WASHINGTON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT COUNCIL
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1500 Jefferson Street SE
Olympia, Washington 98501
360.753.7800
wsac.wa.gov

# LEARN Community of Practice

*Local Education Adult Resource Network*

May 6, 2026
12:00 – 1:00 PM

**Agenda**

1. Welcome
2. Imagining: Brainstorming policy ideas
3. Engaging: Small Group Discussion – Working and Adult Learner Policy Recommendations
4. Wrap Up

**Meeting Schedule**
June 2026 TBD

Information: https://wsac.wa.gov/LEARN
Contact: AdultPathways@wsac.wa.gov

# Local Education Adult Resource Network (LEARN) Community of Practice

May 6, 2026

# Agenda

- In-person update
- Discussion: Early-stage policy brainstorming
- Wrap-Up

LEARN will be 60 minutes today!

# Policy Brainstorm

# Exploring Policy Opportunities Supporting Adult Learners

1. Academic Credit for Prior Learning (ACPL)
2. Work-Based Learning
3. AI in Career Pathways

**Consider the landscape:**

- What might be possible at relatively low cost to the state?
- What types of mandates are helpful?
- What types of incentives would assist in motivating or moving the needle?

# Working Definitions: ACPL

Practices, policies, and processes through which postsecondary institutions formally evaluate and award academic credit for verified knowledge, skills and competencies that an individual has acquired outside of traditional classroom instruction. This includes learning gained through work experience, military service, professional training, industry certifications, non-credit coursework, community or volunteer service, and self-directed study.

**Sample Strategy Ideas**

- **Transcription:** Guidance on how ACPL credits appear on transcripts
- **Transfer:** Policies to support transferability of ACPL credits across institutions
- **Cost/Affordability:** Addresses fees, waivers or financial support for ACPL processes

# Work-Based Learning

A structured educational strategy that integrates meaningful workplace experiences with academic or technical instruction, enabling learners to develop competencies (professional skills, career readiness,) through real (or simulated) work environments.

- Examples: apprenticeships, co-ops, clinical placements, practicum, internships etc. with intentional design and supervision to align with learning outcomes. These are ideally aligned with institutional credentials and labor market needs.

**Sample Strategy Ideas**

- Alignment between educational curricula and employer skill demands
- Shared philosophy recognizing the responsibility across education institutions, employers, workforce, learners
- Standardization of outcomes for hands-on learning
- Credential and credit alignment
- Incentives for employers and higher educational to innovate together

# Working Definitions: AI in Career Pathways

The use of AI as an enabling tool to improve how learners access and progress through pathways. AI tech is being deployed to enhance systems, services and experiences that support learner and worker progression.

**Sample Strategy Ideas**

- **Intelligent advising and navigation:** AI-powered chatbots, advising platforms etc. that guide learners toward programs, credentials, and career options. May include early-alert and interventions.
- **Personalized learning and skills mapping:** Adaptive learning platforms that identify gaps, recommend content, and accelerate competency attainment based on individual learner profiles
- **Labor market intelligence:** AI-driven analysis of real-time labor market data to align curriculum, credentials, and program offerings with emerging and in-demand occupations
- **Employer matching and placement:** Platforms that use AI to connect learners and completers with job opportunities, internships, and work-based learning experiences aligned to their skills and career goals

# Small Group Discussion: 30 Minutes

- Choose which topic you'd like to discuss.
- Each room will have a dedicated staff note-taker, but no formal facilitator.

**Consider the landscape:**

- What might be possible at relatively low cost to the state?
- What types of mandates are helpful?
- What types of incentives would assist in motivating or moving the needle?

## Today's Engagement Prompts:

- What can we try out or pilot to inform practice or policy in the future?
- What barriers exist and would, or how could, a policy solution address it?
- What do you think you or your organization may be willing to do, try, contribute?

# Discussion Share Out

10 minutes

# Wrap Up

Stay tuned for additional summer conversations!

Contact email: adultpathways@wsac.wa.gov
Website: www.wsac.wa.gov/LEARN

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Olympia, Washington 98502
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# LEARN Policy Brainstorm: May 6, 2026

## Summary of Discussion Group Notes

### Academic Credit for Prior Learning (ACPL)

**Key themes:**

- Awareness is a major gap; many students don't know ACPL exists. Faculty were suggested as a frontline resource to inform students in class.
- Affordability is a barrier — ACPL fees aren't covered by financial aid, though institutions are trying to keep costs modest.
- Faculty resistance exists, largely driven by fear that ACPL will reduce class enrollment.
- Scaling is happening strategically — starting with supportive departments where prior learning aligns well with credentials.
- Employers are seen as critical partners, particularly for recruitment and potentially helping cover student costs (up to $4,500)
- Disjointed internal systems make awarding credits inconsistent across college units.
- A possible policy priority: funding to help students cover upfront ACPL costs.

### Work-Based Learning (WBL)

**Key themes:**

- Basic needs are a barrier — adult learners juggling jobs and family responsibilities struggle to prioritize unpaid or time-intensive WBL opportunities.
- Registered apprenticeships unlock workforce funding but are geographically concentrated along the I-5 corridor; rural areas lack capacity to formalize programs.
- Safety and age requirements were discussed, with interest in lowering age thresholds (to 16) to expand access for high school students in fields like healthcare and construction.
- Construction was highlighted as the most in-demand trade in Washington, with interest in adapting WBL models for that sector.
- Despite WBL efforts, employers still report workforce shortages — the demand-supply gap remains a persistent concern.

### AI in Career Pathways

**Key themes:**

- The employer demand for AI competencies is real and growing; K-12 and postsecondary institutions are working to catch up through digital badges, courses, and charters.
- Education is lagging business in AI adoption, though individual faculty and institutions are experimenting independently, described as a "wild west" environment.
- Critical thinking and ethics were emphasized as essential foundations before students use AI tools.
- Specific institutional activity: UW has an internal AI platform ("Purple"); EWU is developing an AI charter and integrating AI into professional education; WSU treats AI as a tool layered onto core communication and creative skills.

- AI holds promise for increasing access — through intelligent advising, personalized learning, labor market alignment, and employer-student matching.
- Workforce concern: AI may pressure new job seekers while asking existing workers to do more with less.
- There was a recommendation for an AI Grant suggest by EWU