



Educator Workforce Legislative Report

December 2020

Executive Summary

Washington State is experiencing a shortage of teachers in certain geographic and subject areas, along with an underrepresentation of certain groups in the teaching profession. To address these problems, the Washington State Legislature created the Educator Workforce Program (EWP). The EWP includes five programs that work in concert to address educator workforce shortages and increase equity for groups currently underrepresented in the teaching profession. Demand for all programs in the EWP is high, as applicants need the support of these valuable financial aid opportunities to realize their career goals. In exchange for receiving a conditional scholarship, recipients must teach as a certificated employee in an approved education program for two years or fulfill the obligation in half the time by serving in a shortage area.

From 686 applicants, the EWP awarded 331 students in the 2019-20 academic year.¹ The program successfully targeted groups underrepresented in the teaching workforce. For the purposes of the EWP, underrepresented teachers were considered people of color; people whose native language was not English; males; disabled people; people who were in foster care during their youth; people with either active, reserve, or veteran status with the military or National Guard; and people with low incomes. The program also successfully targeted shortage areas, with the most common endorsements being elementary education, English language learner, special education, bilingual education, and early childhood education.

Key Takeaways

Washington needs more teachers to address geographic and subject area shortages.

The Educator Workforce Program (EWP) was created to address shortages and increase equity for groups currently underrepresented in the teaching profession.

Demand is high for financial aid programs that address educator shortages.

Participants receive financial support in exchange for a commitment to teach in an approved program and/or shortage area.

WSAC recommends fully funding the Educator Workforce Program to meet high unmet demand.

Continuous funding would help EWP meet the goal of eliminating teacher shortages and reaching equity in teacher representation.

¹ The Teacher Shortage Conditional Scholarship program data included in the report are for the first cohort of TSCS recipients in 2020-21, as there was no application cycle for TSCS in 2019-20.

Recommendations

- **Commit to funding that meets demand:** The EWP offers a targeted approach, developed based on research and partner input, yet there is still a high unmet demand. The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) recommends a continued commitment to fully funding the EWP until there is no teacher shortage and equity has been reached in teacher representation.
- **Commit to the long-term stability of the program:** For the EWP to reach the goal of significantly contributing to the elimination of the teacher shortage and achieving equity in teacher representation, it is critical for the state to maintain continuous, uninterrupted funding.
- **Continue workgroup:** The collaboration and input of partners was foundational to the development of the framework for the EWP. In order to continue the program's success, WSAC recommends reconvening the workgroup to strengthen the selection framework based on program data.
- **Increase application numbers from underrepresented groups and shortage areas:** Although the EWP has received large numbers of qualified applicants, there is still an opportunity to increase applications. Specifically, WSAC would like to increase applications from groups underrepresented in the educator workforce, as well as from statewide endorsement and geographic shortage areas that have the highest need, such as Career and Technical Education.

- **Measure and report outcomes:** Although this report and its predecessor from 2018 highlight strong outcomes, it is too soon to assess the full impact of the program. WSAC will continue to track recipient outcomes and will share findings in the third legislative report due in fall of 2022.

Overview of Educator Workforce Program

The Washington State Educator Workforce Program (EWP) provides a suite of financial aid opportunities to develop and support the educator workforce, including conditional scholarships and grants. These programs are administered by the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC). The EWP seeks to address college affordability barriers, prioritize support for individuals from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in the teaching workforce, and incentivize teaching in shortage areas.

Each of the programs in the EWP is designed to support specific types of teaching candidates, such as paraeducators interested in becoming teachers, current teachers interested in adding an endorsement, or teacher candidates who are student teaching. The programs can be divided into conditional scholarships for alternative routes to teaching, a conditional scholarship for addressing endorsement and geographic shortages, and a grant program to support student teachers.

Alternative Routes Conditional Scholarships

There are three Alternative Route programs: Pipeline for Paraeducators Conditional Scholarship (PPCS), Educator Retooling Conditional Scholarship (ERCS), and Alternative Routes Conditional

Scholarship (ARCS). Each scholarship varies in award amount depending on the program, from \$3,000 to \$8,000 per academic year. Recipients of the awards owe two years of service as a certificated employee in an approved education program in Washington State for each year of funding, unless teaching in a shortage area, in which case one year of service is owed for one year of funding.

