

# Passport to Careers Implementation and Outcome Evaluation

## Executive Summary and Report

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### Prepared For

Washington Student Achievement  
Council

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# Passport to Careers Implementation and Outcome Evaluation: Executive Summary

Westat prepared the Passport to Careers Implementation and Outcome Evaluation on behalf of the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC), as directed in [Senate Bill 5187](#) that authorized an implementation review of the Passport to Careers program. This evaluation involved many key constituents in design, data collection, and feedback for this report between September 2023 and June 2024. In addition to the young adults who experienced foster care and/or unaccompanied homelessness at the center of the Passport to Careers program, key constituents included organizations serving foster youth, the state board of community and technical colleges, public 4-year institutions, and organizations providing Passport to Careers services. The report has three primary purposes to improve the reach and effectiveness of the Passport to Careers program: (1) describe the implementation of Passport to Careers, (2) report outcome findings, and (3) formulate short- and long-term recommendations based on implementation and outcomes findings.

## Key Findings

Multiple data sources informed the findings, including extant data (e.g., Passport Student Support Survey, ANEW internal databases, Unit Record Report), document review, staff interviews, and young adult focus groups. A total of 76 participants took part in 39 interview or focus group sessions. The following key findings are highlighted and linked to sections in the report describing the findings' full implementation and outcomes details:

- 1. The number and types of Passport to Career participants have increased over time.** In 2018, the legislature added eligibility criteria for unaccompanied homeless youth (UHY) and a pathway to apprenticeships to the original pathway to college. Compared with the initial phase (2009–2018) in which only former foster youth (FY) participants were eligible, the program currently serves relatively more UHY than FY participants.
  - A.** In the initial phase (2008–2009 academic year), College Scholarship Pathway participants numbered 142 (only FY), but the number grew to 920 in the current phase (2021–2022 academic year) (510 UHY and 410 FY).
  - B.** In the Apprenticeship Opportunity Pathway, which began in 2019 (current phase), most participants were eligible as UHY (for 2019–2022, 17 UHY and 7 FY).
  - C.** Once identified, ANEW helps young adults navigate the 191 registered programs reported by Passport staff in a focus group. Each program has unique requirements and timelines, and while there is no prescribed pathway, young adults generally complete six steps to be accepted into a registered apprenticeship program.
- 2. Passport administrators report the need for additional funding.** Many Passport staff reported that student support can be maximized through strategic resource allocation and better alignment of federal,

*“Being from financial aid, I’ll always take more money. I can’t do my job if I don’t say money doesn’t solve everything, but it definitely makes things easier. And especially fully funding Passport so that it’s not a question about summer. It’s not a question about how many [Passport students] we have. I anticipate with the better FAFSA we will have more in the unaccompanied homeless youth camp.”*

—Passport staff

state, and institutional requirements. Key constituents consistently raised the need for stable and adequate funding as a barrier.

- A. Many Passport staff hold multiple roles at their institutions (i.e., “wear many hats”) and are often pulled in many directions. Staff and students expressed the need for a team member with 100 percent of their time dedicated to Passport program implementation and student support. While larger institutions and institutions with many Passport students may have one or more full-time designated support staff (DSS), smaller institutions and institutions with a few Passport students may require funding to hire a full-time DSS.
  - B. Staff and students explained that the Passport scholarship supplements students’ living expenses but is not enough to eliminate the need to work, which affects students’ ability to focus on their education.
3. **Many Passport participants are on track to achieve the intended outcomes.** Outcomes, such as academic outcomes and degree completion, aligned with the Passport to Careers design to close equity gaps for FY and UHY.
- A. The level of support helps students focus on their studies because Passport covers their basic needs, such as housing and food. For other students, receiving a laptop, having access to funds to buy books when the quarter starts, or using the lending library for required readings enables them to focus on classes and learning. Other types of outcomes mentioned by many Passport staff included “adulting” skills (e.g., financial literacy) and better nutrition.
  - B. Thirty-one percent of Passport to College participants earned at least a certificate within 8 years, based on initial phase Passport participants ( $n = 1,233$ ) who first enrolled in any postsecondary institution between 2008 and 2016. Fifty-three percent of students in the subgroup who first enrolled in a 4-year school ( $n = 222$ ) earned any credential; nearly half of students in the subgroup (46%) completed a 4-year degree, and 7 percent completed a graduate credential.

## Recommendations

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The research team formulated thematic recommendations to better serve FY and UHY in the Passport to Careers program. These recommendations build on specific suggestions from Passport staff and participants to overcome identified barriers and highlight best practices to overcome with barriers. Key constituents (e.g., WSAC, Passport Leadership Team [PLT], Passport staff) provided feedback on draft recommendations, and the research team incorporated this feedback to prioritize and add actionable supporting points to the recommendations. These recommendations align with key findings and incorporate all 10 Passport staff and participant suggestions:



**Allocate Stable Funding to Meet the Needs of Eligible Students.** As one of Washington State’s key strategies for closing equity gaps, Passport to Careers must be funded to meet the needs of eligible students and to be effective. Without enough funds to serve all eligible students enrolled in college, many of these students—lacking the financial resources to cover college and basic needs expenses—may “stop out” or drop out or take on additional student loan debt. Lack of stable funding may also deter potential students or apprentices from enrolling in college or job training. Funding that aligns with Passport to Careers program design (i.e., case managers who build relationships, emerging technology for communication, and timely information for apprentices) is required for many of the following recommendations. See [Suggestion 6. Fund to Meet Needs for more details](#).



### **Establish Additional Methods to Identify Passport-eligible Young Adults.**

Even with growing participation, especially for UHY, the need to bolster methods for identifying, recruiting, and continuously supporting Passport students is evident. Public postsecondary institutions are required to supplement eligibility information by using campus-based needs assessments or other forms that students complete in accordance with the 2023 [Washington's Postsecondary Basic Needs Act](#). Expanding this requirement to all institutions serving Passport students would provide more consistent identification of UHY. See [Suggestion 2. Bolster UHY Identification Methods](#) for more details.



**Reconsider the Eligibility Criteria.** The recommendation to reconsider age criteria such as the enroll by age 22 and age-out restriction at 26 years old may be partially addressed beginning in aid year 2024-25; there will no longer be an age-out limit on eligibility for Passport awards. Also reconsider the minimum credit requirement because students are challenged to maintain a manageable course load and meet satisfactory academic progress. See [Suggestion 1. Change Eligibility Requirements](#) for more details.



**Fund Full-time, dedicated, and qualified staff.** Passport staff and students suggested having dedicated staff for the college pathway. A few students expressed the desire for a dedicated staff member who can support them, particularly with tasks such as completing financial aid paperwork. Key constituents emphasized that Passport staff need the capacity and resources to build real relationships with students. The [Washington Passport Network](#) provides training and onboarding; ensure these offerings occur with enough frequency to support new staff. Create a network for DSS for ongoing peer support, which could ease staff and student transitions and create warm handoffs for students who transfer to other institutions. See [Suggestion 5. Fund Full-Time, Dedicated Staff](#) and [Suggestion 10. Improve Case Management and Knowledge Transfer](#) for more details.



### **Refresh and redesign the program for UHY and apprenticeship participants.**

One key finding was that Passport to Careers participation and scope increased. UHY currently outnumber FY participants and have unique needs. The newer apprenticeship pathway is nonlinear, decentralized, and varied compared with the original college pathway and college context.

While many Passport staff reported tapping into other supports to supplement Passport participants, there is a need for robust integration at the local institution level, such as formalizing referral systems with community partners. The growing number of UHY who participate in Passport to Careers, coupled with local challenges of market-rate housing for young adults, highlights the need for referral systems to include housing support. Integrating funding and support services may be even more important in 2-year institutions and institutions with fewer Passport students than in 4-year institutions and institutions with more Passport students.

Passport participants suggested creating a manual with step-by-step guidance for apprenticeship participants. Apprenticeship pathway staff and key constituents, including the [Washington State Department of Labor and Industries \(L&I\)](#), a key source for apprenticeship information, need to collect and share more timely information about apprenticeships. Formalizing L&I's role through a

memorandum of understanding or identifying a Passport delegate from L&I may improve the apprenticeship pathway for Passport participants and apprentices more broadly. Emerging technologies such as web scraping publicly available data may provide a lower cost option to collect and share timely information and create a foundation for a step-by-step manual. See *Suggestion 3. Develop Local Resource Repository* and *Suggestion 9. Chart the Path With a Manual* for more details.



**Continuously improve communication and connection.** Build on the strength of relationships and one-to-one communication to counter the lack of reciprocity that many staff raised as a barrier. Institutions could better support multimodal communication, segmenting program-wide updates or general outreach for websites, social media, and blogs and reserve one-to-one modes of communication such as text and email for targeted, personalized outreach. An intentional focus on community development and community building may also provide more visibility to the Passport program, increase students' knowledge of program resources, and improve students' mental health. See *Suggestion 7. Continuously Improve Communication Between Participants and Program Staff* and *Suggestion 8. Foster A Sense of Community* for more details.



**Improve data collection and regularly share data with key constituents.** Data collection processes can be enhanced in several areas to support continuous quality improvement for implementation. For the college pathway, institutions can consider collecting participant-level information about support services received. For the apprenticeship pathway, WSAC may request progress reports detailing recruitment activities; individual-level data about support services requested and received; and enrollment and completion data for preapprenticeships and apprenticeships. Building on the outcome data in this report, collecting and reporting short- and long-term outcome data annually will enable key constituents to better monitor annual progress on achieving program outcomes. The legislature may also consider authorizing another program evaluation that builds on this implementation and outcome evaluation with a more rigorous impact study that estimates the causal effects of Passport for both FY and UHY participants. See *Suggestion 4. Share Data* for more details.

During this evaluation, program and policy changes occurred that may not be reflected in the data collection, analyses, or findings. For example, in March 2024, the legislature funded half of WSAC's maintenance level budget request at the \$1 million level (\$14,998,000 for the biennium), not the \$2 million needed to keep funding level and keep up with increased eligible students/apprentices.

As of May 2024, WSAC reported that maximum awards would need to be reduced from \$5,000 to \$2,800 per student for the 2025 academic year. The data collection that informs these recommendations was completed in March 2024, before budget decisions affected data sources. This report may be helpful for future budget allocations. Ideally, readers will interpret these findings and recommendations considering the most current context. In addition, key constituents such as PLT and Project Education Impact, which develop recommendations to improve educational outcomes for students experiencing foster care and homelessness in Washington State, can layer detailed and timely recommendations that build on this report.

*"So yeah, [a] Handbook would be really cool. Especially because I know that Passport has a lot more to offer than I'm actually aware of."*

— Young adult who has experienced foster care and/or homelessness

## 1. Introduction

Washington State is a state of opportunity for postsecondary success. Fifty percent of 2021 high school graduates enrolled within 1 year; 31 percent of students enrolled in a 4-year institution, and 19 percent enrolled in a 2-year institution.<sup>1</sup> Many of these students received financial aid, with a national financial aid survey reporting that Washington State’s need-based grant aid to undergraduate students is the highest in the nation.<sup>2</sup> The state also recognizes that postsecondary opportunities are not equally accessible to all. According to the most recent labor market and economic report for Washington State, unemployment levels were near historic lows while job openings were at high levels, but just like trends across the United States, labor was in short supply to fill lower-wage job openings.<sup>3</sup> Similar to postsecondary education, workforce opportunities are not equally distributed.

To meet the needs of young adults who experienced foster care or homelessness, the Passport to Careers program was designed to provide financial aid and support services to eligible former foster youth (FY) and unaccompanied homeless youth (UHY) so that these young adults can achieve their postsecondary goals.<sup>4</sup> This program also helps Washington State advance educational equity by meeting the unique needs of these groups of young people.

Across the United States, including Washington, children, youth, and young adults who experience homelessness or foster care face persistent barriers to achieving their educational and career goals. Throughout their Washington public school experiences, students experiencing foster care and/or homelessness face challenges such as changing schools more often than peers and higher rates of absenteeism over the course of a year (57 days for youth in foster care, 61 days for youth experiencing homelessness), both of which disrupt academic progress.<sup>5</sup>

Despite these challenges, students who experienced foster care or homelessness persisted to high school graduation, 42 percent and 38 percent respectively. After graduation, they were less likely than peers who did not have experiences in foster care or with homelessness to enroll in a postsecondary institution—38 percent of FY and 36 percent of youth experiencing homelessness compared with 55 percent of students without these experiences, enrolled within 2 years of graduating high school. Further, both groups of interest (87%) were more likely to choose 2-year institutions than peers without these experiences (68%). Thirteen percent of youth who

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<sup>1</sup> Washington State Education Research and Data Center published a data dashboard in June 2020 (updated in February 2023), which was accessed on May 6, 2024, at <https://erdc.wa.gov/data-dashboards/high-school-graduate-outcomes>.

<sup>2</sup> National Association of State Student Grant & Aid Programs. (n.d.). *53rd annual survey report on state-sponsored student financial aid: 2021-2022 academic year*. Retrieved from [https://www.nassgapsurvey.com/survey\\_reports/2021-2022-53rd.pdf](https://www.nassgapsurvey.com/survey_reports/2021-2022-53rd.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Data Architecture, Transformation and Analysis Division. (2023). *2022 labor market and economic report*. Washington State Employment Security Department. <https://media.esd.wa.gov/esdwa/Default/ESDWAGOV/newsroom/Legislative-resources/2022-annual-economic-report.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Authors use the terms former FY and UHY to refer to Passport to Careers participant eligibility described in Washington Student Achievement Council. (n.d.). *Passport to careers guide: About passport to careers*. <https://wsac.wa.gov/passport/about>.

<sup>5</sup> Project Education Impact. (2019). *Achieving educational success for Washington’s children, youth and young adults in foster care and/or experiencing homelessness: Joint agency report To legislature*. Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families; Washington Student Achievement Council; Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED595805.pdf>



experienced foster care or homelessness enrolled in 4-year institutions compared to 33 percent of their peers without these experiences.<sup>6</sup>

The Washington Student Experience Survey revealed a high level of need across students in terms of housing, food, and other basic needs. For the sample of students enrolled in public colleges in Washington State who participated in the survey, 1 in 2 students experienced basic needs insecurity, regardless of whether they enrolled in 2- or 4-year institutions. Former FY had the highest rates of basic needs insecurity among all subpopulations with 68 percent reporting food insecurity, 59 percent reporting housing insecurity, and 24 percent reporting homelessness.<sup>7</sup>

Young people face many challenges on their journeys to postsecondary success, including deciding whether college is a good fit for their interests and career goals. For young people who choose to enter the workforce, apprenticeships may be a path to a career, with training built in. Apprenticeships are pathways into careers in some of the fastest-growing industries, such as warehousing (which has added more than 900,000 jobs [+15.8%], including more than 600,000 new jobs in warehousing because of the seismic shift toward online commerce) and construction (+4.2%).<sup>8</sup>

The Passport to College Promise Scholarship program began as a pilot in 2007 for FY students and became permanent in the 2012 legislative session.<sup>9</sup> In 2018, the legislature (RCW 28B.117) expanded the program to include UHY and changed the program name to Passport to Careers to incorporate two pathways: College Scholarship Pathway and Apprenticeship Opportunity Pathway.<sup>10</sup> (See Figure 1 for more detailed changes in eligibility.) Washington Student Achievement Council [WSAC] manages the program, including providing guidance for implementers and participants, dispersing funds, monitoring progress, informing policymakers, and overseeing contracts. Note that in 2024, WSAC submitted a maintenance level budget request of \$2 million to keep up with demand beyond the original 2023–2025 biennium amount to fund Passport to Careers (\$13,998,000 evenly split between fiscal years 2024 and 2025). In March 2024, the legislature funded half of WSAC’s maintenance level budget request at the \$1 million level (\$14,998,000 for the biennium), not the \$2 million needed to keep funding level and keep up with increased eligible students/apprentices.

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<sup>6</sup> Project Education Impact. (2019). *Achieving educational success for Washington’s children, youth and young adults in foster care and/or experiencing homelessness: Joint agency report To legislature*. Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families; Washington Student Achievement Council; Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED595805.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Washington Student Achievement Council. (2023). *Basic needs security among Washington college students*. <https://wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2023.BasicNeedsReport.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Data Architecture, Transformation and Analysis Division. (2023). *2022 labor market and economic report*. Washington State Employment Security Department. <https://media.esd.wa.gov/esdwa/Default/ESDWAGOV/newsroom/Legislative-resources/2022-annual-economic-report.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Washington Student Achievement Council. (2022). *Passport to College Scholarship program manual: 2022-23*. [https://wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-23\\_PassportManual\\_Final.pdf](https://wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-23_PassportManual_Final.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Washington Student Achievement Council. (2022). *Passport to College Scholarship program manual: 2022-23*. [https://wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-23\\_PassportManual\\_Final.pdf](https://wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-23_PassportManual_Final.pdf)

**Figure 1. Passport Eligibility Changes Timeline**

	Initial Phase		Current Phase	
	2009	2018	2019	2020
<b>Program Name</b>	Passport to College		Passport to Careers includes: College Scholarship Pathway; Apprenticeship Opportunity Pathway	
<b>Education/ Training</b>	Postsecondary enrollment at an eligible college		Attending an eligible college, preapprenticeship, or apprenticeship program	
<b>Foster Care</b>	Dependent of Washington State		In state, tribal, or federal foster care systems in Washington State	
<b>Time in Care</b>	In foster care for one year after age 16, and in care at age 17.5	In foster care after age 15	In foster care after age 14	In foster care after age 13
<b>Unaccompanied Homeless</b>	Not eligible		Verified unaccompanied homeless event during prior academic year and before age 21	
<b>Residency</b>	Student resided in Washington for other-than-education purposes for one year before attending college, or graduated from a Washington high school, or earned a GED in Washington		Young adult experienced homelessness or out-of-state foster care under the interstate compact as verified by WSAC	

Source: Unpublished program history

Notes: The year in row 1 marks the start of the academic year. For example, changes in 2009 applied to the 2009–2010 academic year.

Passport to Careers builds on nationally recognized models, such as the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Educational and Training Vouchers (ETV) Program, which combines financial aid support with support services tailored to individual participants. The program is designed so that eligible young adults can prepare for, enroll in, and complete higher education or a registered apprenticeship or preapprenticeship program. Program awareness activities start in high school through coordinated prekindergarten through graduate school and/or the workforce (i.e., P-20) and child welfare outreach, intervention, and planning. Program activities include educational planning, information, institutional support, and direct financial resources necessary for eligible young adults to succeed in either higher education or a registered apprenticeship or preapprenticeship program. The Passport to Careers program funds four main components:

1. Scholarship awards
2. Campus funding for Passport to Careers student support
3. Support services (WSAC contracted with the nonprofit College Success Foundation)
4. Apprenticeship grants and support services (WSAC contracted with the nonprofit ANEW, formerly known as the Apprenticeship & Non-Traditional Employment for Women)

**The legislation that authorized the program evaluation in [Senate Bill 5187](#): \$150,000 of the workforce education investment account—state appropriation is provided solely for an implementation review of the passport to careers program. The review must include short and long-term recommendations to improve the reach and effectiveness of the passport program. The review must include consultation with organizations serving foster youth, the state board of community and technical colleges, public four-year institutions, and other organizations involved in the passport to college and passport to apprenticeship programs. Amounts provided in this subsection may be used to provide stipends for youth participating in the review who are receiving funds from passport programs or are eligible to receive funds from passport programs. The review must be submitted to the appropriate committees of the legislature by June 30, 2024.**

The purpose of this evaluation report is to summarize program implementation, report outcomes, and formulate recommendations to improve the reach and effectiveness of the Passport to Careers program. The report opens by setting the context in Washington State and introducing the two eligible groups of students, former FY and UHY as young adults on their postsecondary journeys to successful careers (Section 1). Next, Section 2 describes the program in relation to overall participation, expenditures, types of support for each pathway, and key constituents. Section 3 provides more details about program implementation for college scholarships and apprenticeships. Participant perspectives about both program implementation and outcomes compose Section 4, which presents persistence and completion outcomes for students in the Passport to Careers program at postsecondary institutions, as well as participants' reflections on their own outcomes. The report culminates with Section 5, featuring recommendations based on the findings presented. Appendices provide details about the quantitative (Appendix A) and qualitative (Appendix B) research methods used to collect and analyze the data findings are based on.

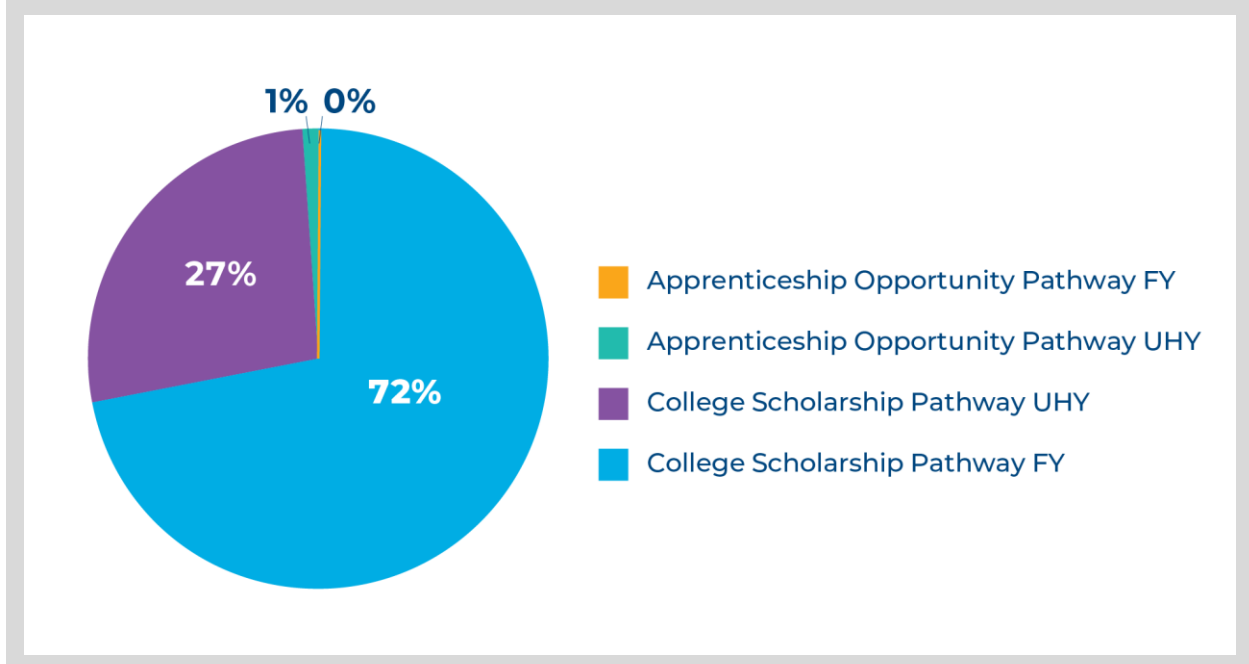
## 2. What Is Passport to Careers?

