



# Adult Reengagement Focus Group Report Summary DRAFT

## Background

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In the spring of 2017, the Washington Student Achievement Council contracted with Western Washington University to conduct focus groups of Washington citizens between the ages of 25-44. The primary goal of this project was to understand the participants' needs and decision making processes regarding postsecondary education.

## Motivations and perceived value of education

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Desire to increase earnings (economic need, realization more education = more opportunities)

Example to children

Encouraged by family, friends and counselors

## Barriers to postsecondary education

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### Financial

- Paying loans from an earlier attempt returning to school.
- Unqualified due to spousal or family income.
- Debt unrelated to education.

### Family/Work-life balance

### Discouragement

- High school teachers/counselors interfered with students' pursuits.

## Preferred learning format

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## Search for answers

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Searches begin with awareness.

Social media, community events, and work place presentations valued.

Initial searches for all programs were internet-based.

Participants endorsed internet searches and/or telephone calls followed by visits to geographically convenient schools.

Greater clarity and simplicity of websites are needed.

State-wide website valued and desired. Should include:

- Filtering capabilities for programs of interest, delivery methods, schedule, and cost.
- Practice entry exams.
- Financial aid information and loan calculator.
- Guidance regarding previous credits.
- Virtual mentor program (connect prospective returning students w/those currently enrolled or completed).
- Budgeting and financial knowledge workshops (in-person or virtual).
- Simplified scholarship system.
- Available child care options/facilities.