Teacher Shortage Conditional Scholarship

In response to the teacher shortage, the Washington State Legislature passed a bill in 2016 establishing the Teacher Shortage Conditional Scholarship (TSCS) program, among other educator workforce initiatives (E2SSB 6455, RCW 28B.102.090). The program went unfunded after one year of awards until the 2019-20 biennium when funding was restored and expanded. The first cohort of awards in the 2019-20 biennium were students receiving funds in academic year 2020-21 and they are included in this report. The scholarship amount varies depending on unmet need with a maximum award of \$8,000 per academic year. Recipients of the awards owe two years of service as a certificated employee in an approved education program in Washington State for each year of funding, unless teaching in a shortage area, in which case one year of service is owed for one year of funding.

Additionally, applicants for the Career and Technical Education Conditional Scholarship (CTECS) program were incorporated into the TSCS applicant recruitment and selection. However, given the small pool (fewer than six recipients) of CTECS thus far, the CTECS recipients are included in TSCS numbers. We hope to separately report on this program in future reports when the application and recipient numbers are large enough.

Student Teaching Grant

The intent of the Student Teaching Grant (STG) is to provide additional funds to student teachers at Title I public common schools in Washington. The grant amount varies depending on unmet need with a maximum, one-time award of \$8,000 per academic year. Unlike the conditional scholarships in the EWP, this grant does not require a service obligation.

EWP Demographic Data

The average age of applicants was 33, with the average age of awardees and non-awardees being very similar (34 and 32, respectively). The applicants were primarily female (79%) and those awarded were also primarily female (78%). Males composed 19% of applicants and 18% of recipients, with the remaining 2% of applicants and 4% of recipients unknown or non-binary/x, as the number of reported non-binary/x applicants and recipients was too small (i.e. fewer than six) to report them separately. The applicants' race and ethnicity were grouped together and into two categories, white and Person of Color, to ensure applicants were not identifiable. The applicants were 55% white and 30% People of Color, with 15% unknown. The recipients were 40% white and 37% People of Color, with 23% unknown.

The average family income of applicants was \$55,476. The average family income of recipients was significantly lower at \$35,249. The average family income of those not awarded was \$71,659. Applicants' percent of Median Family Income (MFI) is a helpful indicator of economic well-being, as it controls for family size in relation to income and accounts for income in comparison to all

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Washingtonians. As a reference point, the MFI in 2019-20 for a family of four was \$92,000. The average percent of MFI of applicants was 73%, with awardees at 49% and non-awardees at 93%.

Table 1 displays a summary of applicant and recipient data, followed by descriptive insights organized by program. The data presented are for academic year 2019-20 for all programs—except TSCS, where the

data are from the first cohort awarded in the 2020-21 academic year. The data for ARCS are for first-time awardees who received funds in the 2019-20 academic year. Applicants of ARCS are selected by the institutions at which they are enrolled, and WSAC receives the list of recipients; therefore, the ARCS data presented in Table 1 are for recipients.

Table 1: Applicant and Recipient Data for Educator Workforce Programs

N = 686 applicants; N=331 recipients

Program	Average Age:	Percent Female:	Percent Male:	Percent White:	Percent People of Color:	Average Family Income:	Average Percent of MFI:
	Applicants Recipients						
ARCS (n = 71)	38	66%	20%	Unknown	Unknown	\$59,377	77%
ERCS (n = 104; n = 63)	48	85%	14%	70%	26%	\$74,139	104%
	41	86%	14%	78%	17%	\$81,995	110%
PPCS (n = 26; n = 16)	35	73%	23%	54%	42%	\$60,598	82%
	37	88%	*	56%	44%	\$67,680	79%
STG (n = 79; n = 62)	29	78%	20%	58%	42%	\$28,135	41%
	29	79%	19%	56%	44%	\$18,222	29%
TSCS (n = 406; n = 119)	31	81%	19%	61%	33%	\$57,469	75%
	29	79%	21%	33%	66%	\$18,495	29%
All EWP (N = 686; N = 331)	33	79%	19%	55%	30%	\$55,476	73%
	34	78%	18%	40%	37%	\$35,249	49%

**Indicates fewer than six in the category*

Note: Gender is reported in two categories to ensure individuals who responded as “non-binary/x” are not identifiable, as the number of applicants in this category was fewer than six for all programs. Percents within a category, such as gender, may not add to 100%, as some data are unknown.

Alternative Route Programs

Alternative Routes Conditional Scholarship

Of the three Alternative Route Programs, ARCS had the lowest percent of female recipients (66%), which could be due in part to a larger percent of applicants whose gender was unknown (14%) or that ARCS has higher parity between male and female recipients than other programs.

The applicants' race and ethnicity were reported in Table 1 as unknown because WSAC did not have individual data on ARCS applicants or recipients. However, according to summary data for the academic year 2019-20 provided by the Professional Educator Standards Board to WSAC, 34% of ARCS recipients were People of Color, 58% were white, and 8% were unknown.