Passport to Careers is a complex program with two pathways, many key constituents, and multiple components to work with two types of participants (FY and UHY) who want to achieve postsecondary success. The two Passport to Careers pathways are the College Scholarship Pathway (college pathway) and the Apprenticeship Opportunity Pathway (apprenticeship pathway). This section provides descriptive information about the number of Passport to Careers participants and expenditures over time. Given the differences in pathway scope and size, this section provides more detailed information for each pathway. Finally, this section concludes with additional information on program change over time, including the role of key constituents in addition to Passport participants, including the Passport Leadership Team (PLT), which supports Passport to Careers as a whole.

### 2.1 Overall Program Participation and Expenditures

The Passport to Careers program has provided scholarships and incentive funds to 3,022 individuals since its inception in 2009. About 3 in 4 participants (2,172 participants, 72%) were college pathway FY participants, which was the only pathway and participant type in the initial phase. About 1 in 4 participants (826 participants, 27%) were college pathway UHY participants, who became eligible in the current phase. Less than 1 percent of all participants chose the apprenticeship pathway (24 participants; 7 FY and 17 UHY) between 2019 and 2022 (current phase), as seen in Figure 2.

**Figure 2. Distribution of Passport to Careers Participants, by Pathway and Participant Type**

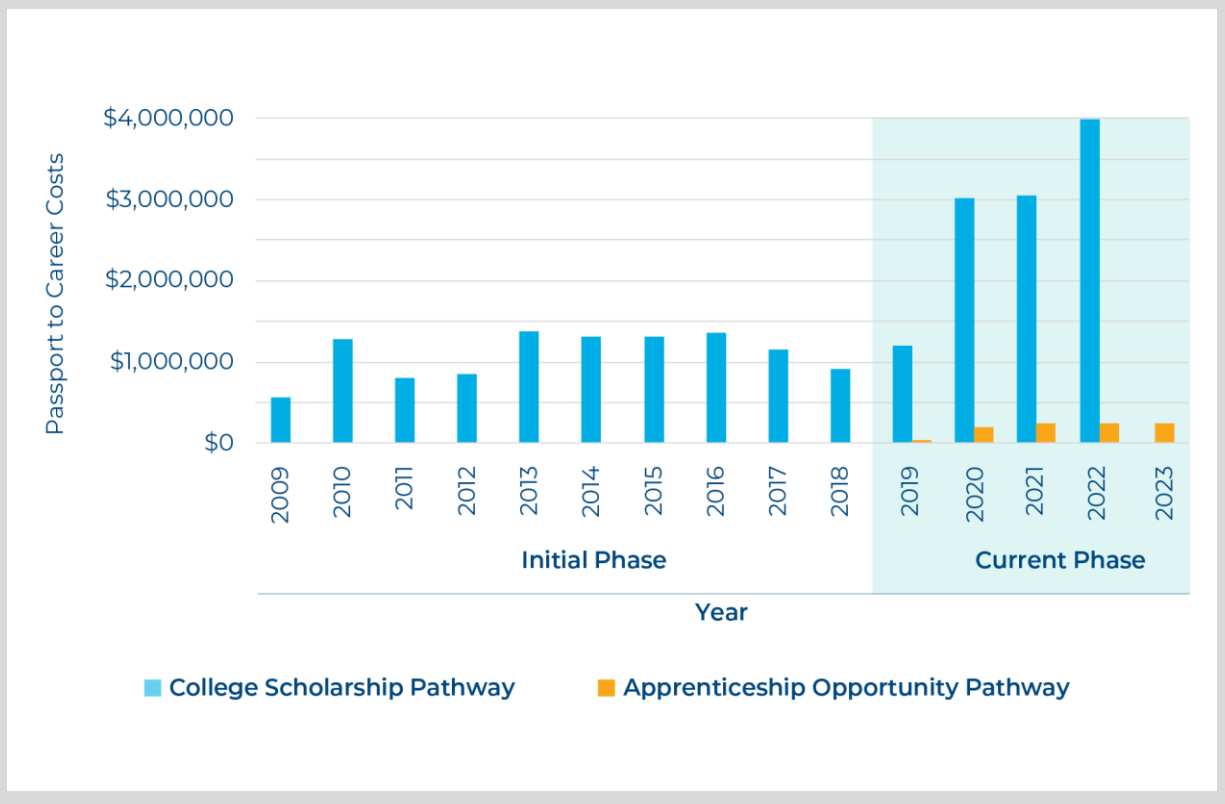


Source: Washington Student Achievement Council Unit Record Report for the College Scholarship Pathway and the ANEW internal databases for the Apprenticeship Opportunity Pathway. *N* = 3,022

Notes: College pathway participants are individuals with at least one positive College Scholarship Pathway award or at least one positive student support payment. Apprenticeship pathway participants are individuals who started a preapprenticeship or are in the Washington State Apprenticeship Registration & Tracking system with active, suspended, canceled, or completed apprenticeship. FY = foster youth; UHY = unaccompanied homeless youth.

The annual cost of the Passport to Careers program, defined as the sum of college pathway scholarships and student support payments for the college pathway and the value of the ANEW contract for the apprenticeship pathway, has typically increased over the 14-year period for which there is data (see Figure 3). The annual costs during the initial phase that served only college pathway FY participants ranged from \$562,000 in 2009 to \$1,361,000 in 2016. The current phase, which adds eligibility for college pathway UHY participants, more than doubled the annual funding for the college pathway to \$3,022,000 in 2020, \$3,041,000 in 2011, and \$3,989,000 in 2022. The annual cost of the apprenticeship pathway that began in the current phase had an initial cost of \$40,000 in 2018 and then stabilized to over \$200,000 per year from 2020 through 2023. In 2022—the most recent year with data for both pathways—the total annual cost of the Passport to Careers was \$4,228,000, with a cumulative cost of \$22,892,000 since 2009.

**Figure 3. Annual Cost of Passport to Careers, by Year**



Source: Washington Student Achievement Council Unit Record Report for the College Scholarship Pathway and the ANEW contracts.

Notes: The annual cost for the college pathway is the sum of college pathway scholarships and student support payments for the college pathway and the value of the ANEW contract for the apprenticeship pathway for that year. A year for the college pathway is defined as the ending year of the academic year, and a year for the apprenticeship pathway is defined as the ending year of the fiscal year. The Annual ANEW contract data only contains overall cost and does not allow for the disaggregation of costs by participant type. The Unit Record Report used to calculate the total cost of the college pathway is only available through 2022.

### 2.1.1 College Scholarship Pathway

A total of 71 postsecondary institutions approved by the Washington College Grant participated in the college pathway at some point since 2009, ranging from 42 to 63 in any single year (see Figure 4). In 2022, 62 of the 63 participating institutions represented 93 percent of all institutions that participate in state financial aid programs. The remaining institution is a virtual-only institution with students who reside in Washington State.

**Figure 4. Number of Institutions Participating in the College Scholarship Pathway, by Year**



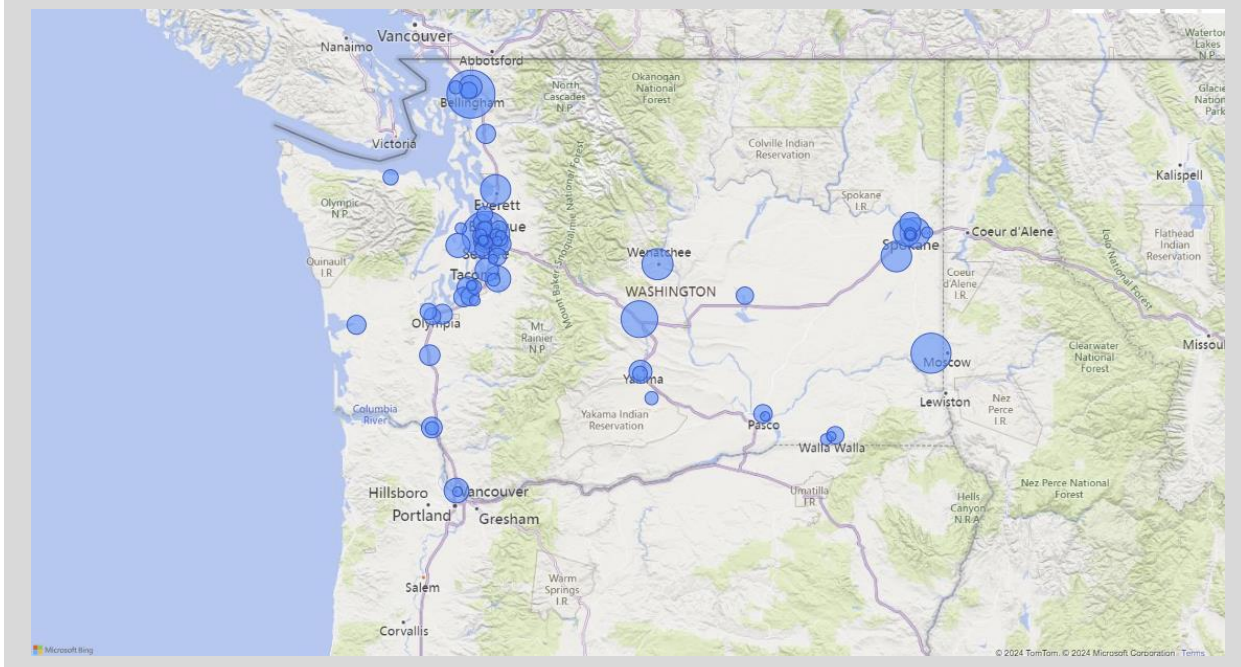
Source: Washington Student Achievement Council Unit Record Report for the College Scholarship Pathway

Notes: College pathway participants are individuals with at least one positive College Scholarship Pathway award or at least one positive student support payment. A postsecondary institution is considered to participate that year if it has at least one participant that year. A year for the college pathway is defined as the ending year of the academic year.

The postsecondary institutions participating in the college pathway are geographically distributed across the state. Figure 5 shows the locations of participating postsecondary institutions, with circles proportional to the average annual number of college pathway participants at the institution. The averages range from a postsecondary institution with a count of one participant to a postsecondary institution with an average of 114 participants. There are many postsecondary institutions along the western urban corridor (along Interstate 5), where the population of Washington State is concentrated. There are additional participating postsecondary institutions in the east near Spokane, and then relatively fewer institutions in the other, more rural parts of the state.

The characteristics of college pathway institutions in 2009 vary by institution type (see Appendix A). In the first year of implementation, public community and technical colleges made up 69 percent of all postsecondary institutions. The general population across this group was mostly White (71%), tuition and fees averaged \$2,904, and 38 percent of the general student population completed an associate's degree or certificate within 200 percent of the expected time to degree. Although the racial distribution of the general student population at public research universities and public comprehensive universities was comparable to the public community and technical colleges, they averaged higher tuition and fees (\$7,184 and \$5,456 respectively) and higher bachelor's degree completion rates (72% and 59% respectively). The private universities and private 2-year colleges and trade schools averaged the highest tuition and fees (\$21,922 and \$13,918 respectively) compared with their public institution counterparts.

**Figure 5. Map of College Scholarship Pathway Postsecondary Institutions Between 2009 and 2022**



Source: Washington Student Achievement Council Unit Record Report for the College Scholarship Pathway and latitude and longitude data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

Notes: College pathway participants are individuals with at least one positive College Scholarship Pathway award or at least one positive student support payment. A postsecondary institution is considered to participate that year if it has at least one participant that year. A year for the college pathway is defined as the ending year of the academic year. Individuals who attend multiple institutions in a year are only counted once per institution for that year. The circles are proportional to the average annual number of college pathway participants and range from 1 to 114 people. The location of each postsecondary institution is based on the 2009 latitude and longitude values for those open in 2009 and on the 2022 latitude and longitude values for all other postsecondary institutions.

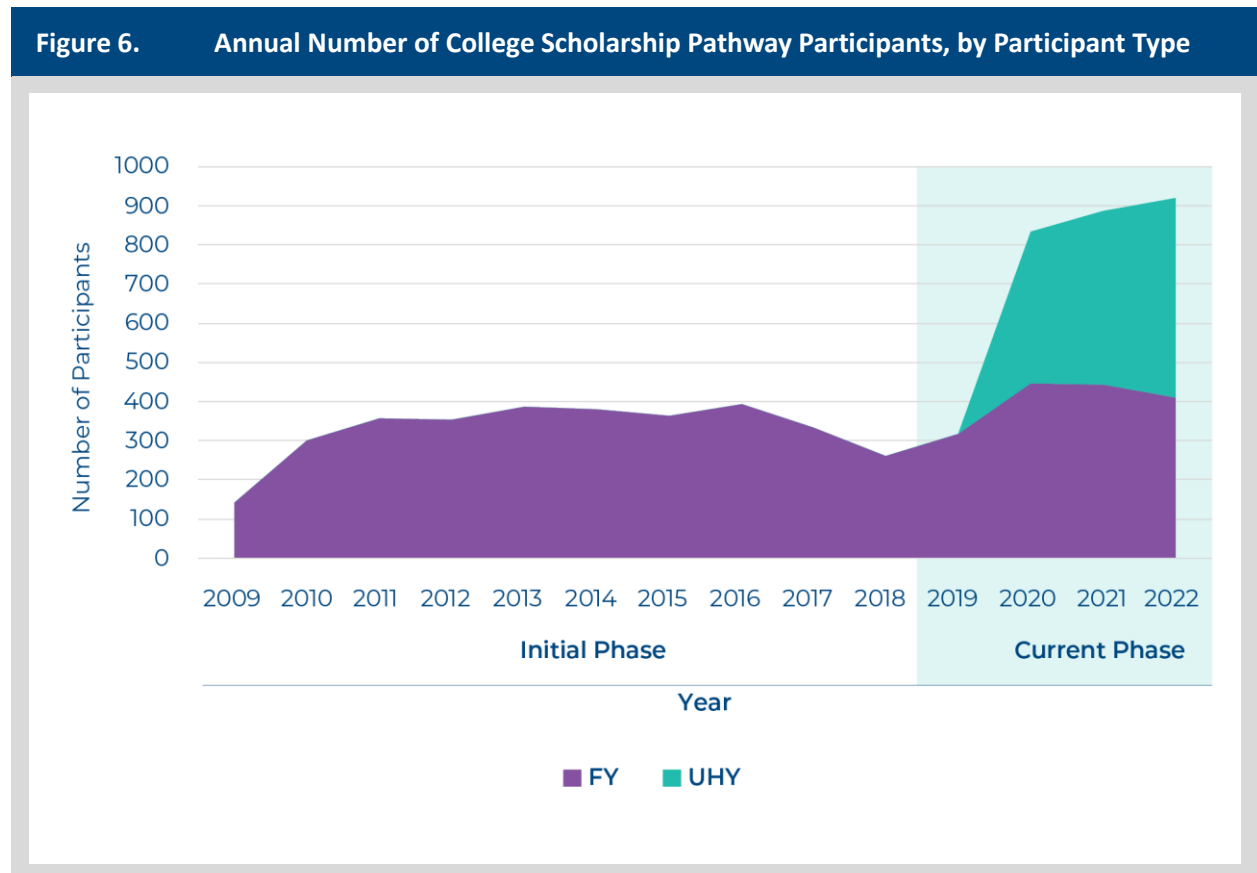
There were notable differences in the participating postsecondary institutions in 2022. In 2022, public community and technical colleges constituted 51 percent of institutions, compared with 69 percent in 2009. For public community and technical colleges, private universities, public comprehensive universities, and public research universities, the demographic composition of the student bodies included a greater proportion of Hispanic students in 2022 (9% to 21%) compared with 2009 (6% to 9%). Public community and technical colleges, private two-year colleges and trade schools, and public comprehensive universities had lower proportions of students who were White in 2022 compared to 2009. Average tuition and fees were also greater in 2022 than in 2009 at public community and technical colleges (\$4,623 in 2022, \$2,904 in 2009) and private universities (\$38,890 in 2022, \$21,992 in 2009). In 2022, one or more Passport students attended a 2-year tribal college that served a majority American Indian or

*“I was kicked out of my house and [became] homeless in Seattle. I was stressed out getting a job and I was like, ‘Everything’s awful, man. This is terrible.’ Until I got connected to the program by a current student. By some miracle, it happened, and I was very quickly connected with people to qualify me as UHY and get my financial aid ready. It’s really great to have that community and a ticket into being able to build a better life for myself. It’s a huge blessing for me.”*

– Young adult who has experienced foster care and/or homelessness

Alaska Native (79%) and had average tuition and fees less than that of public community and technical colleges, at \$3,969.

The number of college pathway participants tended to increase over time and shifted from only being FY participants in the initial phase to being a majority of UHY participants in the current phase (see Figure 6). In the initial phase when eligibility was limited to FY, the annual number of participants ranged from a low of 142 in 2009 to a high of 392 in 2016. In the current phase with eligibility expanded to UHY, the annual number of participants increased to 920 participants in 2022, with more UHY participants than FY participants (510 versus 410).



Source: Washington Student Achievement Council Unit Record Report for the College Scholarship Pathway.

Notes: College pathway participants are individuals with at least one positive College Scholarship Pathway award or at least one positive student support payment. A year for the college pathway is defined as the ending year of the academic year. Individuals who attend multiple institutions in a year are only counted once per year. FY = foster youth; UHY = unaccompanied homeless youth.

There were some changes in the characteristics of college pathway FY participants over time (see Table 1). From 2009 to 2022, the proportions of college pathway FY participants who were White (55% to 43%) and who were Black or African American (20% to 13%) decreased, and the proportion who were Hispanic or Latino increased (from 10% to 25%). The proportion of college pathway FY participants who were female increased from 56 percent to 74 percent. The average age of college pathway FY participants was 18.3 years in 2009 and 20.1 years in 2022. Annual both averages were consistent with the eligibility requirement that college pathway participants be between 18 and 26 years old.



	2009		2022	
	FY	UHY	FY	UHY
<b>Race and ethnicity</b>				
Percent American Indian or Alaska Native	3.6%	N/A	6.3%	3.9%
Percent Asian	3.6%	N/A	4.0%	7.8%
Percent Black or African American	20.4%	N/A	13.1%	14.3%
Percent Hispanic	10.2%	N/A	25.0%	27.7%
Percent Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	N/A	1.0%	1.4%
Percent White	54.7%	N/A	42.9%	39.3%
Percent two or more races	7.3%	N/A	7.6%	5.5%
<b>Gender</b>				
Percent female	55.6%	N/A	74.1%	66.1%
Percent male	44.4%	N/A	25.9%	33.9%
<b>Age</b>				
Average age	18.3	N/A	20.1	19.8

Source: Washington Student Achievement Council Unit Record Report for the College Scholarship Pathway.

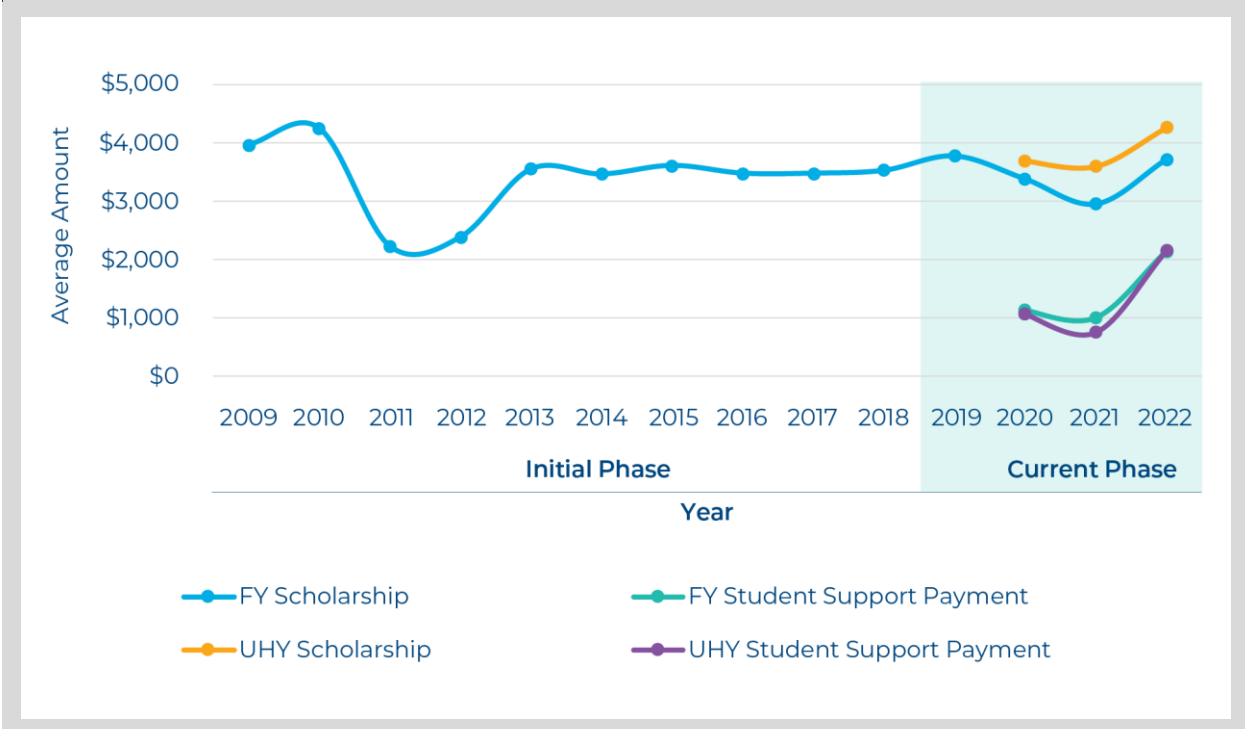
Notes: College pathway participants are individuals with at least one positive College Scholarship Pathway award or at least one positive student support payment. A year for the college pathway is defined as the ending year of the academic year.

Individuals who attend multiple institutions in a year are only counted once per year. FY = foster youth; N/A = not available; UHY = unaccompanied homeless youth.

