



Policy Development 2023

Stakeholder Engagement Forums

July 20 and 28, 2022



Agenda and Objectives for Today

20 minutes Introductions and Framing

80 minutes Emerging Policy Proposals: Presentations and Breakout discussions

10 minutes Next Steps

- **Discuss and gather feedback** from diverse stakeholders on emerging policy proposals that will increase equity in postsecondary attainment
- **Learn about and elevate** local/regional policy proposals to increase equity in postsecondary attainment



Zoom Considerations

- Full group portion and breakout rooms will be recorded for staff purposes
- Video on is encouraged (so we can see you!), but not expected
- Please allow space for all people to speak; notice if it's time for active listening or speaking up
- In any conversation, especially ones that inherently involve systemic power (race, class, gender, etc.), people will show up to the conversation with different backgrounds/real lived experiences and embodied expertise. Please be respectful and be mindful of the potential unintended impact of your language. Please take a moment to reflect on WSAC's equity statement



Washington Student Achievement Council: Who We Are



We advance educational opportunities and attainment in Washington. In pursuit of our mission, the **Washington Student Achievement Council:**

- Leads statewide strategic planning to improve educational coordination and transitions
- Supports Washingtonians through the administration of financial aid, a college savings plan, and support services
- Advocates for the economic, social, and civic benefits of postsecondary education



The Council



Jeff Vincent, Chair
CEO & President
Laird Norton Company



Jan Yoshiwara, Vice Chair
Executive Director
State Board for Community
and Technical Colleges



Alejandro Alcantar
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Central Washington University



Jeff Charbonneau, Secretary
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Zillah School District



Paul Francis
Executive Director
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Davon Thomas
Student
University of Washington



Sativah Jones
Assistant Director of College
and Career Readiness
Highline Public Schools



