, and community-based organizations, are partnering with WSAC in an outreach campaign to encourage adults to engage with expert coaches to resolve barriers, explore programs, and connect to a campus advisor.

Partnership Discussion

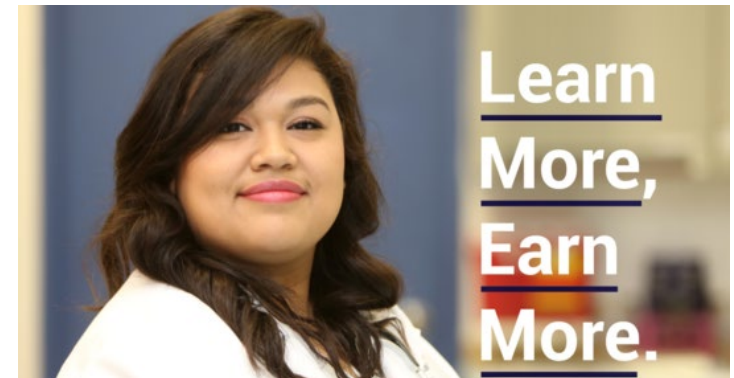
In addition to marketing efforts, strong outreach relies on trusted partners serving adults. WSAC has worked with state agencies, workforce partners, and some community-based organizations in order to promote College and Career Compass, expand awareness of the Washington College Grant coordinated with other resources, and share guidance related to the FAFSA/WASFA.

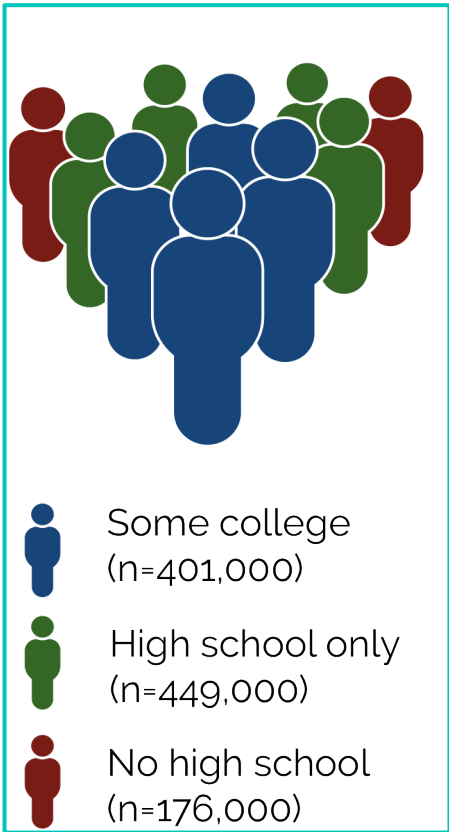
- What should we consider in expanding partnerships to reach adults? Aligned missions? Equity-focus? The reach of the partner? Other?
- What networks can Council members and key partners help connect us to?

ⁱ (April 2019). WSAC Analysis of One-Year American Community Survey data 2019, U.S. Census.

ⁱⁱ (January 2021). Fall Enrollment Report: Exploring the Impact of COVID-19 on Postsecondary Enrollment in Washington. Washington Student Achievement Council. <https://wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-01-12-Fall-Enrollment-Report.pdf> .

How to expand partnerships to reach adults





Nearly 1 million working-aged

273k unemployed

Working in need of upskill & reskill

Disconnected youth

Who are adults?

Anyone disconnected from the educational system without a credential.

How do we reach adults?



DIGITAL MARKETING



WORD OF MOUTH



PARTNERSHIPS

Considerations

- Equity-focused
- Reach
- Alignment
- Other?



How can we expand partnerships to reach adult learners?