In 2022, the characteristics of college pathway UHY participants were similar to their FY peers. The most common racial and ethnic backgrounds were White (43% for FY and 39% for college pathway UHY participants) and Hispanic or Latino (25% for college pathway FY participants and 28% for college pathway UHY participants). Most college pathway participants in both groups identified as female, at 74 percent for FY and 66 percent for UHY. The average ages of college pathway participants were similar at 20.1 years for FY participants and 19.8 years for UHY participants.

College pathway scholarship amounts have been largely stable over time. In the initial phase, participants' average annual college pathway scholarships ranged from a low of \$2,231 in 2011 to a high of \$4,241 in 2010 (see Figure 7). In the current phase, the annual averages for FY were still in that range, at \$3,373 in 2020, \$2,946 in 2021, and \$3,706 in 2022. College pathway UHY participants in the current phase had slightly higher scholarship amounts than their FY peers, ranging from \$3,593 in 2021 to \$4,256 in 2022. The current phase also saw the addition of possible student support payments for college pathway participants. In 2022, 18 percent of college pathway FY participants and 13 percent of college pathway UHY participants received a student support payment. The average student support payment ranged from \$765 in 2021 for college pathway UHY participants to \$2,154 for college pathway UHY participants in 2022.

**Figure 7. Average Passport to Careers Financial Aid and Student Support Payment, by Year and Participant Type**



Source: Washington Student Achievement Council Unit Record Report for the College Scholarship Pathway.

Notes: College pathway participants are individuals with at least one positive College Scholarship Pathway award or at least one positive student support payment. A year for the college pathway is defined as the ending year of the academic year.

Individuals who attend multiple institutions in a year are only counted once per year. FY = foster youth; UHY = unaccompanied homeless youth.

Table 2 presents the average lifetime financial aid received by the college pathway FY and UHY participants. The average total college pathway scholarships received were \$7,535 for FY participants and \$6,320 for UHY participants. The total is higher for the FY participants because they have been eligible for the scholarships since 2009, but the UHY participants have only been eligible since 2020. The lifetime student support payments are relatively low, although this is because many of the FY participants did not attend college in the current phase. The college pathway scholarship averages are less than the average lifetime support via Pell Grants and Washington College Grants. These students, however, still have about \$3,000 in federal student loans, indicating that participants still have costs that are not entirely addressed by other sources of financial aid.

	FY	UHY
<b>College pathway total support</b>	\$7,678	\$6,630
<b>College pathway total scholarships</b>	\$7,535	\$6,320
<b>College pathway total student support payments</b>	\$143	\$310
<b>Total Pell Grants</b>	\$9,496	\$12,533
<b>Total Washington College Grants</b>	\$11,025	\$10,396
<b>Total federal student loans</b>	\$3,180	\$3,431
<b>All other aid</b>	\$9,252	\$9,724

Source: Washington Student Achievement Council Unit Record Report for the College Scholarship Pathway.

Notes: College pathway participants are individuals with at least one positive College Scholarship Pathway award or at least one positive student support payment. A year for the college pathway is defined as the ending year of the academic year. Individuals who attend multiple institutions in a year are only counted once per year. FY = foster youth; UHY = unaccompanied homeless youth.

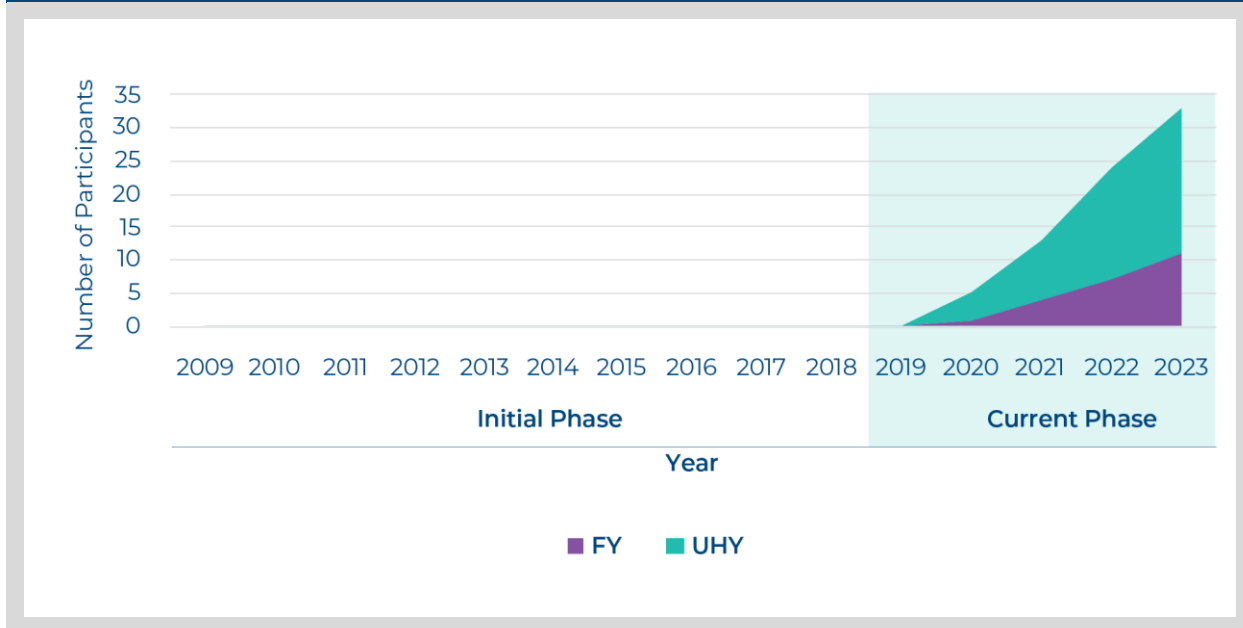
### 2.1.2 Apprenticeship Opportunity Pathway

The apprenticeship pathway provides support to individuals who want to pursue an education and a job simultaneously through registered apprenticeships. Some participants participate in preapprenticeships to prepare them to successfully apply to apprenticeship programs by providing a structured training program specific to an industry. Preapprenticeships are often unpaid or require external organizations to fund individual participants. In registered apprenticeships, apprentices typically earn about half the wage level (plus regular raises) for the selected occupation while being trained by expert craftspeople in the profession. Once apprentices complete an apprenticeship, they will be certified at the journeyman level and receive commensurate pay. Participants may receive financial aid to cover tuition for classes, fees, work clothes, rain gear, boots, and occupation-related tools when participating in eligible preapprenticeship or apprenticeship programs.<sup>11</sup>

The apprenticeship pathway serves fewer participants than the college pathway. Participants are individuals identified by ANEW as either starting a preapprenticeship program or were located in the Washington State Apprenticeship Registration & Tracking system as having an active, suspended, canceled, or completed apprenticeship. Figure 2 shows that 24 participants joined the apprenticeship pathway in 2019–2022. Figure 8 includes the most recent data available for apprentices at the time of the report and shows a total of 33 apprenticeship pathway participants (11 FY, 22 UHY) in 2019–2023.

<sup>11</sup> A more complete program description is available at Washington Student Achievement Council. (n.d.). *Passport to careers guide: About passport to careers*. <https://wsac.wa.gov/passport/about>.

**Figure 8. Annual Number of Apprenticeship Opportunity Pathway Participants, by Participant Type**



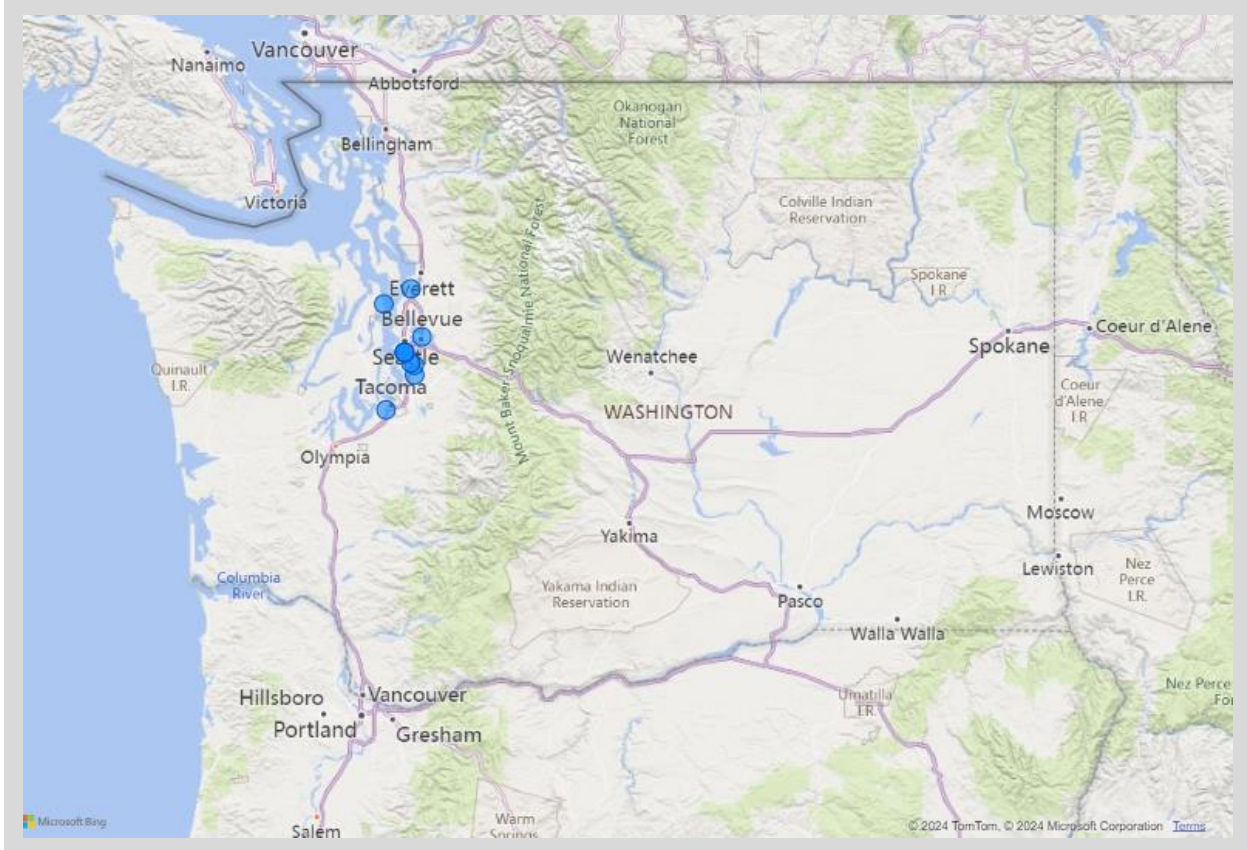
Source: ANEW internal databases and the Washington State Apprenticeship Registration & Tracking system.

Notes: The apprenticeship pathway began in 2019. Apprenticeship pathway participants are individuals who started a preapprenticeship or are in the Washington State Apprenticeship Registration & Tracking system with active, suspended, canceled, or completed apprenticeship. A year for the apprenticeship pathway is defined as the ending year of the fiscal year. FY = foster youth; UHY = unaccompanied homeless youth.

ANEW administrative data contains limited demographic information about each participant. As of May 31, 2023, the average age of the 33 apprenticeship pathway participants was 20.4 years old. The average for the FY participants was 20.0 years old, and the average for the UHY participants was 20.6 years old.

Of the 33 apprenticeship pathway participants in 2019–2023, 13 participants started an apprenticeship based on data in the Washington State Apprenticeship Registration & Tracking system. The apprenticeships were in the bricklaying; heating, ventilation, and air conditioning; ironwork; piledriver/bridge/dock/wharf building; plastering; plumbing; roofing; and sheet metal work occupations. Figure 9 shows that the employer addresses for the apprenticeships are all in the Seattle area in the western part of the state. Note that ANEW’s original contract (2019) proposed two apprenticeship navigators separated by eastern and western regions of the state, but the eastern position was not filled. The updated 2022 contract eliminated the regional position, although it was not clear what prevented the position from being filled (e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic, location, visibility). As of 2023, no apprenticeship pathway participants accessed registered apprenticeships in other parts of Washington State.

**Figure 9. Map of Apprenticeships Opportunity Pathway Employers**



Source: ANEW internal databases and the Washington State Apprenticeship Registration & Tracking system.

ANEW has dedicated resources to identify and recruit these 33 participants into the apprenticeship pathway. Based on ANEW's available quarterly progress reports, the apprenticeship pathway held between 157 and 654 meetings, events, and orientations per year between 2020 and 2023.<sup>12</sup> The meetings were typically with support service agencies, school districts, nonprofits such as Treehouse, and shelters to identify participants, and other meetings with providers, partners, contractors, and employers. ANEW attended and hosted events such as college and career fairs, business expos, and industry conferences and orientations such as an Apprenticeship 101 workshop. The number of attendees at these meetings, events, and orientations ranged from 6,302 people in 2023 to 11,493 people in 2021.

## 2.2 Key Constituents

*In addition to the young adults who experienced foster care and/or unaccompanied homelessness who are at the center of the Passport to Careers program, key constituents included individuals and organizations with expertise in FY and UHY, postsecondary education, and/or workforce training and employment. The PLT is an advisory body that advises WSAC on Passport to Careers policy and practice issues and enhances the program design, implementation, and quality of the Passport to*

<sup>12</sup> WSAC and ANEW were unable to locate one quarterly report in 2020 (April through June), two quarterly reports in 2022 (July through September and October through December), and two quarterly reports in 2023 (July through September and April through June).

*Careers Program. The PLT is a cross-sector team of 20–30 student support practitioners and key constituents representing the regional diversity of Washington State, including the following:*

- Individuals with lived foster care and unaccompanied homeless experience
- Public and private agencies that assist current and former foster care recipients and unaccompanied youth or young adults experiencing homelessness in their transition to adulthood (e.g., [Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families \[DCYF\]](#), [Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction \[OSPI\]](#), [Treehouse Launch Success Program](#), [Supplemental Education Transition Planning \[SETuP\]](#))
- Student support specialists from public and private colleges and universities (e.g., DSS)
- State boards for community and technical colleges (e.g., [Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges \[SBCTC\]](#))
- Workforce training, education, and employment organizations (e.g., [ANEW](#))

PLT members serve a minimum of a 2-year term and participate in one or more work groups dedicated to driving improvements related to program data, infrastructure, and PLT advising structure. PLT members actively participate in regional groups that promote a cross-sector, student-centered approach to regional wraparound service delivery for students from foster care and UHY through collaboration, service coordination, and intervention. The PLT convenes quarterly. PLT members and other key constituents contributed to the design, data collection, and feedback of this report. For example, the 2024 Passport to Careers State Conference on May 14, 2024, provided an opportunity for key constituents to review the draft findings and recommendations of this report.

### 3. Program Implementation

This section provides more detailed implementation findings based on Section 2, organized by Passport to Career pathways (i.e., College Scholarship Pathway and Apprenticeship Opportunity Pathway implementation). Within the college pathway, findings are presented by program components (e.g., scholarships and financial aid, support services). For both pathways, the research team described findings about which implementation strategies work well (best practices) and common barriers to implementation. Findings for both pathways conclude with suggestions based on key constituents’ suggestions to overcome identified barriers plus best practices that align with barriers. Passport serves both FY and UHY, and when applicable, the report highlights differences in how aspects of the program work for each group.

This evaluation involved many of the key constituents in the design, data collection, and feedback for this report. *Throughout the report*, key constituents who participated in data collection are referred to as the following:

- **Passport Staff:** People who implement the program at the college level, such as DSS, financial aid staff, and institutional Passport leaders, or through the apprenticeship pathway, such as institutional Passport leaders and apprenticeship navigators
- **PLT Members:** Members of the PLT
- **Young Adults Who Experienced Foster Care and/or Unaccompanied Homelessness:** Passport participants in focus groups

Multiple data sources informed program implementation fidelity, including extant data document review (e.g., Passport Student Support Survey, ANEW internal databases), staff interviews, and young adult focus groups. A total of 76 participants participated in 39 interview or focus group sessions. See Appendix A for more details about administrative data sources and methods. See Appendix B for more details about the qualitative data methods underlying these findings.

## **3.1 College Scholarship Pathway Implementation**

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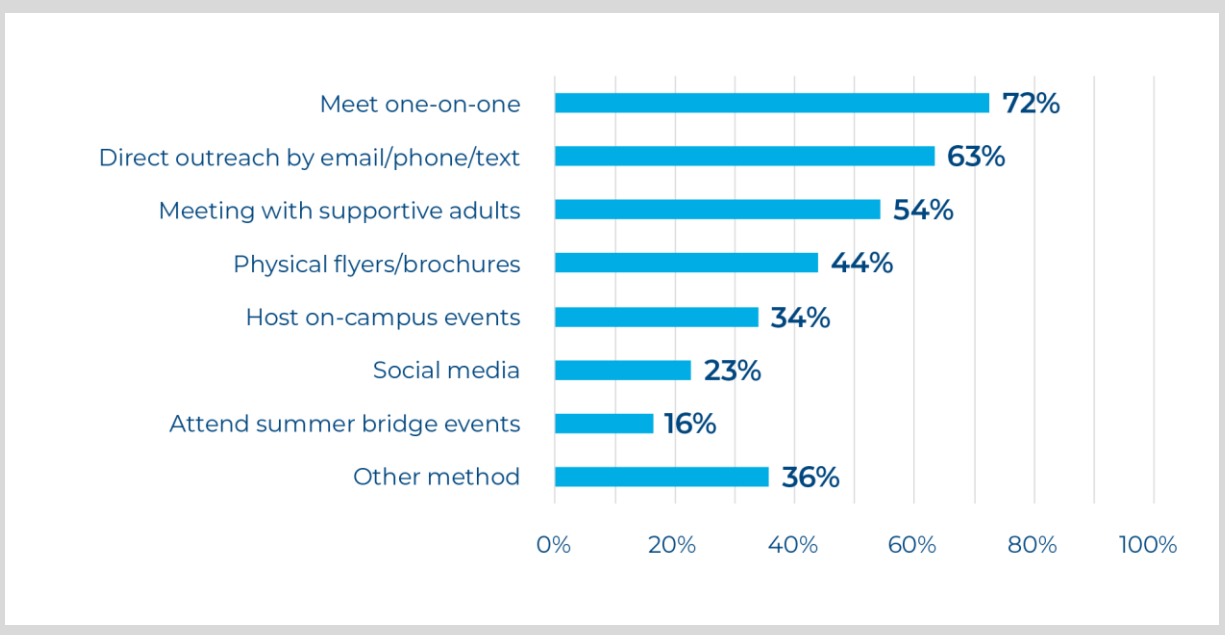
To learn about how the college pathway is implemented, the research team conducted interviews with college staff (30 institutions, 50 Passport staff), 4 interviews with PLT members, and 3 focus groups of Passport students who represented 7 colleges and universities. To supplement interviews and focus groups, the research team analyzed extant data sources including recent Passport Student Support surveys. Passport staff and student experiences from interviews and focus groups frame this section and are woven throughout the report. College pathway implementation findings follow in two sections—Section 3.1.1. focuses on implementing scholarship award elements including eligibility, award calculation, reporting, and satisfactory academic progress (SAP), and Section 3.1.2. focuses on implementing support services.

### **3.1.1 Implementation of Scholarships and Financial Aid**

To frame the implementation of scholarships and financial aid, this section begins with findings from Passport Student Support Survey responses from 41 to 43 postsecondary institutions participating in the college pathway each year from 2020–2023. To identify eligible students, postsecondary institutions use a variety of methods to reach out to prospective students about the college pathway. The most common approaches staff reported to connect to prospective students were direct contact via one-on-one meetings (72%), outreach via email, phone, and text messaging (63%), and meetings with supportive adults (54%). Broader approaches were less likely to be used, such as flyers and brochures (44%), on-campus events (34%), or social media (23%) (see Figure 10). Some of the other methods reported by respondents were coordination with high school partners and other service providers.

Postsecondary institutions reported approaches to discuss the college pathway once students were in the Passport program that were similar to the ones used with prospective students. Most institutions reported that staff conduct outreach to current students via email, phone, or text messaging (83%) and one-on-one meetings (81%). In addition, most respondents reported contacting current students through on-campus partner collaborations (82%) and many reported utilizing off-campus partner collaborations (50%) to discuss program services (see Figure 11). Other methods reported by respondents were learning management systems like Canvas and on-campus events.

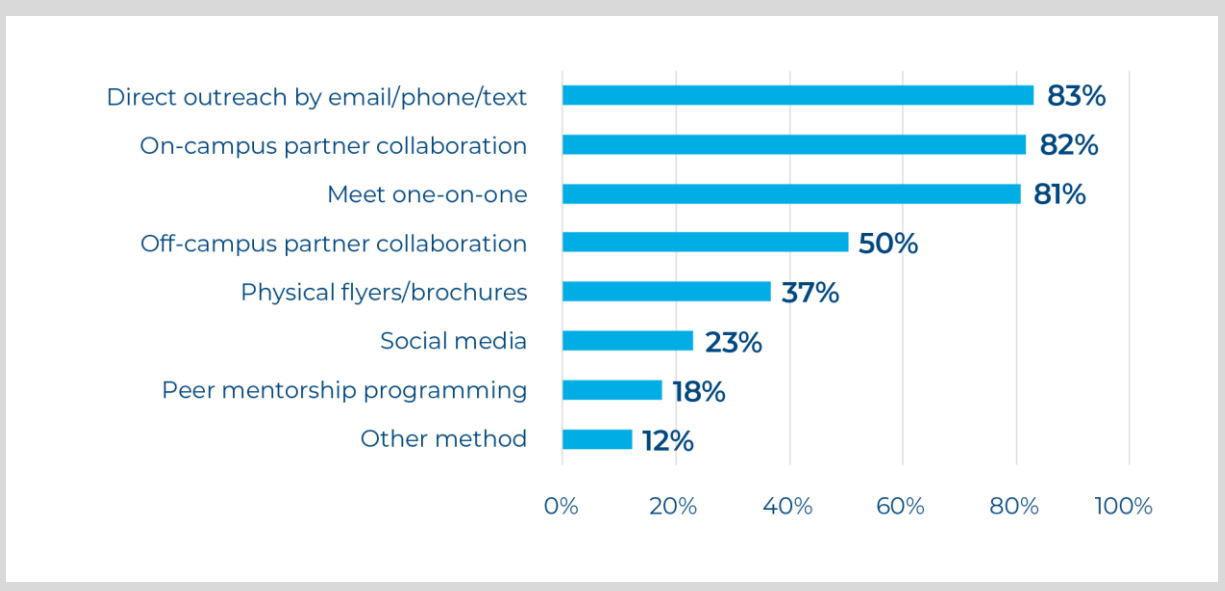
**Figure 10. Institutional Methods to Talk About the College Scholarship Pathway With Prospective Students**



Source: Passport Student Support surveys in 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023.