Educator Retooling Conditional Scholarship

The average age of ERCS applicants was 48 and the combined average of the other Alternative Route Programs was 37. This aligns with the program's target demographic, which is teachers who are interested in adding a shortage area endorsement to their certificate. These teaching professionals also had, on average, higher income than other applicants, with recipients having a higher average income than applicants. This was also true for applicants' and recipients' percent of MFI, with recipients' percent of MFI being higher than the total pool of applicants (110% and 104%, respectively). This trend warrants more in-depth exploration as to what barriers may exist for lower-income applicants to be awarded.

Pipeline for Paraeducators Conditional Scholarship

People of Color composed 42% of the PPCS applicant pool, with 54% white and 6% unknown. There was a slight increase in the percent of the recipients who were People of Color (44%) represented in the recipient pool compared to the applicant pool.

The average family income of applicants was \$60,598, which is slightly higher than the average for applicants of all EWP at \$55,476. This may be in part because the program requires that applicants be employed as paraeducators, whereas other programs in the EWP have applicants who may not be working while attending school full-time. The average family income of PPCS recipients (\$67,680) was higher than the PPCS applicant pool. However, the percent of MFI of recipients (79%) was lower than the applicant pool (82%), suggesting that applicants with more people in their household were awarded. However, this trend warrants more in-depth exploration as to what barriers may exist for lower-income applicants to be awarded.

Student Teaching Grant

The applicant and recipient data for STG were similar, except for income and percent of MFI, suggesting that a representative group of recipients was selected from the applicant pool. Given that STG is meant to prioritize applicants with the most need, it is not surprising that the average family income of recipients was approximately \$10,000 less (\$18,222) than all STG applicants (\$28,135). The average percent of MFI of applicants was 41%, with recipients at 29%.

Teacher Shortage Conditional Scholarship

The TSCS data are from the first cohort awarded in the 2020-21 academic year. As noted earlier, the CTECS was awarded from the TSCS applicant pool and their data were combined in the following overview to protect individual applicant data, as there were fewer than six applicants and recipients of the CTECS.

Of all the programs in the EWP, TSCS saw the highest demand, with 406 applications in its first cycle since being reinstated. The average age of applicants was 31, with the average age of awardees being 29. The applicants were primarily female (81%) and those awarded were also primarily female (79%). Males composed 19% of applicants and 21% of recipients. The applicants were 61% white and 33% People of Color with 6% unknown. The recipients were 33% white and 66% People of Color with 1% unknown. The increase in the proportion of recipients self-identified as People of Color as compared to the TSCS applicants represents the priority given to underrepresented teachers, of which one of the categories is being a Person of Color.

The TSCS recipient data also represent the priority given to applicants with higher financial need. The average family income of applicants was \$57,469. The average family income of recipients was significantly lower at \$18,495. The average percent of MFI of applicants was 75%, with recipients at 29%.

Deferments and Repayments

Recipients of the conditional scholarships in the EWP owe two years of service for every year they receive funds. For recipients who are unable to serve their obligation, they may be placed in deferment or

repayment status. A deferment is temporary and often occurs when a major life event conflicts with fulfilling service, such as taking time away from work for medical reasons or having difficulty finding work in their field. A repayment may be temporary or permanent, depending on circumstances and the recipient's ability to serve their obligation. The goal of the conditional scholarships in the EWP is for all recipients to pay back their scholarship via service. However, there are times where repayment is necessary.

The cohort of recipients who are the focus of this report have not had enough time pass since disbursement to be in repayment. Of the 269 conditional scholarship recipients, 264 are still in school and 5 are in service. In future reports, a more detailed analysis of deferments and repayments will be included.

Conclusion

The Educator Workforce Program is working to address the teacher shortage and to achieve equity in teacher representation in Washington State. It will take continued support for the EWP to have an impact on the workforce. This support includes a continuous appropriation; partnerships with other state agencies, school districts, and nonprofit organizations; innovative strategies and partnerships to reach groups currently underrepresented in the teaching workforce; and a thorough, longitudinal outcomes analysis that can inform all aspects of the EWP. With continued support from the Legislature, the suite of programs in the EWP can operate together to improve the educator workforce in our state.

About the Washington Student Achievement Council

The Washington Student Achievement Council is committed to increasing educational opportunities and attainment in Washington. The Council has three main functions:

- Lead statewide strategic planning to increase educational attainment.
- Administer programs that help people access and pay for college.
- Advocate for the economic, social, and civic benefits of higher education.

The Council has nine members. Four members represent each of Washington's major education sectors: four-year public baccalaureates, four-year private colleges, public community and technical colleges, and K-12 public schools. Five are citizen members, including one current student.

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