

## **Increase enrollment and financial planning support for adults**

The current state economy has left many Washingtonians unemployed or with limited job security, with impacts felt more severely within communities of color. While it is unclear the duration of the recession, high numbers of laid-off workers would benefit from earning a credential and gaining new skills. Those who are in industries most impacted during the pandemic are less likely to have postsecondary education and are more often from communities of color.

Recent survey responses indicate adults are most concerned about cost, and while Washington has robust financial aid assistance available – eligibility criteria can be confusing, and the application process is intimidating. Misinformation exists across support sectors, and benefits are often not coordinated to ensure adult learners have access to the career pathway that suits their needs.

Washington needs to build on statewide outreach initiatives, policies, and programs (College & Career Compass, Aim Higher, Washington College Grant) to expand partnerships in regions to provide individualized enrollment assistance to dislocated workers.

### **Description**

Institutions that participate in state financial aid would be invited to submit proposals in collaboration with local community-based organizations. Projects will describe sustainable partnerships providing individualized enrollment supports with a focus on financial aid application support and financial and basic needs planning.

A range of \$10,000-25,000 partnership grants would be provided for up to 40 institutions (variable depending on reach of the partnership) for \$1M annually or \$2M for the biennium. Institutions would be required to demonstrate a commitment to serving adult learners and describe a shared partnership with local community-based organization(s) to expand local efforts supporting dislocated and adult learners in the financial planning and enrollment process. Grants would be renewable for two years to allow for shared learning and refinements.