Notes: The percentages are the averages of the percentages for each year. The number of institutional respondents was 43 in 2020, 41 in 2021, 44 in 2022, and 43 in 2023.

**Figure 11. Institutional Methods to Talk About the College Scholarship Pathway With Current Students**

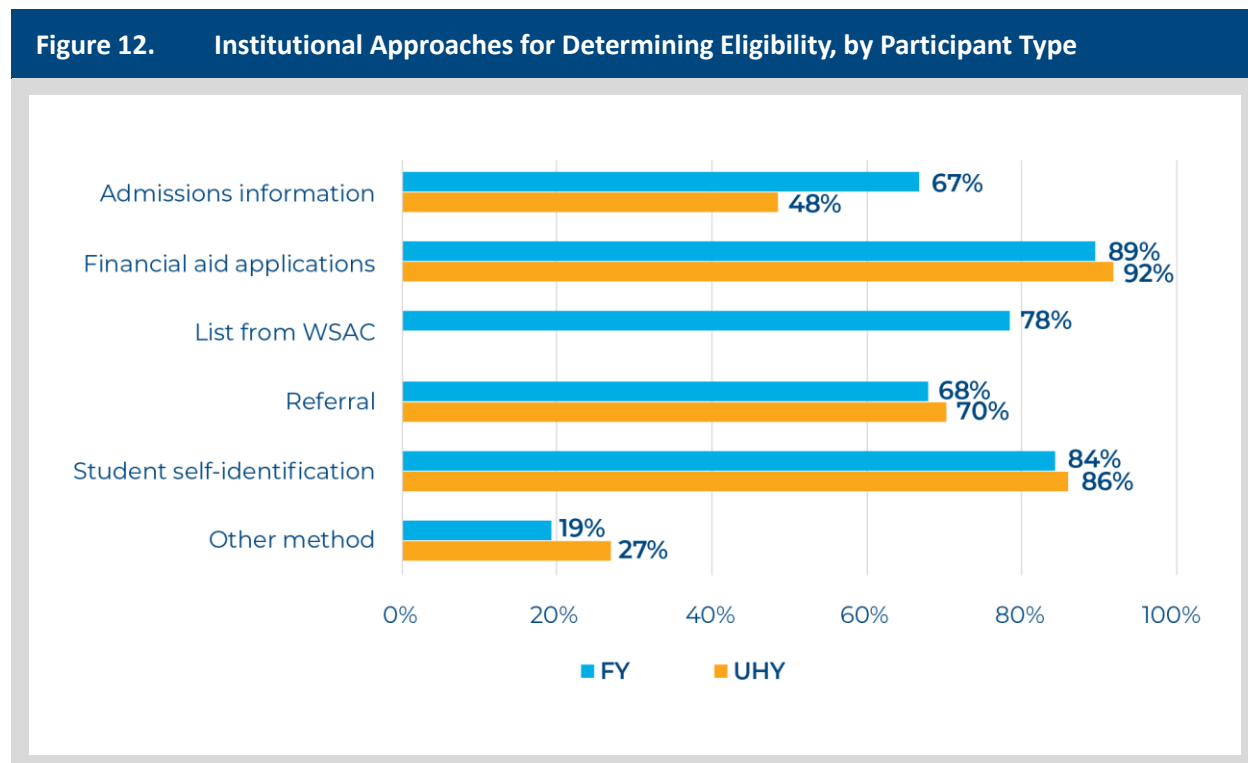


Source: Passport Student Support surveys in 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023.

Notes: The percentages are the averages of the percentages for each year. The number of institutional respondents was 43 in 2020, 41 in 2021, 44 in 2022, and 43 in 2023.



Consistent with the program guide, participating postsecondary institutions used many methods to determine eligibility for the college pathway. To determine eligibility based on FY status, most respondents used financial aid applications (89%), student self-identification (84%), the list from WSAC (78%), referrals (68%), and admissions information (67%). Other methods for verifying FY status included working with kindergarten through grade 12 foster care liaisons, SETuP, and DCYF. To determine eligibility based on UHY status, respondents were most likely to use financial aid applications (92%), student self-identification (86%), and referrals (70%). Less than half of respondents determined eligibility based on admissions information (48%), and respondents were not asked whether they used the WSAC portal for this participant type (see Figure 12). Other methods for verifying UHY status included working with high school liaisons.

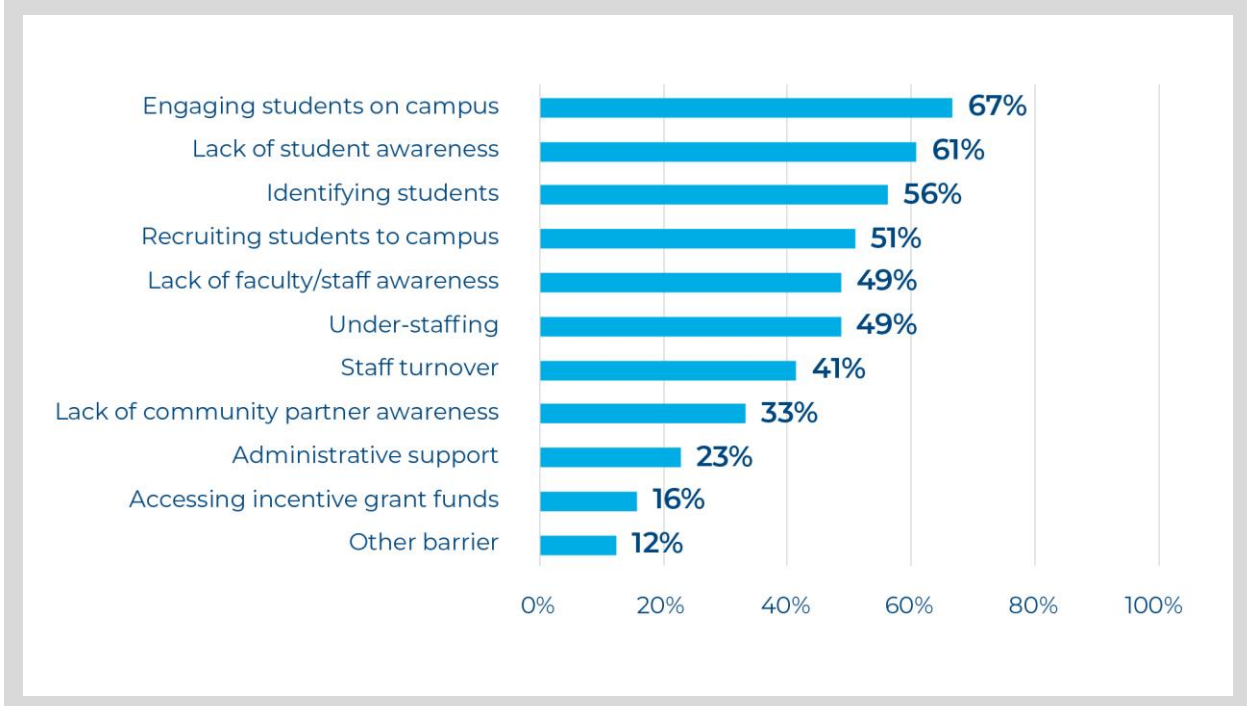


Source: Passport Student Support surveys in 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023.

Notes: The percentages are the averages of the percentages for each year. The number of institutional respondents was 43 in 2020, 41 in 2021, 44 in 2022, and 43 in 2023. The survey instrument did not include “List from WSAC” as a response option for UHY participants.

Postsecondary institutions reported a variety of barriers to the successful implementation of the College Scholarship Pathway. The most common barriers reported were related to student identification and student engagement. Over half of the respondents reported barriers such as difficulty engaging with students (67%), lack of student awareness (61%), difficulty identifying eligible students (56%), and difficulty recruiting students to campus (51%). Less than half of respondents reported barriers related to program staffing; 49 percent reported a lack of staff awareness, 49 percent reported understaffing, and 41 percent reported high staff turnover (see Figure 13). Additional details about these barriers related to scholarships follow. (See barriers related to support services in Section 3.1.2.2.)

**Figure 13. Institutional Implementation Barriers, 2019–2020 Through 2022–2023**



Source: Passport Student Support surveys in 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023.

Notes: The percentages are the averages of the percentages for each year. The number of institutional respondents was 43 in 2020, 41 in 2021, 44 in 2022, and 43 in 2023.

### 3.1.1.1 Best Practices for Implementing Scholarships and Financial Aid

Many staff across institutions described several successful strategies for determining scholarship eligibility, calculating scholarship awards, monitoring students' SAP, and completing WSAC reporting requirements. Student experiences with these program components are woven into staff insights to present a program participant perspective.

**Leverage Partnerships.** Institutions have a variety of methods for determining scholarship eligibility, but many staff reported leveraging partnerships as a key strategy for locating students not captured by the Department of Children, Youth, and Family (DCYF), Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), Washington Application for State Financial Aid or the WSAC portal.<sup>13</sup> To broaden the program's reach, some institutions described sharing information between Passport staff and other on-campus organizations that support similar populations. For example, one institution described a useful on-campus partnership for identifying prospective students: *"We have a program on campus called WISH, which stands for While In School Housing. If [students] meet the age eligibility, [the WISH] advisor usually refers them directly to us so we can determine eligibility for Passport."* Many staff also noted that collaborating with faculty or other departments and organizations is helpful when identifying Passport-eligible students, particularly UHY. One institution recommended setting up the Passport program in an existing support service structure, like TRIO because it makes it easier to integrate. TRIO is a federally funded network of campus

<sup>13</sup> In 2020, financial aid administrators began using the WSAC portal to notify WSAC of a student's Passport eligibility.

services for students who could also be Passport-eligible.<sup>14</sup> Lastly, most DSS staff described a positive relationship with the financial aid office as crucial for identifying eligible students.

**Create a Pipeline.** Many staff stressed the value of keeping connected with local high schools and organizations to create a pipeline of eligible students to receive support while pursuing higher education. A few students shared they were a part of programs in high school such as HEART (Homeless Education and Resource Team), which serves a similar population as Passport, or another program called Running Start that is open to all students in the state. One student shared she reached out to her local community college to inquire about Passport because she saw flyers advertising the program in her high school and the local community. Students across all focus groups were not shy to share how much the Passport program improved their lives, which is why students also emphasized the importance of publicizing the opportunity. As one student noted, bringing awareness to the program through marketing materials directly to staff supporting the population and students is another avenue for UHY and FY to learn higher education is attainable through Passport.

**Submit SAP Appeals.** SAP is required to maintain the Passport scholarship and staff shared strategies for supporting students in meeting the challenge of maintaining SAP eligibility. When students fail to meet SAP and risk losing financial aid, many institutions describe an appeals process or academic performance improvement plan that students can submit to continue receiving financial aid. Most Passport staff described these processes as crucial for supporting students in continuing their education after a difficult semester. Many staff noted keeping connected with students can be challenging (see **Limited Student Responsiveness and Engagement** in Section 3.1.1.2), but one-on-one conversations are most important because staff can be aware of challenges impacting a student's success and intervene with support before the student fails to meet SAP. Many DSS staff shared being unable to view students' grades until the end of the quarter is a primary reason student engagement and outreach are crucial for keeping staff informed. At a few institutions, DSS staff explained that financial aid staff can see more information about a student's academic progress (e.g., GPA) and notify DSS staff to try and contact a student. A few Passport staff shared they can monitor SAP using early warning systems, but that is not a widely available strategy for all campuses. Lastly, a few staff also noted faculty are useful in connecting Passport staff with students who might be struggling academically (e.g., missing class or assignments) early on and help direct them to resources, like tutoring, to get back on track before the quarter ends.

**Establish Trust and Build Rapport.** In staff interviews with the research team, many emphasized the importance of establishing trust and building rapport with students. Several students similarly discussed the role of staff relationships as pivotal in their academic success, with many students noting appreciation of the program staff at their institutions and naming several who were integral to achieving their goals.

Regarding WSAC reporting, staff noted several best practices for satisfying reporting requirements with few issues. Specifically, a few staff emphasized that communication across teams to retrieve accurate numbers, and keeping information in a central, shared location, like a spreadsheet, are common strategies for streamlining the reporting process. The research team spoke to several DSS staff who could not speak about the WSAC reporting requirements because it is maintained by financial aid staff, who were less available to speak to the research team because of competing priorities.

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<sup>14</sup> See the Federal TRIO Programs website at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html> for more information.

## PATH TO COLLEGE

“I would like to see more information passed out. You see those [flyers] ‘Have you been in foster care over the age of 13? You may qualify for free college’ posted in doctor’s offices, schools, random elevators, whatever. So, I got out of high school [and] lots of stuff happened. [Once] I kind of settled down, I was like, ‘I’m gonna reach out to my local community college and, if it’s free, I’ll go’ because that’s where I was at and there was no way I could pay for it. Next term, I was in full time. I had no idea how it got paid, but it’s like, ‘Okay, it’s paid!’”

—Young adult who has experienced foster care and/or homelessness

Many Passport staff mentioned Dawn Cypriano-McAferly, the Assistant Director of the Passport to Careers program, by name as a useful and welcoming resource at WSAC for answering questions. A few Passport staff *also highlighted PLT regional groups as an important offering, emphasizing the value of sharing best practices across campuses.*

### 3.1.1.2 Barriers to Implementing Scholarships and Financial Aid

Many students and staff across institutions described several barriers to program implementation: program visibility, calculating scholarship awards, keeping students engaged and responsive to outreach, and keeping students from feeling discouraged when academic challenges arise.

**Lack of Program Visibility.** Both staff and students raised program visibility as a barrier. Most students were aware of the benefits that the Passport program offered and noted their scholarship support was largely the reason they were able to attend school. However, they also shared that until the program was listed on their financial aid award letter, they were unaware of it. A Passport liaison or school administrator directly recruited a few students, but many of the students had enrolled in their institution before knowing about the Passport program. Students agreed that if the program were more visible, more students would be able to benefit from the financial support that the Passport program provides.

*“There’s a lot of students that have fallen through the cracks because they haven’t filled out their FAFSA. As Passport program mentors, we don’t get notified that a student is in the program unless they are verified through financial aid. So that’s been one challenge for us to try to get more posters up for students.”*

—Passport peer mentor/young adult who has experienced foster care and/or homelessness

**Balancing Unmet Need and Scholarship Awards.** When calculating scholarship awards, a few financial aid staff expressed difficulty trying to balance the cost of attendance and expected family contribution to maximize the unmet need to be addressed by scholarships, grants, or loans. Many staff noted the importance of maximizing Passport scholarship funds to support students' financial aid packages, but unmet need is a burden for scholarship award calculation. One Passport staff shared calculating scholarship awards is especially challenging when a Passport student is identified later in the academic year and has already received other funding sources, like loans or other grants and scholarships.

**Limited Student Responsiveness and Engagement.** All staff acknowledged it is difficult to keep Passport students consistently engaged with the program and responsive to staff outreach. Many staff observed that external factors, namely work schedules, are a barrier for students to being on campus regularly, and several students mentioned struggling to balance work and school. A few students mentioned they do not have to work as much now that they have Passport funding, but it is not enough to completely forego work. Students mentioned a "one-stop shop" to access support services or socialize with peers on campus would make it easier for students who cannot come to campus regularly.

**Unlearning Negative Stereotypes.** A few staff observed that many students are discouraged when they fail to meet SAP and internalize that one misstep to mean they are unfit for college. These staff reminded students that a challenging quarter is not the end, and the Passport program has resources available to ensure their success. One staff person observed that challenges to meet SAP often appear in the first or second quarter and expressed that this population of students may need three or four quarters to feel stable with a full course load. However, staff cannot award scholarship funding for multiple quarters if students are not passing classes or taking enough credits. Many staff reported that the appeals system helps support students getting back on track. Passport staff expressed that it is challenging to help students reframe their mindsets about their academic capabilities—students may not realize they have a second chance to improve their academic standing and are using failure to confirm negative stereotypes they hold about themselves. Individualized Passport staff support, combined with an appeals system, encourages students to learn how to rebound after a tough quarter or two.

*"Oftentimes, a student might be living with a family member which lowers their cost of attendance, which lowers the amount of free money that can come to [them]. So out of all our [students] every year, there will be several with no room for any more money. So that's a barrier, that unmet need is gone, and we can't give them any money at that point. And so the change in financial aid through this coming year is that emergency money cannot be counted against financial aid."*

—Passport staff

*"I think there's a lot of emotional baggage that comes from the mindset [Passport students] have about going into college. Getting that confirmation of failing to meet SAP is like, 'Oh, well, you know, this proves that I can't do it.' I think a lot of students don't see what's available to them, and so it's sitting down with a student and really going over the options. The biggest barrier is changing the lens through which they're looking at school."*

—Passport staff

### 3.1.1.3 Suggestions for Improving Scholarships and Financial Aid

Students and staff proposed suggestions to the research team for improving the program based on their experience as a participant and expertise as program implementers. The research team compiled prevalent suggestions shared by numerous staff or students and unique strategies a few institutions incorporated that might be beneficial to implement on other campuses.

**Suggestion 1. Change Eligibility Requirements.** Many Passport staff expressed opinions about scholarship eligibility, particularly the age requirement, and minimum credits required to receive funding. Several Passport staff strongly suggested removing the age restriction, citing external factors as a barrier for the Passport population starting higher education at an earlier age.<sup>15</sup> Many other Passport staff also commented on the minimum credit requirement as a challenge for students to maintain a manageable course load. Similar to many Passport staff's concerns with the age requirement, staff observations indicated that some students, particularly those struggling with coursework or balancing work and school, might only be able to take one course in a semester. One Passport staff person described the challenge of credit requirements for students at their institution and proposed a suggestion for how to ensure students with fewer credit hours can still receive the scholarship award:

“A program change we would like to see considered is students can't receive the scholarship when they have less than 6 credit hours. Sometimes a student needs to take one class because they are not meeting satisfactory academic progress and it is all they can handle to continue, but it's hard with less financial support. Because they're only taking one class, which is five credit hours at our institution, they're one credit hour short of getting this funding that makes the difference in their success. So, you know, even if it was like the scholarship is pro-rated based on credit hours or something like that.”

—Passport staff

**Suggestion 2. Bolster UHY Identification Methods.** Staff at a couple of institutions described using an intake form that has a checkbox to indicate whether a student is FY or UHY. If selected, the form is sent to the Passport staff on campus to identify whether the student is Passport-eligible. Similarly, many staff described an independent student status form that FY and UHY students can complete, which financial aid staff can use for the student's FAFSA application. Some staff reported leveraging a student's independent status on the FAFSA as a means for determining whether a student might be Passport-eligible. This suggestion aligns with the Postsecondary Basic Needs Act, Washington's first state-level policy on a support infrastructure for students' basic needs. Public and some private campuses' basic needs-related supports for all students, including Passport participants have been bolstered by recent legislation (e.g., Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness grant program, Students Emergency Assistance Grant programs in community and technical colleges, Postsecondary Basic Needs Act navigation, Basic Food Employment & Training).

**Suggestion 3. Develop Local Resource Repository.** A few students suggested it would be helpful to publish a website or newsletter that is regularly updated to include program information, upcoming events, and available resources. For example, one student noted the potential value of an online repository of program information to keep students current and feeling connected to campus: *“Something online that has all of the resources we get emails about or discuss in person might be helpful for students who maybe couldn't go on to campus or reach out as often.”* Passport students often need to balance competing priorities, such as family and work schedules, which impacts their ability to focus on school and availability to visit campus. This suggestion aligns with staff who also recognized the need to identify alternative forms of communication and reported that student responsiveness to outreach is low. Similarly, a few staff expressed that an online repository of WSAC resources for staff at participating institutions would be another useful source for answering questions.

**Suggestion 4. Share Data.** A unique Passport staff perspective expressed interest in receiving a summary report of WSAC data to get a sense of program implementation across the state. This

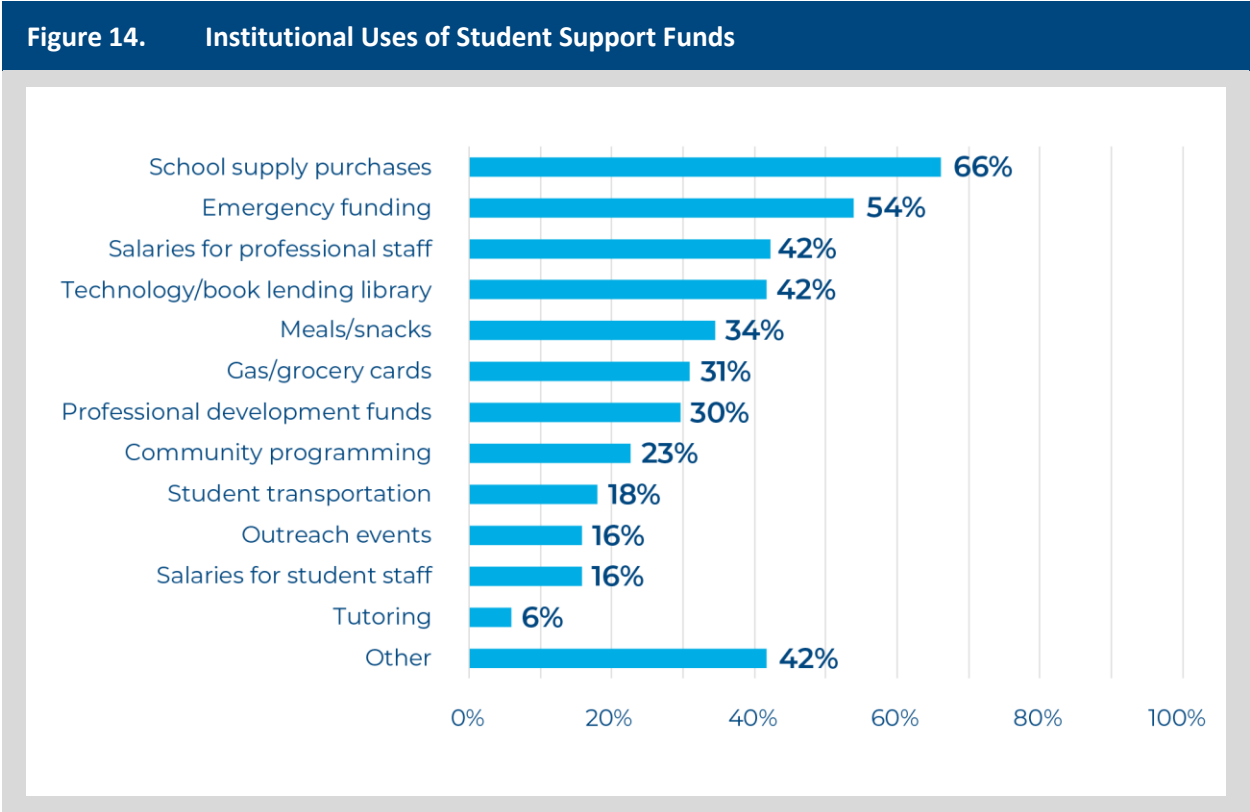
<sup>15</sup> [Senate Bill 5904](#) was passed in March 2024 to remove the upper age limit for Passport (26 years) to align the college pathway's eligibility time frame with the Pell Grant (6 years or 150% of program length).

Passport staff person imagined the report data would be useful to streamline implementation and motivate program change. A few Passport staff expressed connecting with other institutions through regional conferences as a meaningful strategy and sharing WSAC data with staff can encourage transparency and serve as an additional way for campuses to keep connected and collaborate.

### 3.1.2 Implementation of Student Support Services

In addition to scholarships, the college pathway offers participants access to student support funds, formerly called incentive grants. These funds are designed to address education-related student needs that are not met through financial aid packages such as student programs; enrollment, academic, personal, financial, and career services; school supplies; meals and snacks; housing deposits; and medical bills.<sup>16</sup> They can be provided as direct student support payments to students or as services provided by postsecondary institutions.

In 2020–2023, the most common uses of student support funds were to purchase school supplies (66%) and to pay for emergencies (54%). Other uses of the funds included to pay for salaries for professional staff (42%), libraries (42%), meals and snacks (34%), and gas and grocery cards (31%). Some of the other reported uses were to pay for tuition, career counseling tools, and housing. Not all participating institutions used student support funds, and many institutions that did use the funds reported multiple ways of using them (see Figure 14).



Source: Passport Student Support surveys in 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023.

Notes: The percentages are the averages of the percentages for each year. The number of institutional respondents was 43 in 2020, 41 in 2021, 44 in 2022, and 43 in 2023.

<sup>16</sup> Washington Student Achievement Council. (2022). *Passport to College Scholarship program manual: 2022-23*. [https://wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-23\\_PassportManual\\_Final.pdf](https://wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-23_PassportManual_Final.pdf)

### 3.1.2.1 Best Practices for Implementing Support Services

DSS, PLT members, and students shared their experiences about the importance of developing trusting relationships and personalized communication at their institutions through one-to-one connections. These interactions provided space for Passport students to share the challenges they were experiencing on and off campus while staff were able to identify needed resources while learning more about their students' needs. Passport staff reported prevalent strategies including building relationships with students with one-to-one communication. Passport staff connected both relationships and communication with being able to meet students' individual needs. Many staff reported using emergency funds and service referrals.

**Emergency Funds.** Many Passport staff shared the importance of using emergency grant funds to meet students' acute needs. When students received emergency funds to meet their needs related to housing, childcare, and transportation they were more able to attend classes and meet their academic requirements. Many staff emphasized that UHY, who may not have stable housing before enrolling or after matriculating in the institution, were more likely to use emergency funds for housing application fees, deposits for housing, or monthly rental costs.

**Connecting With Services Beyond Passport.** Like DSS, PLT participants discussed connecting students with needed services across the institution as a successful strategy for implementing support services. Many PLT members had historical connections with additional departments at their institutions or were knowledgeable of other scholarship programming and support services that could assist high school students before they enrolled in college. Connecting them with these services before college enrollment helped students understand what services they would need once they began taking college courses or connected students with points of contact early to answer much-needed questions.

*“Once you’ve got them in there and they like you and you’re like ‘ok, we’re cool’. Then they’ll come to you with other things. And so we meet with students from anywhere from like budgeting and creating a budget all the way to, you know, you’re getting evicted tomorrow and we need to come up with a game plan and use some emergency funds to like get you in a hotel’.”*

—Passport staff

**One-to-One Communication.** In addition to emergency funds, most Passport staff cited one-to-one communication with students as a successful strategy to implement student support services. Emailing Passport students to inform them about funding opportunities or events that addressed their specific needs or directing them to resources in a one-to-one meeting served as an opportunity for staff to get to know the students they served. Staff also noted that the one-to-one often serves as a precursor to addressing students' immediate needs because this meeting was often the first time a student could share a challenge they were experiencing and needed emergency funds to address. Staff noted that students often experience challenges that may remain unresolved until a Passport staff can provide funding or alternative resources.



PLT members also discussed that reaching out to students was a successful strategy for implementing support services. Passport staff have mixed feelings about email as an effective strategy, but one DSS said: *“Even if we’re not getting a response, [check ins] are important because when I do occasionally get a response, it’s clear that students appreciate the idea that somebody is paying attention and is interested in how they’re doing.”* PLT members used multiple methods of contacting high school and college students such as email, text, or calling them to check in and direct them to needed services. PLT members either contacted students directly or connected students with a DSS member to address questions or assist with accessing resources.

*“I call or text or email pretty regularly with them. And we’ve done the FAFSA together. And we’ve done Passport together. And we’ve done an [Education and Training Voucher Program] ETV together. Usually because it’s confusing for them, [we] set up their email and their student accounts online. And we have done all the paperwork together. The participants and I, we work really closely together.”*

—PLT

**Trusting Relationships.** Across all student focus groups, young adults described trusting relationships with adults and named staff members whom they can directly email or call if they have questions. They recognized staff members who have assisted them with understanding their financial aid and scholarship awards and staff who have directed them to additional departments when there were questions that were outside of the scope of the Passport program. The identified staff were mostly DSS or financial aid staff connected to students’ academic institutions. In addition, students identified individuals who served as institutional liaisons before they were enrolled at their current postsecondary institution. These liaisons may have been social workers or staff at 2-year institutions students attended before applying to their current institution.

### 3.1.2.2 Barriers to Implementing Support Services

Staff and students noted several barriers to the successful implementation of support services. The most prevalent barriers noted in staff interviews and focus groups included insufficient institutional and staff capacity, low student engagement, and lack of program visibility with the latter deeply impacting student awareness and attendance of Passport programming and events.

**Limited Institutional Capacity.** Many Passport staff noted that institutional capacity was a barrier to implementing support services. Although this barrier was prevalent across most staff interviews, institutional capacity was consistently a barrier for smaller public institutions. Staff at 2-year institutions cited smaller enrollment, smaller budgets, and fewer staff than larger institutions, which impacted the support services available, such as campus housing. While a few 4-year institutions mentioned campus housing as a strategy that worked to support Passport students, Passport staff at 2-year public institutions cited the lack of campus housing and limited funding available to meet student housing needs in market-rate rentals that reflect the rising cost of living across Washington State. While this impacts all students at these institutions, many Passport staff highlighted that UHY disproportionately struggled with stable housing while they attended their academic institutions.

**Balancing Multiple Roles.** Passport staff, especially DSS, reported maintaining other institutional support roles. This often limits the capacity of Passport staff to fulfill all the requirements of the Passport-designated support role. While multiple roles or “wearing many hats” may be an advantage in terms of familiarity with the other scholarship programs or resources such as food pantries and clothing closets, staff expressed a desire for full-time DSS. Staff shared that Passport students often need more one-on-one care and additional resources than the traditional student, but staff feel they are unable to dedicate the amount of time necessary to support Passport students while managing multiple roles.

*“There’s just so many things that I don’t have capacity to do with all the other responsibilities I have in addition to Passport. Maybe, if it was easier for funding to go specifically towards staff salary and benefits, I think that could really help with increasing, more student engagement and better quality support for them.”*

—Passport staff

Like Passport staff reported balancing multiple roles, Passport students described balancing their commitments as a student and Passport participant with roles such as being a parent or employee as a barrier. Passport staff across institutions also described student engagement as a barrier. Staff shared that it was often difficult to communicate with students because students may not frequently check school email accounts with messages about events or support services. Staff realized that email was not always the best way to communicate with students because students were also overwhelmed with other emails from the institution. While some Passport staff reported successfully using text messages, other staff reported that texting students was not allowed at their institution. Even when students do receive communications, common reasons Passport staff cited for lack of student engagement in activities was that students have busy schedules with part-time jobs and full class loads, or childcare hours that do not allow for students to attend events outside of class time.

*“I think the biggest thing is when and where. A lot of the students, especially Passport students, they’re already working quite a few hours either on or off campus to try to be able to pay for life stuff. It’s not as if this scholarship alone is going to be adequate for most of them to cover all their expenses. I think that was the hardest thing. It’s like, ‘Oh, thanks so much for this invitation. But I don’t have any time between classes and my job to be able to do anything extra’.”*

—Passport staff

**Miscommunication.** PLT members mentioned additional communication barriers; program materials and program navigation were not clear or easily accessible to students. Many touched on not having a central website or web page to direct students to access information on what support services are available or what additional resources can be provided while they are enrolled at the institution. Along with unclear programming materials, PLT members also noted that program knowledge was a barrier to implementing support services. Students may not know that they qualify for the program because program materials are not easily accessible. Students experiencing homelessness may also not know they qualify for the program because the Passport to College pathway is not promoted in the college materials.

*“It’s interesting hearing that there’s more of the community-based thing that I’m kind of hearing from everyone else. I utilize the financial aspect of it to pay for my tuition and everything. Other than that, there’s nothing that I know of that’s available.”*

— Young adult who has experienced foster care and/or homelessness

Students were largely unaware of the specific services that the Passport program provided on their campuses. Across focus groups, students discussed their participation in events that umbrella

scholarship programs on their campus provided but were unaware of Passport-specific opportunities. When in need of services, students shared that they were aware that they could contact the Passport DSS at their institution for assistance, but they were not acutely aware of which support services were available to them. Many students were unaware of the support services that the Passport program provided and relied on their communication with the DSS to address any immediate concerns.

### 3.1.2.3 Suggestions for Improving Support Services

Suggestions for improving support service implementation directly connect to identified barriers. Having full-time dedicated Passport staff, additional funding for support services, and fresh ideas for community building would improve Passport support. (Note that numbering continues from the previous suggestions linked to scholarships and financial aid.)

**Suggestion 5. Fund Full-Time, Dedicated Staff.** Both Passport staff and PLT participants noted the importance of having a full-time DSS person on each campus whose role is solely dedicated to the Passport program. Although some institutions have one or more full-time DSS, other institutions with fewer Passport students may have staff who work part time on program. Many Passport staff mentioned that they have multiple roles. In some cases, working across programs or departments enabled staff to weave together resources; in other cases, staff shared that multiple roles hindered their ability to provide individualized attention to the students in the program. Staff also noted that their workload does not allow for more individualized care to Passport students who may need additional services or face challenges unique to their unhoused or foster care experiences. A few students recognized that, in some cases, staff were stretched thin and unable to devote their total attention to Passport students. A few students expressed the desire for a dedicated full-time Passport staff member who can support them, particularly with tasks such as completing financial aid paperwork, which often uses language that can be difficult to understand. The unique needs of FY and UHY necessitate staff with trauma-informed expertise. Thus, a qualified full-time person whose responsibilities were solely dedicated to Passport programming would benefit the program and the students.

*“As a role, it’s kind of been more picked up and taken on in addition to someone’s regular role. What I’m trying to do is create more organizational structure around it to where we have not just a designated support staff, but actually designated person/role that would oversee and coordinate that work.”*

—Passport staff

**Suggestion 6. Fund to Meet Needs.** Both Passport staff and PLT participants suggested additional funding to implement support services. This suggestion was especially evident in 2-year institutions where Passport staff noted the limitations of capacity. A Passport staff said: *“Being from financial aid, I’ll always take more money. I can’t do my job if I don’t say money doesn’t solve everything, but it definitely makes things easier. And especially fully funding Passport so that it’s not a question about summer. It’s not a question about how many [Passport students] we have. I anticipate with the better FAFSA we will have more in the unaccompanied homeless youth camp.”* Passport staff noted that the current scholarship amount is limited for students who need to cover additional financial responsibilities like housing, food, and medical care. This often leads students to take on additional part-time jobs, which impacts the time they can commit to their classes. Staff also noted that additional funding would allow institutions to provide additional resources for Passport students such as counseling or connect them with

*“The community aspect of it is the piece that is really missing. And I think if students had more money and they had to grind less to survive, that they might be able to engage in community more.”*

—Passport staff

external mental health services. An increase in funding would also allow institutions to hire a full-time person designated to the Passport program and alleviate the workloads of current staff who are stretched across departments and programs. Finally, additional loans would benefit Passport students who are not eligible for federal loans and struggle to stretch their Passport award.

**Suggestion 7. Continuously Improve Communication Between Participants and Program Staff.**

Findings showed that one-to-one communication was an effective strategy to reach Passport participants, and program staff expressed the need to communicate individually with students. Institutions may consider using emerging technologies like OtterBot to text students. OtterBot enables institutions to text high school students and their families with reminders about financial aid applications and provides access to assistance any time of day or night. (See the WSAC OtterBot site for more information.) Institutions could use multimodal communication, segmenting program-wide updates or general outreach for websites, social media, and blogs, and reserve one-to-one modes of communication such as text and email for targeted, personalized outreach.

**Suggestion 8. Foster a Sense of Community.** In addition to financial resources, a sense of community is important. Passport staff shared that many students are isolated from other students and campus resources for several reasons. The physical location of the campus may not be easily accessible because it is in a rural area, away from city resources. Additionally, students may only be able to access affordable housing that is located further away from their campus. These challenges often contribute to students not being able to develop a sense of community on campus. Throughout interviews, staff suggested that an intentional focus on community development would benefit students. Community building would provide more visibility to the Passport program, students be more knowledgeable of program resources, and students' mental health would benefit from making connections with other students. Several institutions have worked to create Passport student mentors who can reach out to students and advocate for their needs. However, many staff suggest a more dedicated focus on continued community building that includes events, accessible space, and resource sharing would help alleviate many of the challenges students face across campuses.

## 3.2 Apprenticeship Opportunity Pathway Implementation

### WINDING ROAD TO APPRENTICESHIP

One young woman landed in Passport to Careers after a preapprenticeship called Youth Build. Interested in hair design, she was accepted into a registered apprenticeship program. She came to a dead end because no journey level stylist had one-to-one availability. Passport staff searched the map of salons on the apprenticeship website and added LinkedIn. They expanded job titles to include front desk staff so that this go-getter with a family to support had paid work related to her field of interest. It took 9 months, but when Passport staff received a call about an immediate opening at a salon, they assured the employer that the apprentice had reliable transportation—a support they could provide—so she could start right away.

As described in Section 2.1.2, the apprenticeship pathway provides Passport-eligible young adults with employment and training simultaneously. To learn about how the apprenticeship pathway is implemented, the research team conducted one interview with ANEW staff and one focus group with apprentices, reviewed quarterly reports to WSAC, and analyzed data from extant data (i.e., ANEW's internal database and the Apprenticeship Registration & Tracking database, <https://secure.lni.wa.gov/arts-public/#/program-searchfor>). The following section draws on these sources, starting with describing the process of becoming an apprentice. Next, the report details the

best practices and barriers to implementing the apprenticeship pathway. This section concludes with suggestions to improve the apprenticeship pathway.

### 3.2.1 Becoming an Apprentice

The apprenticeship pathway has many twists and turns, starting with how young adults find their way to an apprenticeship. Or, more accurately, how Passport staff identify eligible Passport participants who are interested in apprenticeships. ANEW focuses on activities that help to identify and prepare eligible Passport participants so they can begin charting their path into a registered apprenticeship.

**Identifying Eligible Participants.** Potential Passport participants may learn about the apprenticeship pathway through the college program. Young adults may connect through college staff, peers, or outreach activities. One participant shared that he first learned about Passport as a college student. When he decided college was not right for him and withdrew, he was able to take advantage of ANEW's 12-week Preapprenticeship Construction Education (PACE) when he was laid off from his job. At the time of the focus group, the participant had completed PACE and had two interviews with an employer for a registered apprenticeship program. He was working construction while waiting to hear if he would be accepted.

**Navigating an Uncharted Path.** Once identified, ANEW helps young adults navigate among the 191 registered programs reported by Passport staff in a focus group. Each program has unique requirements and timelines, so while there is no prescribed pathway, young adults generally complete six steps described by Passport staff:

1. Contact ANEW through email, text, or in-person outreach
2. Complete eligibility form
3. Complete career exploration call
4. Complete individualized employment plan
5. Apply for preapprenticeship and/or apprenticeship
6. Apprenticeship acceptance (eligible until age 26 or apprenticeship program completion)

**Emphasis on Outreach.** As evidenced by ANEW's quarterly reports to WSAC, much of their efforts occur before step 1 with outreach activities. Between steps 2 and 3, ANEW confirms Passport eligibility. After participants complete step 3 (career exploration), and Passport staff confirm alignment between career interests and apprenticeships, participants complete step 4. The individualized employment plan (step 4) includes concrete goals and barriers. For steps 5 and 6, participants may need to apply for and complete a preapprenticeship to qualify for an apprenticeship. After step 6 (acceptance into a registered apprenticeship program), Passport staff provide participants support during apprenticeships that may include purchasing equipment and supplies or meeting transportation needs. Passport staff estimated that apprenticeships take 2–5 years to complete, and they continue to support Passport participants until age 26 or apprenticeship program completion, whichever comes first.

## FAST TRACK TO APPRENTICESHIP

One brilliant young man, as described by Passport staff, took an accelerated course in high school and was identified through the [McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act](#) (Title IX, Part A of ESSA). Because he finished in the top 2 in the course, he gained direct entry into the sheet metal union. He received support that included first month's rent and gas cards, so when he started the apprenticeship but had not yet received a paycheck, he had some stability to focus on a smooth start.

### 3.2.2 Best Practices for Implementing the Apprenticeship Pathway

Passport staff and participants noted several strategies that worked well including systematically collecting barriers related to career goals to be able to align support services and preapprenticeship options. This made it easier to better prepare participants to successfully gain access to registered apprenticeship programs.

**Aligning Needs and Supports.** Passport staff described an important step for participants; they complete an individualized employment plan with staff that includes their goals, steps to achieving goals (e.g., specific skills or experiences, preapprenticeship programs, registered apprenticeship programs), and barriers. Passport staff described how they match supports (e.g., drivers' education

*“Especially in the construction industry, you need reliable transportation. And so with that, you need a [drivers’] license.”*

*—Passport staff*

course and license fees, gas cards, car repairs, rental assistance) to individuals' barriers so that they can achieve their career goals. Passport staff work with participants during preapprenticeships, when applying to apprenticeships, and during apprenticeships, providing support such as purchasing equipment and supplies, or meeting transportation needs. One apprentice reported receiving boots, rain gear, coveralls, and several valuable tools needed for car repair—all part of his mechanic's program and needed to keep his car going for the long drive to his work site.

**Preparation Through Preapprenticeships.** Passport staff shared the types of formal and informal preparation for preapprenticeships they provide, which include skill development, resume and application support, and interview practice. Formal preparation includes preapprenticeship programs. ANEW provides some preapprenticeship programs (e.g., PACE) and refers participants to other programs. ANEW offers a summer PACE session in conjunction with Running Start that funds youth participants ages 16–24. Passport staff reported that most Passport participants go through one of their preapprenticeship programs.

### 3.2.3 Barriers to Implementing the Apprenticeship Pathway

Passport staff and participants noted barriers such as multiple timelines for programs, lack of timely program information, staff turnover, and a lack of clarity about program offerings.

**Untimeliness and Untimely Information.** First, preapprenticeship and apprenticeship programs have different start and end dates that do not follow a regular term schedule common for the college pathway. Application deadlines for the 191 registered apprenticeships may not align with the completion of preapprenticeships. Both Passport staff and participants described searching for apprenticeship deadlines and contact information on the [Washington State Department of Labor and Industries](#) website as tedious; information was not always up to date, which has resulted in potential apprentices missing crucial information or even application deadlines. The timeline for apprentices also included the wait time between applying, being accepted, and starting the apprenticeship, which varies. Finally, the timeline for apprenticeship completion depends on

workforce demand, which may limit the opportunity to complete required hours. Unlike college course credits that students select each term, Passport staff reported that apprentices may have 20 hours of work one week, 80 the next, and 0 another week.

**Effects of Staff Turnover on Case Management.** One Passport participant described the in-between the preapprenticeship and then not being an apprentice yet, which is not usually very fast. This person chose an industry that takes a long time, but they described that even if they were interested in carpentry, it could take weeks or months to get in. During this time, staff turnover presented additional difficulties with case management. The apprentice was unsure if the new staff person read the case notes or if they were not considered “in the program” and eligible for support services requested (i.e., paying a phone bill). A few participants expressed frustration about the lack of clarity of who is eligible, when, and for which support.

*“I feel like there’s a lot of little barriers, little barriers that at the end of the day somebody might not get very far, because it’s tiring on top of, you know, handling life, which is everybody’s prone to that, but especially people who are in these situations eligible for this program.”*

—Young adult who has experienced foster care and/or homelessness

**Ineffective Outreach to Identify Eligible and Interested Apprentices.** Another barrier related to time is the proportion of time and resources ANEW spends on the beginning of the pipeline (e.g., outreach). Traditionally, outreach has included locations where potential participants meet some, but not all Passport criteria. For example, shelters that serve 18–24-year-olds and high schools where students may be younger than 18 or not have completed high school yet.

**Unclear Understanding About Available Supports.** Participants were not always clear about which support services were available and when. Transportation is key for this statewide apprenticeship program, often with early morning start times and shifting construction sites. One participant described requesting a gas card only to be told they had run out. Plus, Passport staff described support service limits and approvals. For example, housing rental assistance can be offered once a year, and car repair assistance can be offered twice a year. Childcare is a recurring need and sometimes a limiting factor (e.g., the childcare center closes on certain days when the participant is expected to be in preapprenticeship program or apprenticeship work site).

*“There’s a number of services allowed per year. There’s a per max per client. Then there’s documentation that’s required because we don’t give like financial aid gives a check directly to a student. We never give money directly to a participant.”*

—Passport staff

### 3.2.4 Suggestions for Improving the Apprenticeship Pathway

This section concludes with suggestions based on key constituents’ ideas to overcome identified barriers and highlights related best practices. Suggestions to improve the apprenticeship pathway include creating more streamlined guidance, reducing or better managing staff turnover, and improving systems for tracking participant progress and outcomes. (Note that numbering continues from the previous suggestions linked to the college pathway.)

**Suggestion 9. Chart the Path With a Manual.** Creating a step-by-step manual (more detailed than the general six steps) could start with the most popular apprenticeships (e.g., cement mason or laborer apprenticeships). Guiding participants through detailed timelines for acquiring skills, completing preapprenticeships, applying, and getting accepted to apprenticeships would help young adults plan for the long road. Including stories of successful apprentices (both Passport and non-Passport) plus contact information for potential journey-level mentors would add value to the manual, according to Passport participants. Because offerings may change each year, ANEW may consider using techniques such as web scraping (i.e., the process of using bots to extract content and data from websites) to collect and organize publicly available data from sites such as the [Washington State Department of Labor and Industries](#) website as starting places or support updates change over time. Experts in supporting apprentices may start with generative artificial intelligence using publicly available data and then apply their expertise to customize a step-by-step manual to better meet the needs of young adults on the apprenticeship pathway.

*“So yeah, [a] Handbook would be really cool. Especially because I know that Passport has a lot more to offer than I’m actually aware of.”*

—Young adult who has experienced foster care and/or homelessness

**Suggestion 10. Improve Case Management and Knowledge Transfer.** To improve case management and relationships between staff and young adults, retaining staff is essential. However, because turnover is inevitable, one suggestion is to improve knowledge and relationship management protocols to ensure participants have a better experience, regardless of which staff fill roles. Passport staff reported hiring a new staff position in 2024 whose primary role is outreach, including multiple contacts with prospective apprentices. One new outreach location is “transitional living programs because technically everyone in that program qualifies” according to Passport staff.

In the spirit of continuous improvement, definitions of who is a participant and types of activities have evolved since 2019 when the apprenticeship pathway began. Along with improving case management systems for better knowledge and relationship management, another suggestion is to improve and standardize reporting systems to WSAC.

## 4. Participant Outcomes

Outcomes include stories about young adults who met their postsecondary goals by graduating or securing employment and benchmarks along the way as described by staff and participants. In addition, for selected college cohorts, this section outlines outcomes including credits earned and graduation. Multiple data sources informed participant outcomes, including extant data interviews (e.g., Unit Record Report [URR], ANEW internal databases), and focus groups. A total of 76 participants participated in 39 interview or focus group sessions. See Appendix A for more details about administrative data sources and methods. See Appendix B for more details about the qualitative data methods underlying these findings.

### 4.1 Outcomes for the College Pathway

To provide a multidimensional description of the college pathway outcomes, this report draws on two data sources. First is the interviews and focus groups with Passport staff and current participants, including FY and UHY. The second data source is administrative data on students who first enrolled in college between 2009 and 2016 and participated in Passport during the initial phase. The study team used this earlier set of cohorts to observe educational outcomes over the course of up to 8 years (through 2024). However, this time frame is exclusively in the initial phase of Passport, limiting the Passport participants to those who are FY only.



### 4.1.1 Current College Student Outcomes

Passport staff connected the scholarship and other supports to academic outcomes for the students they work with. Many staff noted the benefits of addressing basic needs, and others talked about the supports such as academic tutoring and budgeting guidance. The level of support helps students focus on their studies because Passport covers their basic needs, such as housing and food. For other students, receiving a laptop, having access to funds to buy books when the quarter starts, or using the lending library for required readings enables them to focus on classes and learning. Note that while many staff said the scholarship and other supports were able to meet student needs, a few staff said that with the cost of housing, transportation, and food in their areas, even with Passport, students still did not have enough to have a sense of stability. Further, staff commented on the “variables to their lives that no amount of funding from the school is going to impact” even with emergency funding available for things like medical bills, moving costs, and car repairs.

*“The scholarship and the financial aid, all that helps them take a breath that they can keep a roof over their head and food in their belly. The other piece is just life; financial aid is awarded at the beginning, and they have to make it last 12 weeks. They can’t take it and go buy a car. They can’t take it and take a vacation. They learn to budget it out. Some students will pay for 3 months of rent as soon as they get their financial aid so they don’t have to worry about that part. So, thinking about the participants’ outcomes, it’s trying to get them to understand – the money will be there if you pass your classes.”*

—Passport staff

#### FINANCIAL LITERACY WELLNESS

One university invited a local credit union representative to run a workshop about financial literacy wellness. The presenter recognized students may not have a lot of experience or even advice from people in their lives and normalized that it was okay to not know things about building credit, carrying debt, buying a car, and owning a home. Students asked the presenter many questions because he was approachable and relatable. After multiple workshops, students had answers to many questions and felt equipped to make decisions about their financial wellness that might impact them 5 to 10 years from now.

*Source: Passport staff interviews*

A few Passport staff and participants reported a sense of stability with Passport that enabled young adults to stop making money in ways that threatened their health and safety. Many students find their way to the program because they were a UHY, so a more prevalent outcome is that students find more secure housing in a dorm or apartment under Passport after living out of a car, on the street, or in group settings as reported by both Passport staff and participants. Many staff and young adults described how Passport was a safety net that helped students persist with their studies when facing barriers such as a car breaking down, being short on rent one month, losing housing, or paying a fee to get back into good standing.

*“I’ve seen students graduate or transfer, get jobs, and eventually figure out housing. We have success stories and I think because of Passport and that additional support, they’ve been able to do it. They have not just financial support, but just the support system of humans, you know, people cheering them on and telling them it’s possible to get an education.”*

—Passport staff

Other types of outcomes mentioned by many Passport staff included “adulting” skills such as financial literacy and nutrition. A few Passport staff reported that they organized financial literacy and budgeting workshops. One university invited a local credit union representative to host multiple financial literacy workshops for Passport students. Students received answers to their

many questions about building credit, carrying debt, buying a car, and owning a home that helped them to make decisions that might impact them immediately, and 5 to 10 years in the future. A few Passport staff also discussed mental health support services referrals—many students may not have access to mental health care. Through referrals, they gain access to support to help manage a crisis. Passport staff noted that access to high-quality mental health services had other benefits such as students developing more positive attitudes (less stigma) about counseling, starting to heal from past trauma, and learning additional coping skills, all of which bolstered their resiliency. When describing the persistence of one student, the Passport staff said, *“That’s the resiliency I see in this particular group of students – it’s off the charts. Other factors in life get in way of their education, but education isn’t always a straight line. There’s twists and turns in it and so I let them know that.”*

#### **4.1.2 College Scholarship Pathway Participant Degree Completion Outcomes**

This section describes degree attainment outcomes of college pathway participants who first enrolled in postsecondary education between 2008 and 2016 according to the Washington State Education Research and Data Center (ERDC). Note this period includes only the initial phase of Passport to Careers and, therefore, excludes UHY participants. The analysis sample consists of 1,233 Passport participants, of which 52 percent are White, 15 percent are Hispanic, and 13 percent are Black. The gender distribution of the analysis sample is 61 percent female and 39 percent male (see Appendix A, Table A.6). Table 3 presents degree completion outcomes 4 years and 8 years after initial postsecondary enrollment for all participants, participants who first enrolled at 2-year institutions, and participants who first enrolled at 4-year institutions. Completion rates include students who transferred to a different institution in or outside Washington. Of the Passport participants who first enrolled in any postsecondary institution between 2009 and 2016, 6 percent completed a certificate, 10 percent completed an associate’s degree, and 4 percent completed a bachelor’s degree within 4 years of initial enrollment. Eight years after initial enrollment, 10 percent earned a certificate, 17 percent earned an associate’s degree, 14 percent earned a bachelor’s degree, and 2 percent earned a graduate credential. Overall, 18 percent of participants completed any credential within 4 years, and 31 percent completed any credential within 8 years. (Table 3 note explains the meaning of “completed any credential” and specific awards and degrees.)

**Table 3. Passport to Careers Participant Degree Completion by Years From Initial Enrollment, by Initial Postsecondary Institution Type**

		All Participants	Participants Who First Enrolled at 2-Year Institutions	Participants Who First Enrolled at 4-Year Institutions
	Cohort count	1,233	1,011	222
<b>4 years from initial enrollment</b>	Certificate	5.7%	6.5%	1.8%
	Associate’s degree	10.3%	11.8%	3.6%
	Bachelor’s degree	4.0%	0.8%	18.5%
	Graduate degree or certificate	0.1%	0.0%	0.5%
	Completed any credential*	18.1%	17.1%	22.5%
<b>8 years from initial enrollment</b>	Certificate	9.7%	10.8%	4.5%
	Associate’s degree	16.5%	18.3%	8.1%
	Bachelor’s degree	14.0%	7.0%	45.9%
	Graduate degree or certificate	1.5%	0.4%	6.8%
	Completed any credential*	31.3%	26.5%	53.2%

Source: Washington State Education Research and Data Center and Washington Student Achievement Council Unit Record Report for the College Scholarship Pathway

Notes: \*Completed any credential is the unduplicated count and may not sum from the rows above if a student earned more than one award type during that period. If a student earned a certificate and a bachelor’s degree, they were counted twice, once in each row. If they earned two certificates, they were counted once.

Among the college pathway participants who first enrolled at a 2-year college, 7 percent earned a certificate within 4 years, and 11 percent earned a certificate within 8 years of first enrollment. Twelve percent of participants completed an associate’s degree within 4 years, which is roughly 200 percent of the expected time to complete a degree, and 18 percent did so within 8 years. A rough comparison for this group of Passport students is all students who enrolled in 2-year institutions in 2009, and their degree completion rates by 200 percent of the expected time were higher: 38 percent at public community and technical colleges and 69 percent at private 2-year colleges and trade schools. (See Appendix A for the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System [IPEDS] source information.)

Within 4 years of first enrolling at a 4-year college, college pathway participants had an on-time bachelor’s degree completion rate of 19 percent. Eight years later, or 200 percent of the expected time to degree completion, 46 percent of these participants completed a 4-year degree, and 7 percent completed a graduate credential. A rough comparison for Passport students who first enrolled at a 4-year institution and their 8-year completion rate for a bachelor’s degree is the 8-year completion rate among all students at public research universities (72%), public comprehensive universities (58%), and private universities (66%). (See Appendix A for IPEDS source information.)

The lower degree completion rates for college pathway participants compared with the overall rates may not indicate that the college pathway fails to help postsecondary education attainment. Considering the barriers these participants face, as described in previous sections, the counterfactual degree completion rates for these students without college pathway support are likely to be lower than the rates for all students enrolled in postsecondary education. Future research that compares the outcomes of college pathway participants with those of a credible comparison group can help policymakers understand the impacts of the assistance on postsecondary outcomes.

## 4.2 Outcomes for Current Apprentices

Apprenticeship programs take 2–5 years to complete, and because the apprenticeship pathway began implementation in 2019, preapprenticeship completion and registered apprenticeship retention are the primary outcomes of interest. The administrative data maintained by ANEW show little evidence of registered apprenticeship completion for the apprenticeship pathway. Of the 33 participants who were active between 2020 and 2023, 20 participants completed a preapprenticeship, and 7 of those participants started an apprenticeship, with 6 of them still active at the time of this report. Of the remaining 13 participants who did not complete a preapprenticeship, 6 started an apprenticeship, with 1 completion, 1 active, and 4 either suspended or canceled.

## 5. Recommendations

The research team formulated thematic recommendations to better serve FY and UHY in the Passport to Careers program. These recommendations build on specific suggestions from Passport staff and participants to overcome identified barriers and highlight best practices to overcome with barriers. Key constituents (e.g., WSAC, Passport Leadership Team [PLT], Passport staff) provided feedback on draft recommendations, and the research team incorporated this feedback to prioritize and add actionable supporting points to the recommendations. These recommendations align with key findings and incorporate all 10 Passport staff and participant suggestions:



**Allocate Stable Funding to Meet the Needs of Eligible Students.** As one of Washington State’s key strategies for closing equity gaps, Passport to Careers must be funded to meet the needs of eligible students and to be effective. Without enough funds to serve all eligible students enrolled in college, many of these students—lacking the financial resources to cover college and basic needs expenses—may “stop out” or drop out or take on additional student loan debt. Lack of stable funding may also deter potential students or apprentices from enrolling in college or job training. Funding that aligns with Passport to Careers program design (i.e., case managers who build relationships, emerging technology for communication, and timely information for apprentices) is required for many of the following recommendations. See [Suggestion 6. Fund to Meet Needs](#) for more details.



**Establish Additional Methods to Identify Passport-eligible Young Adults.** Even with growing participation, especially for UHY, the need to bolster methods for identifying, recruiting, and continuously supporting Passport students is evident. Public postsecondary institutions are required to supplement eligibility information by using campus-based needs assessments or other forms that students complete in accordance with the 2023 [Washington’s Postsecondary Basic Needs Act](#). Expanding this requirement to all institutions serving Passport students would provide more consistent identification of UHY. See [Suggestion 2. Bolster UHY Identification Methods](#) for more details.



**Reconsider the Eligibility Criteria.** The recommendation to reconsider age criteria such as the enroll by age 22 and age-out restriction at 26 years old may be partially addressed beginning in aid year 2024-25; there will no longer be an age-out limit on eligibility for Passport awards. Also reconsider the minimum credit requirement because students are challenged to maintain a manageable course load and meet satisfactory academic progress. See [Suggestion 1. Change Eligibility Requirements](#) for more details.



**Fund Full-time, dedicated, and qualified staff.** Passport staff and students suggested having dedicated staff for the college pathway. A few students expressed the desire for a dedicated staff member who can support them, particularly with tasks such as completing financial aid paperwork. Key constituents emphasized that Passport staff need the capacity and resources to build real relationships with students. The [Washington Passport Network](#) provides training and onboarding; ensure these offerings occur with enough frequency to support new staff. Create a network for DSS for ongoing peer support, which could ease staff and student transitions and create warm handoffs for students who transfer to other institutions. See [Suggestion 5. Fund Full-Time, Dedicated Staff](#) and [Suggestion 10. Improve Case Management and Knowledge Transfer](#) for more details.



**Refresh and redesign the program for UHY and apprenticeship participants.**

One key finding was that Passport to Careers participation and scope increased. UHY currently outnumber FY participants and have unique needs. The newer apprenticeship pathway is nonlinear, decentralized, and varied compared with the original college pathway and college context.

While many Passport staff reported tapping into other supports to supplement Passport participants, there is a need for robust integration at the local institution level, such as formalizing referral systems with community partners. The growing number of UHY who participate in Passport to Careers, coupled with local challenges of market-rate housing for young adults, highlights the need for referral systems to include housing support. Integrating funding and support services may be even more important in 2-year institutions and institutions with fewer Passport students than in 4-year institutions and institutions with more Passport students.

Passport participants suggested creating a manual with step-by-step guidance for apprenticeship participants. Apprenticeship pathway staff and key constituents, including the [Washington State Department of Labor and Industries \(L&I\)](#), a key source for apprenticeship information, need to collect and share more timely information about apprenticeships. Formalizing L&I's role through a memorandum of understanding or identifying a Passport delegate from L&I may improve the apprenticeship pathway for Passport participants and apprentices more broadly. Emerging technologies such as web scraping publicly available data may provide a lower cost option to collect and share timely information and create a foundation for a step-by-step manual. See [Suggestion 3. Develop Local Resource Repository](#) and [Suggestion 9. Chart the Path With a Manual](#) for more details.



**Continuously improve communication and connection.** Build on the strength of relationships and one-to-one communication to counter the lack of reciprocity that many staff raised as a barrier. Institutions could better support multimodal communication, segmenting program-wide updates or general outreach for websites, social media, and blogs and reserve one-to-one modes of communication such as text and email for targeted, personalized outreach. An intentional focus on community development and community building may also provide more visibility to the Passport program, increase students' knowledge of program resources, and improve students' mental health. See *Suggestion 7. Continuously Improve Communication Between Participants and Program Staff* and *Suggestion 8. Foster A Sense of Community* for more details.



**Improve data collection and regularly share data with key constituents.** Data collection processes can be enhanced in several areas to support continuous quality improvement for implementation. For the college pathway, institutions can consider collecting participant-level information about support services received. For the apprenticeship pathway, WSAC may request progress reports detailing recruitment activities; individual-level data about support services requested and received; and enrollment and completion data for preapprenticeships and apprenticeships. Building on the outcome data in this report, collecting and reporting short- and long-term outcome data annually will enable key constituents to better monitor annual progress on achieving program outcomes. The legislature may also consider authorizing another program evaluation that builds on this implementation and outcome evaluation with a more rigorous impact study that estimates the causal effects of Passport for both FY and UHY participants. See *Suggestion 4. Share Data* for more details.

During this evaluation, program and policy changes occurred that may not be reflected in the data collection, analyses, or findings. For example, in March 2024, the legislature funded half of WSAC's maintenance level budget request at the \$1 million level (\$14,998,000 for the biennium), not the \$2 million needed to keep funding level and keep up with increased eligible students/apprentices. As of May 2024, WSAC reported that maximum awards would need to be reduced from \$5,000 to \$2,800 per student for the 2024–2025 academic year. The data collection that informs these recommendations was completed in March 2024, before budget decisions affected data sources. This report may be helpful for future budget allocations. Ideally, readers will interpret these findings and recommendations considering the most current context. In addition, key constituents such as PLT and Project Education Impact, which develop recommendations to improve educational outcomes for students experiencing foster care and homelessness in Washington State, can layer detailed and timely recommendations that build on this report.

## Appendix A

### Quantitative Research Methods

#### Data Sources and Methods

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#### Washington State URR and ERDC Data

WSAC's URR is the primary data source for college pathway scholarships, student support payments, and participant characteristics. Submission of URR data is mandatory for all institutions participating in Washington State financial aid programs. Each year, institutions produce a student-level dataset with detailed information on financial aid awards received during the academic year, including state aid, awards from federal and institutional financial aid programs, and some forms of assistance that come from sources other than financial aid programs. The data also include information on student demographics, basic information on student enrollment (e.g., class standing and enrollment intensity), and key family finance variables used to determine financial aid awards. WSAC matched participant type (FY or UHY) based on a table used by program administrators to the URR. WSAC collects the data via a portal, conducts data quality checks, and works with institutions to resolve any errors in the data.

The descriptive data for this report were extracted from the URR for any students ever receiving a college pathway scholarship or student support payment. The time span of the data runs from 2009, when the Passport program went into effect, through 2022, which was the latest available year at the time this report was prepared. Because students may attend more than one institution over the course of their careers, and even within an academic year, data for each Passport recipient are aggregated across institutions for all years and for all institutions within a year. Annual award totals and headcounts for individual institutions require no aggregation because there is exactly one URR record per student per institution.

Each institution is then classified as being in one of the following groups: Public Four-Year Colleges & Universities, Independent/Private Four-Year Nonprofit, Private Four-Year For Profit, Community & Technical Colleges, Tribal Colleges, Private Two-Year Career Colleges Nonprofit, and Private Two-Year Career Colleges For Profit. These institution sectors are based on WSAC's college types for determining participation in the state financial aid system.

Data on graduation outcomes were obtained from the Washington State ERDC. ERDC uses the following three data sources to determine graduation outcomes:

1. **The Public Centralized Higher Education Enrollment System (PCHEES).** The PCHEES system, which ERDC maintains, collects data on individual students attending public colleges and universities. The data span the course of students' postsecondary careers from admissions through graduation. Institutions submit data specifically tailored to the PCHEES system, which applies extensive checks for completeness and consistency.
2. **The data warehouse of SBCTC.** The SBCTC data warehouse compiles administrative data from the system's 34 community and technical colleges. The data warehouse includes student-level information about enrollments and credentials conferred. Data integrity in the SBCTC data warehouse is maintained by SBCTC's Quality Assurance Reporting System, which identifies problematic data for review and correction.
3. **National Student Clearinghouse (NSC).** NSC collects rudimentary records on postsecondary enrollments and credentials earned. Nearly all postsecondary institutions in the United States

submit enrollment and credential records to NSC. However, students may opt out of NSC reporting. Students in the public institution Passport population who also enrolled at institutions outside the Washington public sector, either in Washington or out of state, will most likely have NSC records documenting enrollment at such institutions and any credentials earned from them.

Using ERDC's URR records, data were extracted for students who received a college pathway scholarship or student support payment from a Washington university or community or technical college. Because Passport recipients are heavily concentrated in the public postsecondary sector, ERDC had data for over 92 percent of college pathway participants. Records from these different sources were matched using procedures ERDC developed that provide an anonymous research identification number enabling the records to be joined. Match rates are high: Of the 2,770 unique Passport recipients in the public institution population, only 6 did not have any matched enrollment term records, and only 30 did not have a matched high school completion record. (There is no presumption that each student should have a matching credential record because the records exist only if a credential is earned.)

The overall degree and credential completion measures are modeled loosely on the Outcomes Survey of the federal IPEDS. Students are assigned to cohorts based on the year of their first postsecondary enrollment. When a high school graduation date is available, the first postsecondary enrollment during or after the month of school graduation is used to identify the academic year of the first postsecondary enrollment. Otherwise, students are assigned to cohorts based on the first postsecondary enrollment after May 31 of the last reported high school year.

In the case of the 30 students without high school records, the first Passport award year is used to place them into cohorts. Students are also assigned to institutional levels of "two-year" or "four-year" according to the type of institution they attended in their first postsecondary year. Most students enrolled exclusively at one institutional level that year. However, when students were enrolled at both levels, their institutional level was assigned based on the preponderance of their enrollments that first year. Credentials conferred were identified for the 4-year period from their first postsecondary enrollment year through August 31 of the third year thereafter. Credentials conferred were identified for the 8-year period from their first postsecondary enrollment year through August 31 of the seventh year thereafter. These credential data are available for cohorts in the years from 2009 through 2016 (the last year for which an 8-year outcomes range is available). Credentials were counted if awarded at any institution, not just the institution of first enrollment. Students remained classified by institutional level according to the assignment made in their first postsecondary year. For example, 2-year students who transferred to a 4-year institution to earn a bachelor's degree are reported in the 2-year data.

## Passport Student Support Survey

To study the implementation of the College Scholarship Pathway, the research team used WSAC's annual Passport Student Support Survey, designed to document implementation by all institutions participating in the college pathway. Since 2020, the survey has addressed program outcomes, including number of participants and certificate and degree completion, along with information about participant recruitment separately for FY and UHY, support services, and implementation challenges. The research team excluded the results from the 2018 and 2019 surveys because the surveys in those years collected information about outreach using open-ended questions instead of the closed-ended questions used in more recent years and because they covered implementation during the initial rather than the current phase.



We estimated averages for each annual survey and then produced averages for the 2020 through 2023 period by giving each year equal weight. The analysis assumes that data are missing at random. More sophisticated analyses, such as those that create nonresponse weights, were not possible because of the lack of information about the sample frame for each annual survey.

## IPEDS

The third data source used in this report is the IPEDS, which contains information about each postsecondary institution over time. The research team used the following surveys from 2009 and 2022:

- **Institutional Characteristics/Directory Information.** This survey contains information about the latitude and longitude of the institution.
- **Fall Enrollment/Race/Ethnicity, Gender, Attendance Status, and Level of Student.** This survey contains information about the demographic characteristics of students enrolled in the fall of each year.
- **Institutional Characteristics/Student Charges for Academic Year Programs.** This survey contains information about the average in-state tuition and fees for each institution.
- **Graduation Rates/Graduation Rate Data, 200 Percent of the Normal Time to Complete.** This survey contains information about the graduation rates at 200 percent of the normal time to complete based on whether the institution is a 2-year or 4-year institution.

The IPEDS data were matched to the URR and ERDC data based on the institution's name and location in Washington State, and the statistics described in the report are based on annual averages across institutions, overall, and by institutional sector. The research team conducted two-sample t-tests to interpret differences between types of institutions at a given point in time and for specific types of institutions over time.

## Supplemental Tables and Figures

<b>Table A.1. Institutional Participation in College Scholarship Pathway</b>					
	<b>First Year</b>	<b>Last Year</b>	<b>Number of Years</b>	<b>Average Annual Participants</b>	<b>Total Annual Participants</b>
<b>2-year institutions</b>					
Bates Technical College	2010	2022	13	4.3	39
Bellingham Technical College	2009	2022	14	7.0	40
Big Bend Community College	2019	2022	4	7.6	54
Cascade Beauty College	2009	2022	14	3.0	23
Centralia College	2014	2022	5	11.9	90
Clare's Beauty College Inc	2009	2022	14	1.0	1
Clark College	2009	2014	3	19.3	226
Clover Park Technical College	2009	2022	14	8.6	108
Divers Institute of Technology	2009	2022	14	2.0	Less than 10
Edmonds Community College	2009	2022	14	5.9	55
Everest College-Renton	2013	2014	2	1.0	Less than 10
Everett Community College	2010	2022	10	31.6	266
Evergreen Beauty & Barber College	2009	2022	14	5.0	10
Gene Juarez Academy of Beauty	2009	2022	11	4.1	21
Glen Dow Academy of Hair Design	2009	2022	14	2.9	14
Grays Harbor College	2009	2022	14	9.8	93
Green River Community College	2009	2016	8	21.6	137
Highline Community College	2009	2022	14	16.7	102
Interface College-Spokane	2009	2022	14	1.0	Less than 10
International Air and Hospitality Academy	2009	2022	14	1.1	10
Lower Columbia College	2009	2022	14	12.5	79
Perry Technical Institute	2018	2020	3	4.6	27
Pierce College at Fort Steilacoom	2009	2022	14	10.6	126
Renton Technical College	2015	2022	8	7.5	37
Seattle Community College-North Campus	2009	2022	14	6.4	66
Seattle Vocational Institute	2014	2015	2	2.0	16
Shoreline Community College	2009	2022	14	8.4	69
Skagit Valley College	2010	2022	3	10.3	104
South Puget Sound Community College	2011	2022	10	6.9	70
Spokane Community College	2009	2022	13	31.1	340
Spokane Falls Community College	2010	2022	13	24.3	271
Stylemaster College of Hair Design	2009	2022	14	3.5	Less than 10
Tacoma Community College	2009	2022	11	14.0	156
Walla Walla Community College	2009	2017	6	7.8	76
Wenatchee Valley College	2009	2022	14	33.6	140
Whatcom Community College	2015	2022	8	15.8	122
Yakima Valley Community College	2011	2022	12	15.9	190

	First Year	Last Year	Number of Years	Average Annual Participants	Total Annual Participants
<b>4-year institutions</b>					
Antioch University Seattle	2012	2022	11	1.0	Less than 10
Bastyr University	2010	2022	13	0.0	Less than 10
Bellevue College	2009	2021	11	12.2	99
Central Washington University	2009	2022	14	49.5	334
City University of Seattle	2009	2022	14	1.0	Less than 10
Columbia Basin College	2019	2022	4	9.1	127
Cornish College of the Arts	2010	2022	11	2.6	11
DigiPen Institute of Technology	2009	2022	7	1.3	5
Eastern Washington University	2009	2022	14	32.6	284
Gonzaga University	2009	2022	13	2.5	17
Heritage University	2009	2022	14	3.4	24
InterCoast Colleges	2010	2022	10	0.0	Less than 10
ITT Technical Institute-Spokane Valley	2009	2022	14	2.0	Less than 10
Lake Washington Technical College	2019	2021	3	6.1	41
Northwest College of Art	2010	2022	13	2.0	Less than 10
Northwest Indian College	2009	2022	14	3.2	15
Northwest University	2009	2022	14	2.4	18
Olympic College	2016	2022	7	18.3	188
Pacific Lutheran University	2022	2022	1	1.5	17
Peninsula College	2009	2022	14	5.3	48
Saint Martin's University	2019	2022	4	11.2	54
Seattle Community College-Central Campus	2009	2022	14	10.2	114
Seattle Community College-South Campus	2009	2022	12	4.8	35
Seattle Pacific University	2010	2022	11	8.0	51
Seattle University	2022	2022	1	16.0	183
The Art Institute of Seattle	2009	2022	14	1.8	Less than 10
The Evergreen State College	2009	2022	14	6.5	53
University of Puget Sound	2010	2022	13	1.3	Less than 10
University of Washington-Seattle Campus	2009	2022	14	88.4	456
Walla Walla University	2011	2022	12	2.0	Less than 10
Washington State University	2010	2022	6	60.5	443
Western Governors University	2018	2022	5	2.0	3
Western Washington University	2009	2022	14	91.0	413
Whitman College	2009	2022	14	1.0	Less than 10
Whitworth University	2010	2013	4	12.9	62

Source: Washington Student Achievement Council Unit Record Report for the College Scholarship Pathway.

Notes: College pathway participants are individuals with at least one positive College Scholarship Pathway award or at least one positive student support payment. A postsecondary institution is considered to participate that year if it had at least one participant that year. A year for the college pathway is defined as the ending year of the academic year. Individuals who attend multiple institutions in a year are only counted once per institution for that year.

**Table A.2. Findings from the Passport Student Support Survey, 2020 Through 2023**

Characteristic	Average	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Number of responding institutions</b>	43	43	41	44	43
<b>Methods to determine eligibility based on foster care status</b>					
Admissions information	67%	65%	68%	66%	67%
Financial aid applications	89%	86%	88%	98%	86%
List from WSAC	78%	81%	83%	77%	72%
Referral	68%	60%	71%	66%	74%
Student self-identification	84%	88%	80%	80%	88%
Other method	19%	16%	22%	20%	19%
<b>Methods to determine eligibility based on unaccompanied homeless youth status</b>					
Admissions information	48%	47%	44%	52%	51%
Financial aid applications	92%	93%	88%	95%	91%
Referral	70%	67%	73%	68%	72%
Student self-identification	86%	88%	85%	84%	86%
Other method	27%	23%	27%	30%	28%
<b>Methods for reaching prospective students</b>					
Meet one-on-one	72%	84%	66%	64%	77%
Direct outreach through email/ phone/text	63%	60%	71%	61%	60%
Meeting with supportive adults	54%	63%	46%	50%	58%
Physical flyers/brochures	44%	44%	41%	43%	47%
Host on-campus events	34%	44%	22%	27%	42%
Social media	23%	26%	17%	27%	21%
Attend summer bridge events	16%	23%	22%	14%	7%
Other method	36%	40%	32%	32%	40%
<b>Methods for reaching current students</b>					
Direct outreach through email/ phone/text	83%	84%	90%	86%	72%
On-campus partner collaboration	82%	88%	73%	80%	86%
Meet one-on-one	81%	86%	80%	82%	74%
Off-campus partner collaboration	50%	65%	54%	43%	40%
Physical flyers/brochures	37%	28%	29%	36%	53%
Social media	23%	23%	29%	20%	19%
Peer mentorship programming	18%	28%	15%	9%	19%
Other method	12%	12%	12%	16%	9%
Passport incentive fund uses					
School supply purchases	66%	70%	66%	66%	63%
Emergency funding	54%	58%	59%	43%	56%
Salaries for professional staff	42%	37%	46%	45%	40%
Technology/book lending library	42%	47%	44%	30%	47%
Meals/snacks	34%	40%	24%	32%	42%
Gas/grocery cards	31%	40%	29%	32%	23%

Characteristic	Average	2020	2021	2022	2023
Professional development funds	30%	30%	12%	41%	35%
Community programming	23%	28%	12%	20%	30%
Student transportation	18%	21%	7%	16%	28%
Outreach events	16%	16%	17%	14%	16%
Salaries for student staff	16%	19%	12%	16%	16%
Tutoring	6%	7%	10%	5%	2%
Other	42%	49%	46%	36%	35%
<b>Passport implementation barriers</b>					
Engaging students on campus	67%	58%	66%	77%	65%
Lack of student awareness	61%	49%	63%	66%	65%
Identifying students	56%	49%	63%	55%	58%
Recruiting students to campus	51%	40%	56%	61%	47%
Lack of faculty/staff awareness	49%	44%	51%	48%	51%
Under staffing	49%	42%	51%	50%	51%
Staff turnover	41%	23%	39%	52%	51%
Lack of community partner awareness	33%	30%	29%	41%	33%
Administrative support	23%	19%	20%	27%	26%
Accessing incentive grant funds	16%	16%	15%	18%	14%
Other barrier	12%	14%	20%	5%	12%

Source: Passport Student Support surveys in 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023

Notes: The percentages are the averages of the percentages for each year. The number of institutional respondents was 43 in 2020, 41 in 2021, 44 in 2022, and 43 in 2023.

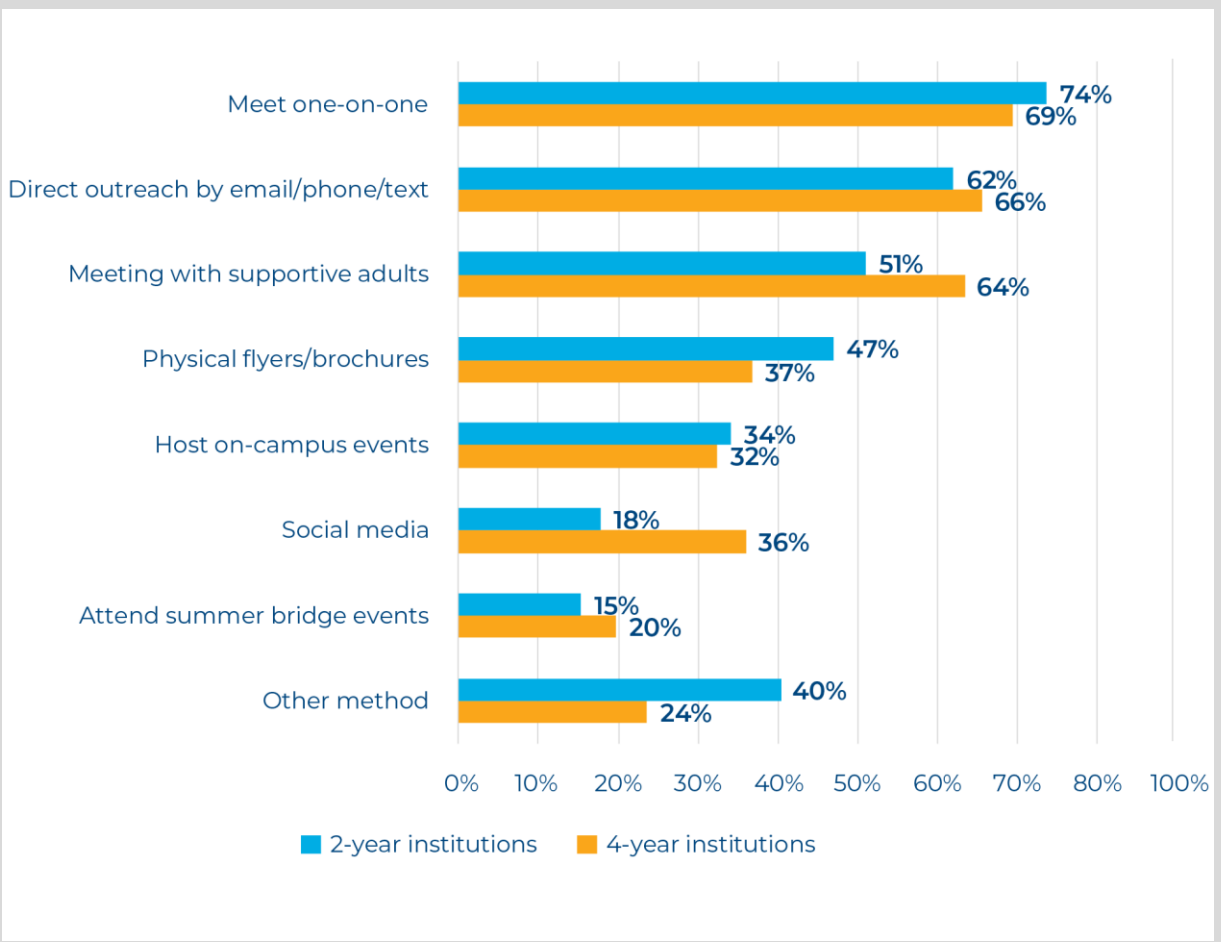
**Table A.3. Selected Characteristics of College Scholarship Pathway Postsecondary Institutions, by Institution Type**

		Public Research Universities	Public Comprehen sive Universities	Private Universities	Public Community and Technical Colleges	Private 2-Year Colleges and Trade Schools	Two-Year Tribal College
<b>2009</b>	Percentage of institutions	5%	7%	10%	69%	10%	0%
	Average percent American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	2%	0%	2%	2%	
	Average percent Asian	16%	4%	6%	7%	0%	
	Average percent Black or African American	3%	4%	21%	7%	2%	
	Average percent Hispanic	6%	9%	5%	9%	8%	
	Average percent Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	
	Average percent White	72%	78%	51%	71%	84%	
	Average percent two or more races	1%	4%	17%	4%	3%	
	Average tuition and fees	\$7,184	\$5,456	\$21,992	\$2,904	\$13,918	\$2,646
	Average percent complete bachelor's degree within 200% of expected time to degree	72%	59%	59%	37%		
	Average percent complete associate's degree or certificate within 200% of expected time to degree				38%	69%	
<b>2022</b>	Percentage of institutions	3%	6%	27%	51%	11%	2%
	Average percent American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%	79%
	Average percent Asian	19%	4%	9%	9%	2%	0%
	Average percent Black or African American	4%	4%	6%	7%	4%	0%
	Average percent Hispanic	14%	16%	17%	21%	24%	9%
	Average percent Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	Average percent White	55%	65%	58%	54%	60%	3%
	Average percent two or more races	8%	8%	8%	8%	6%	8%
	Average tuition and fees	\$12,247	\$8,460	\$38,890	\$4,623		\$3,969
	Average percent complete bachelor's degree within 200% of expected time to degree	72%	58%	66%			14%
	Average percent complete associate's degree or certificate within 200% of expected time to degree				40%	76%	

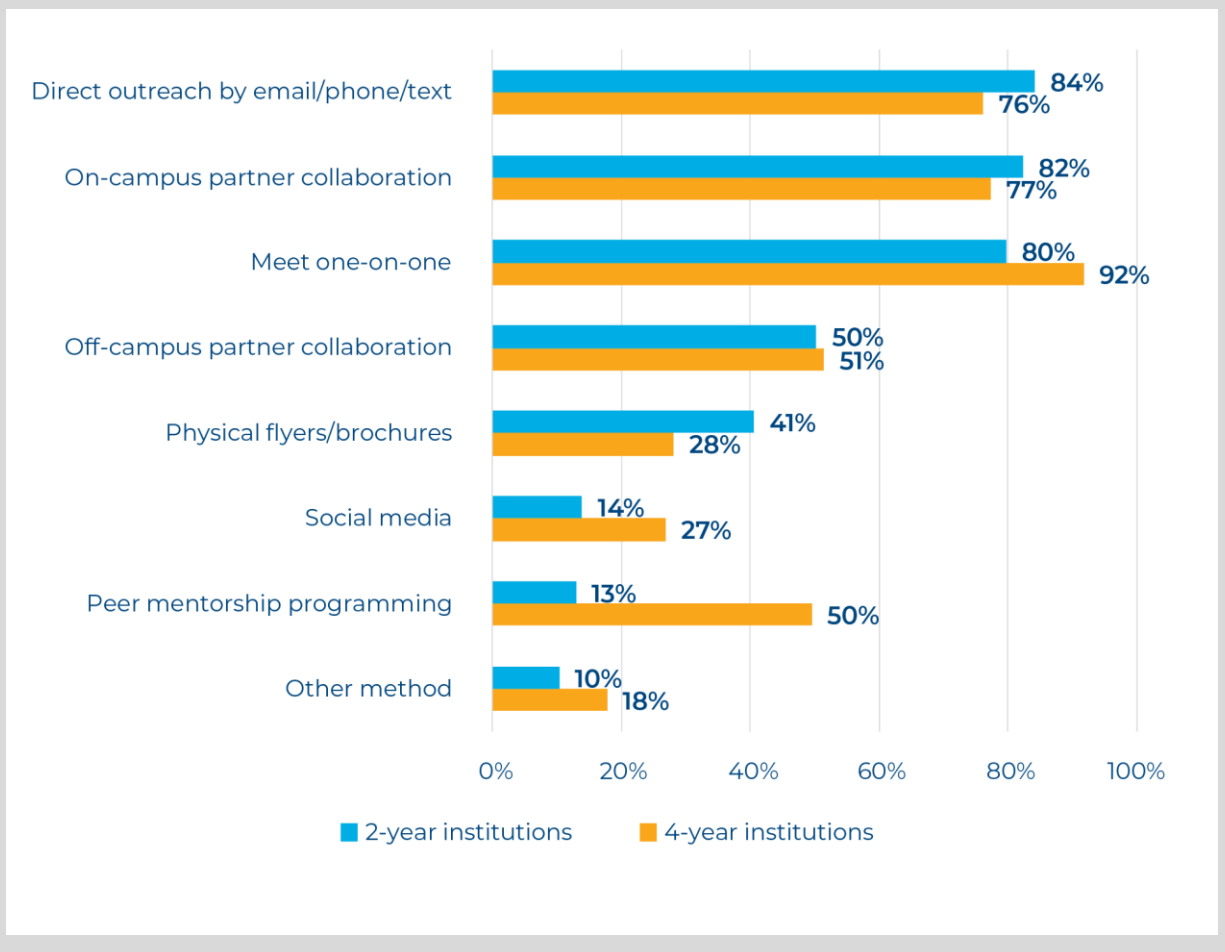
Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 2009 and 2022

Notes: The averages are averages of institution-level characteristics. Average tuition and fees are in nominal dollars.

**Figure A.1. Institutional Methods to Talk About the College Scholarship Pathway With Prospective Students, by Institution Type**

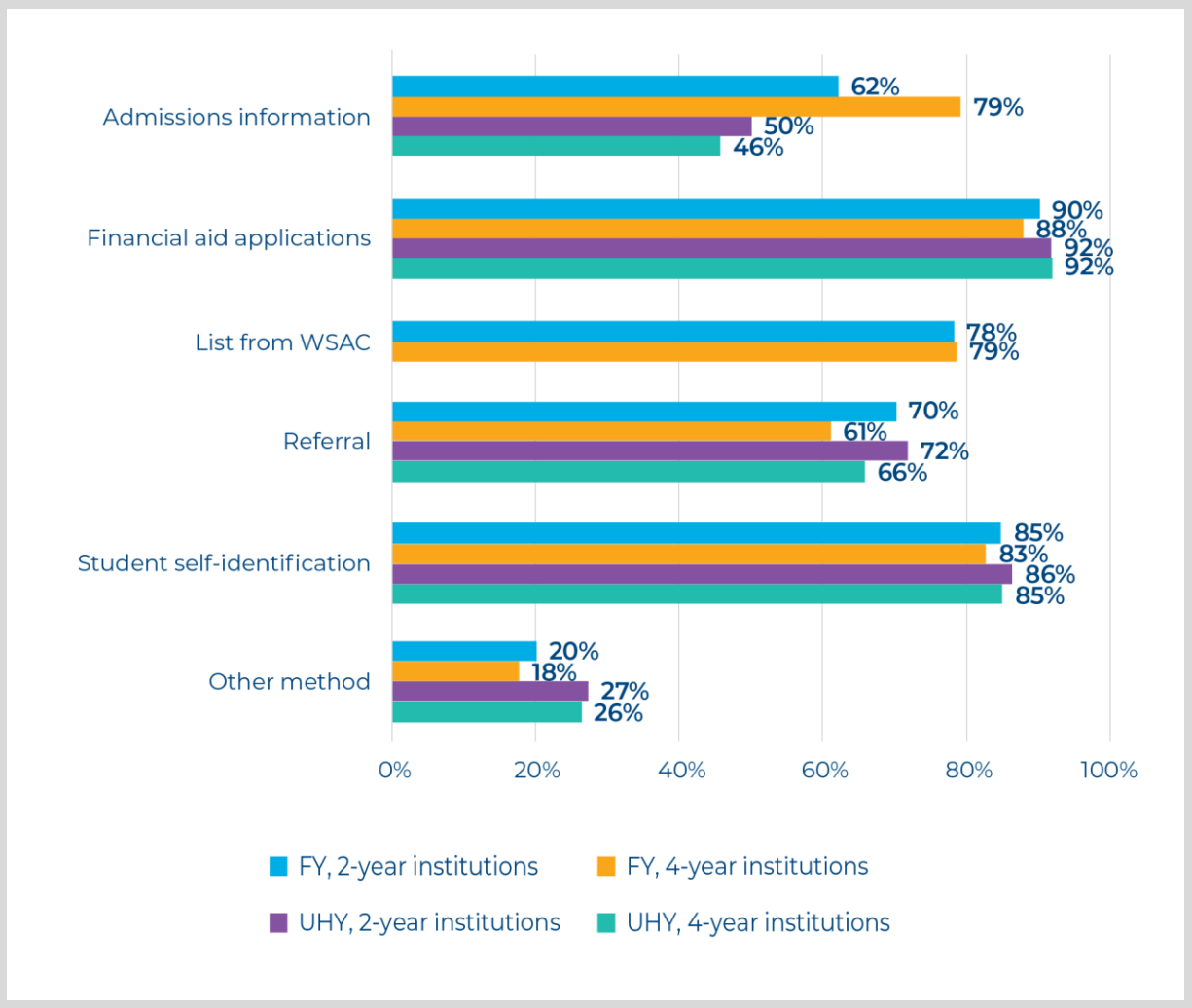


**Figure A.2. Institutional Methods to Talk About the College Scholarship Pathway With Current Students, by Institution Type**



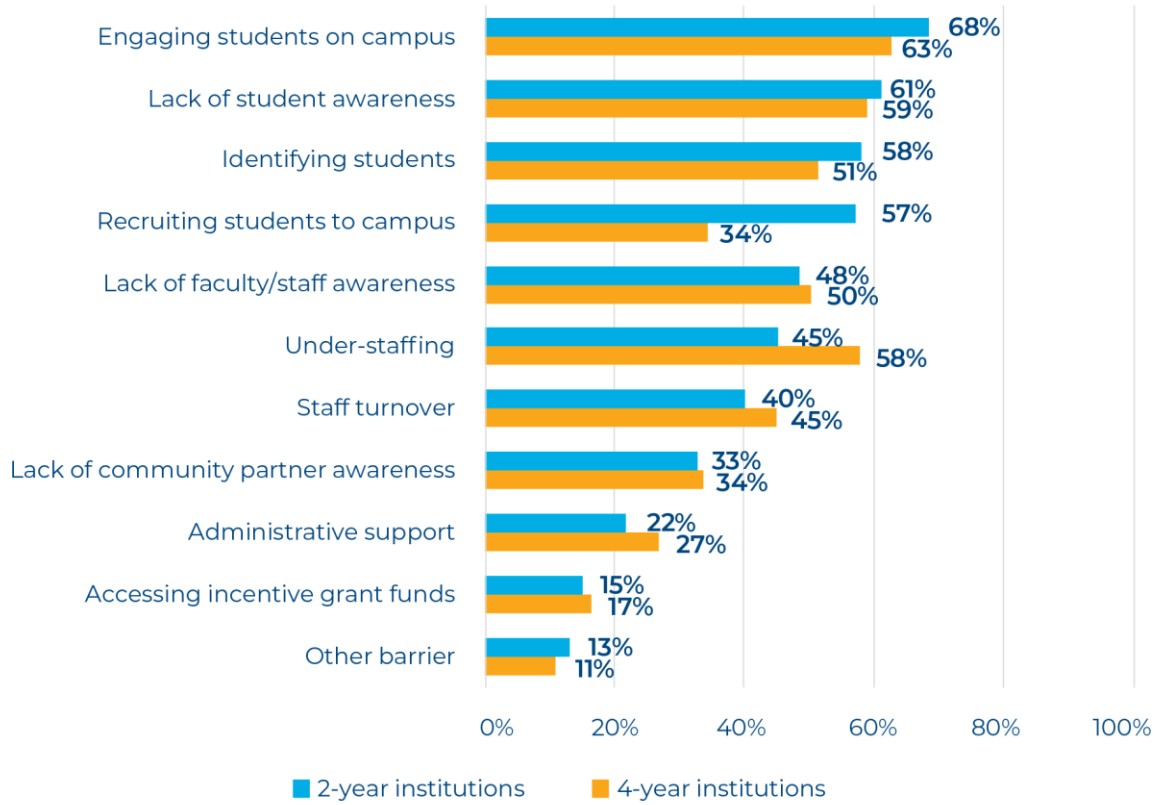


**Figure A.3. Institutional Approaches for Determining Eligibility, by Participant Type and Institution Type**

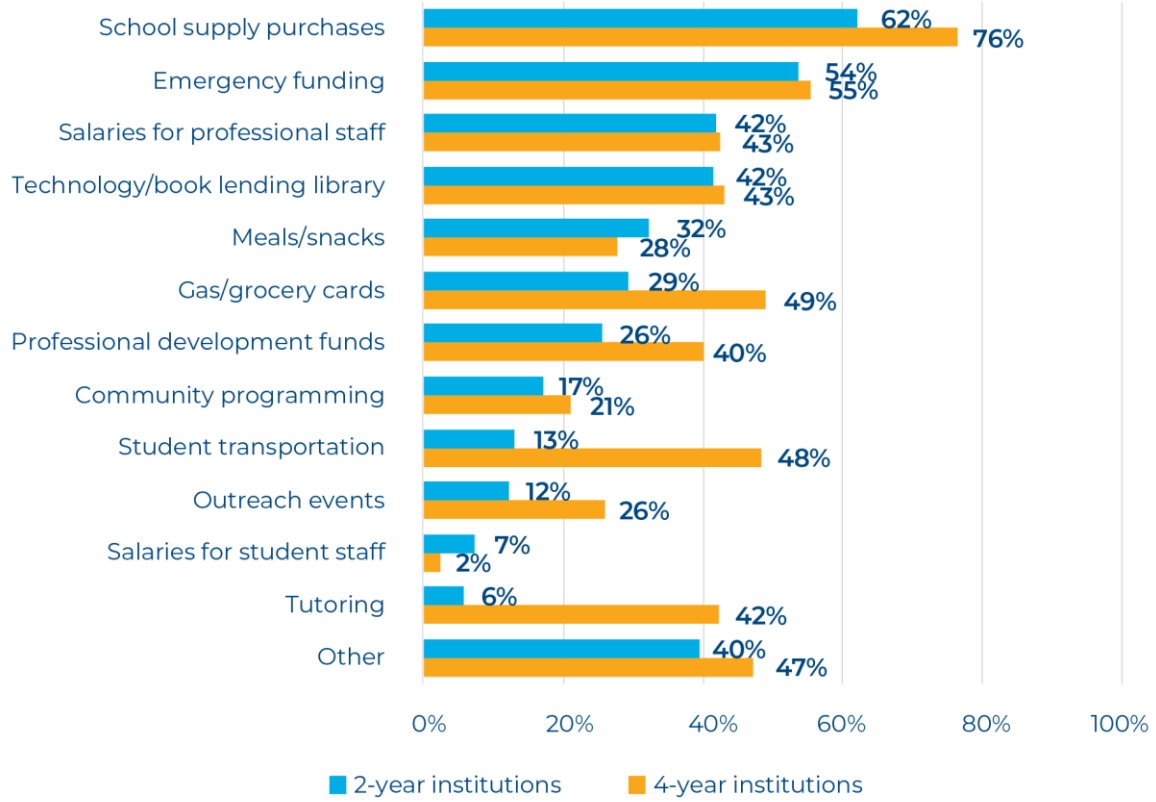


FY = foster youth; UHY = unaccompanied homeless youth; WSAC = Washington Student Achievement Council

**Figure A.4. Institutional Implementation Barriers, 2019–2020 Through 2022–2023, by Institution Type**



**Figure A.5. Institutional Uses of Student Support Funds, by Institution Type**



**Table A.6. Percentages of Participants Completing Any Credential, by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, Initial Enrollment Institution Type, and Years From Initial Enrollment**

		All Participants	Participants Who First Enrolled at 2-Year Institutions	Participants Who First Enrolled at 4-Year Institutions
<b>4 years from initial enrollment</b>	Race/Ethnicity			
	American Indian/Alaska Native	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
	Asian	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
	Black or African American	22.5%	23.3%	n.a.
	Hispanic or Latino	19.9%	17.4%	27.9%
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander			
	White	18.0%	17.0%	23.0%
	Two or More Races	12.1%	9.8%	n.a.
	Gender			
	Female	21.8%	21.5%	23.2%
	Male	12.3%	10.3%	21.7%
<b>8 years from initial enrollment</b>	Race/Ethnicity			
	American Indian/Alaska Native	29.3%	n.a.	n.a.
	Asian	60.0%	n.a.	n.a.
	Black or African American	37.5%	35.3%	48.1%
	Hispanic or Latino	31.5%	25.4%	51.2%
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
	White	32.0%	27.1%	59.0%
	Two or More Races	20.2%	14.7%	45.5%
	Gender			
	Female	36.2%	32.0%	55.1%
	Male	23.7%	18.1%	50.6%

Source: Washington State Education Research and Data Center and Washington Student Achievement Council Unit Record Report for the College Scholarship Pathway.

Notes: n.a. = not available; cells based on less than 10 cases were suppressed. Totals and some categories are n.a. to prevent recalculation of data in suppressed cells.

## Appendix B

### Qualitative Research Methods

The qualitative methods for this study included a document review, interviews, and focus groups with key constituents. Key constituents who participated in qualitative data collection included the following:

- Passport staff from colleges such as DSS, financial aid staff, and institutional Passport leaders
- PLT
  - ANEW staff (Passport to Apprenticeship contractor)
- Young adults who experienced foster care and/or unaccompanied homelessness

This section includes the methods of selecting the target population and sample, participant recruitment, data collection tools, and analysis plans.

#### Document Review

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WSAC provided the research team with Passport program manuals published in previous years to supplement the most recent version available at the [Washington Passport Network Resources website](#). The document review focused on program manuals from the 2019–20, 2020–21, 2021–22, and 2022–23 academic years. These program manuals provided a framework for focus groups and interviews about implementation. The research team used a rubric to track program changes across time and used rubric findings as a data source throughout the report. Additional documents and websites used are cited using hyperlinks and footnotes.

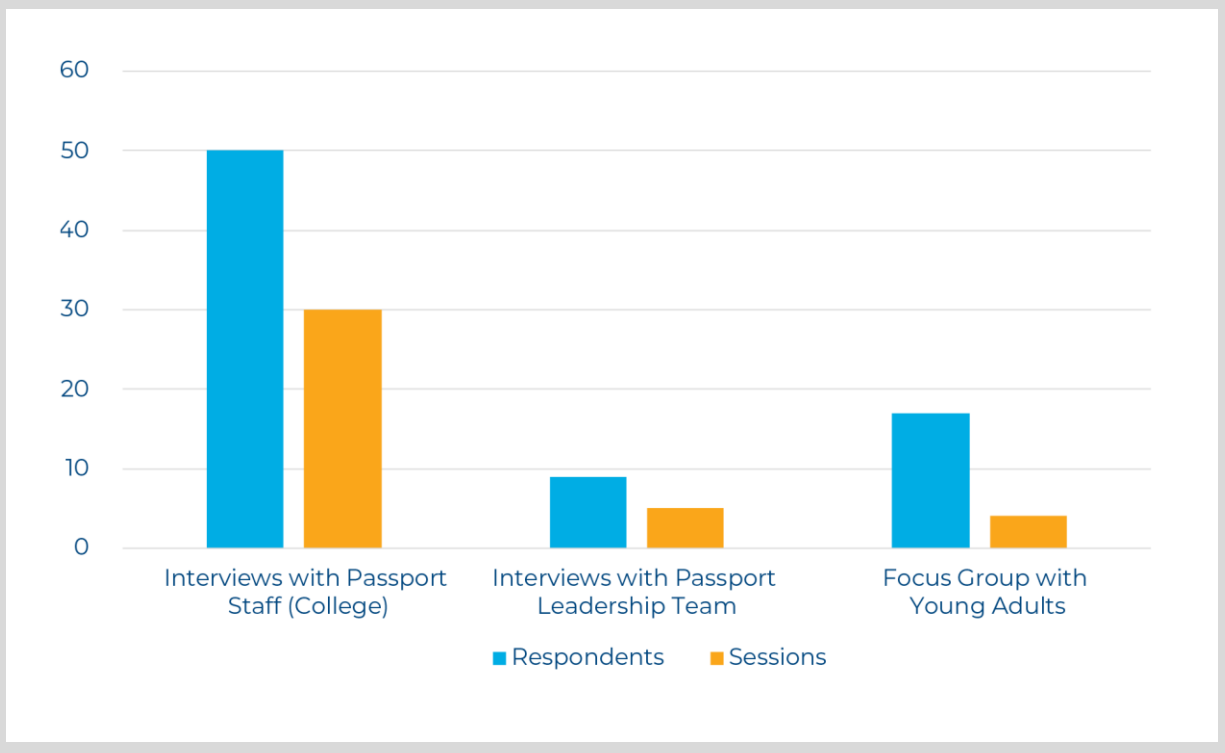
#### Qualitative Data Collection with Key Constituents

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This evaluation involved many key constituents, as described in Section 2, in interviews and focus groups as part of qualitative data collection. In addition to participating in interviews and focus groups, key constituents weighed in on design and data collection tools and methods and provided feedback on preliminary findings and recommendations. Four members of the Westat research team recruited and conducted the interviews and focus groups between January and March 2024 with Westat Institutional Review Board approval. A total of 76 participants participated in 39 interview or focus group sessions (see Figure B.1.).

The Westat research team constructed protocols to highlight staff or participant roles. Protocol questions were created based on programming components within the Passport to Careers program manual. Additional questions were added to highlight specific strategies and barriers that Passport program staff experience throughout program implementation and student/participant navigation. Evaluation protocols also touched on student and apprentice outcomes and provided space for participants to share suggestions for program implementation based on their experiences in their roles.

**Figure B.1. Number of Respondents and Sessions for Qualitative Data Collection**



### Passport Staff Recruitment and Data Collection

WSAC shared a Passport staff contact list, including 47 institutions, with the Westat research team to aid recruitment efforts, and Dawn Cypriano-McAferly at WSAC sent the first message about the evaluation. Passport-participating institutions included 4-year institutions, community colleges, and technical schools.

For interviews with Passport staff, the research team contacted representatives (DSS were the first point of contact) at institutions with Passport participants from 2019 to the present. The research team contacted DSS and instructed them to consult with invited additional Passport staff at their institutions, including staff in financial aid and Passport leadership roles. Of the 47 institutions contacted, 30 completed interviews, 7 declined (reasons included), and 10 were nonresponsive after at least 5 contact attempts. The response rate for the college pathway institution interviews was 64 percent (30 of 47 institutions). Of the 30 institutions, 10 were universities (5 private and 5 public), and the remaining 20 were public community and technical colleges. A total of 50 Passport staff participated in these 30 interviews. Interview protocols included 18 questions about strategies and barriers Passport staff faced when implementing programming requirements and how they perceived possible outcomes for students who participated in the Passport program.

The research team collected data from most of the 20 institutions represented in PLT including ANEW, College Success Foundation, DCYF, OSPI, Treehouse, Washington SBCTC, and seven colleges and universities. PLT members were interviewed either in PLT-specific interviews, apprenticeship-specific interviews, or as one of the 30 DSS interviews of colleges and university staff. Six organizations were selected for PLT interviews to augment PLT perspectives that were included as part of college pathway interviews (four PLT members and seven colleges). The research team

conducted five PLT or apprenticeship-related sessions with a total of nine individuals representing five organizations, yielding an 83 percent response rate (five of six institutions) for the PLT-specific sessions. Sixty percent of PLT institutions (12 of the 20) were represented in qualitative data collection. Each session group lasted between 60 and 90 minutes to discuss 18 questions about strategies and barriers staff faced when implementing programming requirements and how they perceived possible outcomes for young adults who participated in the Passport program.

## Passport Participant Recruitment and Data Collection

The research team provided Passport staff who participated in interviews with outreach language to recruit college students and apprentices for focus groups. DSS staff and case managers for apprenticeship support sent the initial invitations to students. All Passport students at the 30 participating institutions and all ANEW participants received an email from Passport staff (DSS at their institution or case manager for apprenticeship support) inviting them to complete an interest form for focus groups. Fifty-three young adults from 16 institutions plus apprenticeships completed an interest form. The research team contacted each person who expressed interest in having more information about the focus group and asked young adults to complete scheduling polls using Calendly. The research team scheduled focus groups to maximize participation. Of those interested young adults, 17 participated in one of four virtual focus groups. The participants represented seven colleges and universities plus the apprenticeship pathway. Each focus group lasted between 60 and 120 minutes to discuss 21 questions focused on young adults' personal experiences, perspectives on navigating Passport requirements, and questions about how the Passport program assisted their college, careers, or apprenticeships. All young adult participants received a \$50 gift card via email for their participation.

## Qualitative Data Analysis

Four research team members conducted the qualitative analysis for this evaluation (i.e., interviews and focus groups). All four research team members identify as female, and at least three members identify with racially and ethnically marginalized groups. Two of the four team members have completed the We All Count Foundations of Data Equity training and applied data equity concepts to this evaluation. The research team members participate in ongoing formal training and informal activities to address their own biases and understandings of different marginalized groups and continue to be mindful of how their experiences shape their understanding of the responses from the different participant groups in this evaluation. The research team dedicated time in the design phase of the evaluation to identify key constituents and brainstorm research methods that would be sensitive to the populations of interest and prioritized the safety and agency of all participants. The research team focused on participant safety throughout data collection, analysis, and the construction of this report.

All interviews and focus groups were videorecorded with closed caption transcription provided for attendees to access during the interview. The research team downloaded transcripts from the Zoom online platform, renamed them to protect the identities of individual participants, and saved these documents in a secure folder accessible only to the research team. The research team cleaned transcripts, which consisted of correcting transcription errors (e.g., WASSAC à WSAC, they à their) and grouping text based on speaker responses. Once cleaned, all transcripts were uploaded to the NVivo qualitative analysis program for coding and analysis.

The research team developed a structural or organizational coding schema deductively from the interview and focus group protocols for topical analysis. For college staff interviews ( $n = 30$ ), four members of the research team assessed intercoder reliability using a sample of two transcripts.

Each team member coded independently, and then the full team met to compare and discuss variations in approaches. Across the two transcripts, the research team had an average agreement of 98.8 percent of agreement across codes. The research team then revised the codebook with an updated list of codes based on the results of this session. The research team reviewed coding assignments weekly to raise questions about codes and discuss emerging themes. The research team applied the same codebook to the five PLT and four young adult focus groups.

Following coding, the research team conducted a thematic analysis. The research team created a list of queries using the revised coding schemes and organized the queries based on the report outline and research questions. Initial analysis focused on identifying themes within each of the participant categories. Secondary analysis included queries examining variation in emerging themes by institution type (e.g., 2-year vs. 4-year, private vs. 4-year public colleges and universities) and by participant characteristics (e.g., young adults who experienced foster care and/or homelessness). All identifiable data, including names, institutions, and locations, were removed to protect the identity of all participants between analysis and reporting.

## Feedback and Report Revision

Following thematic analysis and reporting, the research team solicited key constituent feedback on the draft findings and recommendations May 13–17, 2024. The research team emailed a draft of the report and Padlet link to 53 young adult participants who expressed interest or participated in focus groups, 59 Passport staff who participated in interviews, and 20 additional key constituents WSAC identified. The research team also hosted a session during the WSAC Passport to Careers State Conference on May 14, 2024. DSS, WSAC staff, and PLT team members attended the session and provided feedback. The research team hosted a second feedback session on May 16, 2024, for 20 additional key constituents WSAC identified, including Project Education Impact team members. (Project Education Impact is a coalition of state agencies and nonprofit organizations working to develop strategies to improve outcomes for Passport participants.) Thirty-two unique key constituents identified their names and roles in a Padlet designed to collect feedback. It contained 53 posts and substantive comments as well as “likes” on posts that helped the research team prioritize feedback important to multiple key constituents.

## Notes About Language in This Report

Throughout the report, key constituents who participated in data collection are referred to as the following:

- **Passport Staff:** People who implement the program at the college level, such as DSS, financial aid staff, and institutional Passport leaders, or through the apprenticeship pathway, such as institutional Passport leaders and apprenticeship navigators
- **PLT Members:** Members of the PLT
- **Young Adults Who Experienced Foster Care and/or Unaccompanied Homelessness:** Passport participants in focus groups

The research team applied the following guidelines to reflect the prevalence of themes from qualitative data sources:

- One: unique perspective meaning that a theme exists once in the data set or subject group
- Two or three: a few mentions of a theme, accompanied by clarifying language
- Four or more: many mentions of a theme, accompanied by clarifying language



Note that quotations in this report have been lightly edited for capitalization and punctuation. Inserted references are marked with brackets (i.e., []). Stories reflect one or more participants' examples from their Passport experience, and the research team may have turned specific examples into something more generic to protect the identity of individuals.

## About

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Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) contracted with Westat to conduct a Passport to Careers evaluation following Senate Bill 5187. Westat completed the evaluation design, implementation, and report between September 2023 and June 2024 applying a data equity framework that involved many key constituents at all phases. WSAC provided ongoing feedback, connections to key constituents, and deidentified extant data. The research presented here uses confidential data from the Education Research and Data Center (ERDC) located within the Washington Office of Financial Management (OFM). ERDC's data system is a statewide longitudinal data system that includes deidentified data about people's preschool, educational, and workforce experiences. The views expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of OFM or other data contributors. Any errors are attributable to the authors. Please direct questions about the evaluation to [lorinathanson@westat.com](mailto:lorinathanson@westat.com) and questions about the Passport to Careers program to [passport@wsac.wa.gov](mailto:passport@wsac.wa.gov).

## Westat

Westat improves lives by delivering exceptional data-driven research and technical assistance, fostering insights and solutions to advance health, education, and social and economic opportunity. Our approach is rooted in rigorous statistical and data science methods with an unflinching dedication to improving lives through research—we approach each project with investigative curiosity, data rigor, adaptive methods, and advanced technology. These attributes, unchanged since our establishment in 1963, combined with our innovative thinking, transparency, and adaptability, are why clients find exceptional value in our work.

**Westat research team:** Lori Nathanson, PhD; Albert Y. Liu, PhD; Nina Page; Latifa (Tia) Fletcher, PhD; Victoria Martin

## Acknowledgments

The Westat research team thanks the many key constituents for their expertise, time, and effort so that this evaluation is not just about or for them, but with them. First, thanks to the WSAC research team, Mark Lundgren, Emma Lacalli, and Kara Larson, who guided the evaluation design, connected the Westat research team with participants and data sources, created high-quality deidentified datasets, and conducted analyses, all of which made this evaluation possible. Other key constituents provided datasets including [Education Research & Data Center](#) and ANEW to augment data collected through WSAC's URR. Thanks to the many Passport to Careers implementers who participated in multiple stages of the evaluation, including Becky Thompson and Dawn Cypriano-McAferly from WSAC, PLT members, and designated support and financial aid staff at Washington State institutions large and small. Key constituents, including Project Education Impact workgroup members, previewed findings and provided feedback on the associated recommendations as part of their charge to improve educational outcomes for Washington State students. Most of all, the evaluation team thanks the young adults who experienced foster care or homelessness who completed surveys and participated in focus groups above and beyond the efforts they put into their postsecondary journeys to satisfying careers.

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<https://wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/06.2024-Passport.to.Careers.Implementation.and.Outcome.Evaluation.pdf>