Chris Reykdal
Superintendent
Office of Superintendent of
Public Instruction



Evangelina Shreeve
Director
Pacific Northwest National
Laboratory

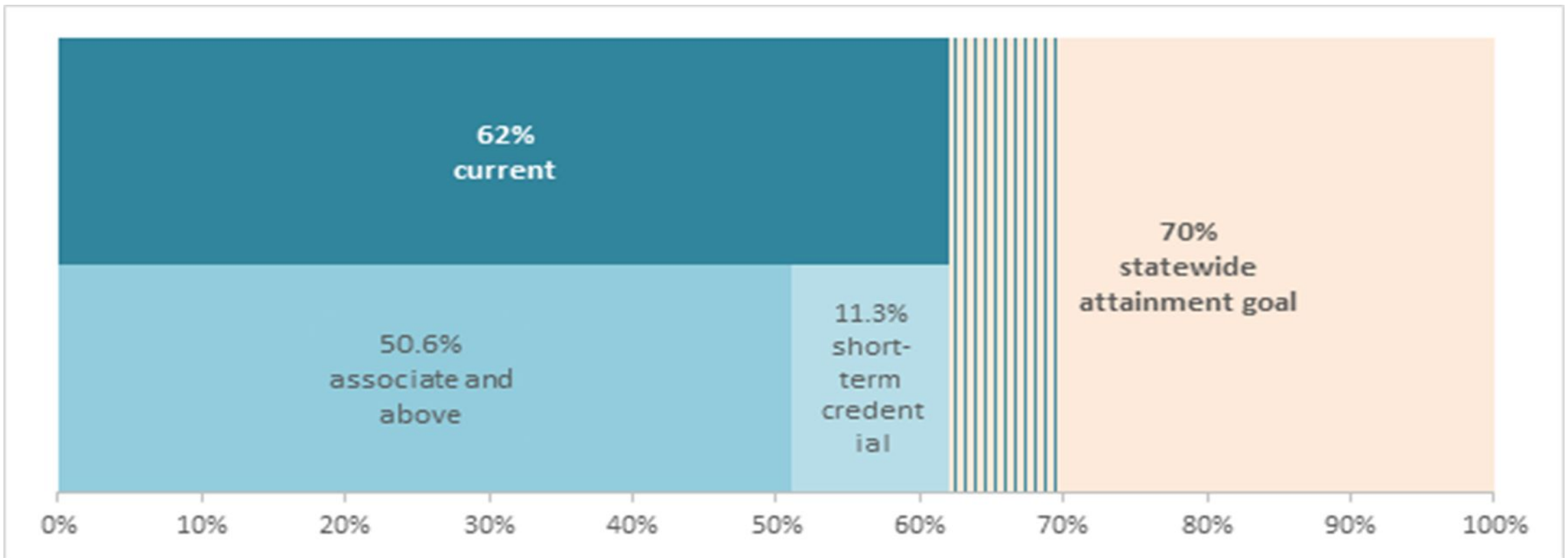


Dr. Terri Standish-Kuon
CEO & President
Independent Colleges of
Washington



Washington's Postsecondary Attainment Goal

At least 70 percent of Washington adults, ages 25-44, within each racial and ethnic community and region, will have a postsecondary credential. Currently, an estimated 62% percent of Washington's adults have a credential beyond high school.

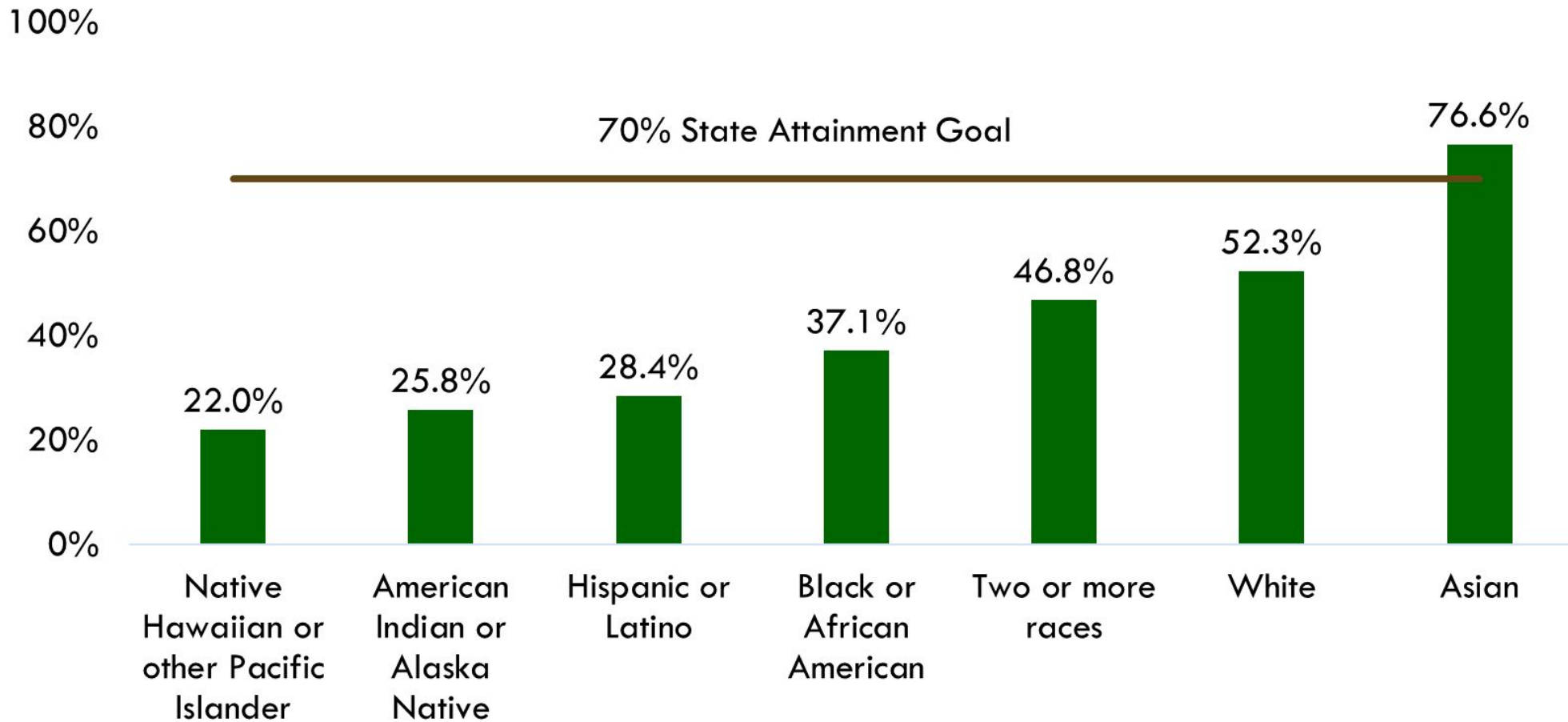


Source: 2019 American Community Survey 1 Year Washington



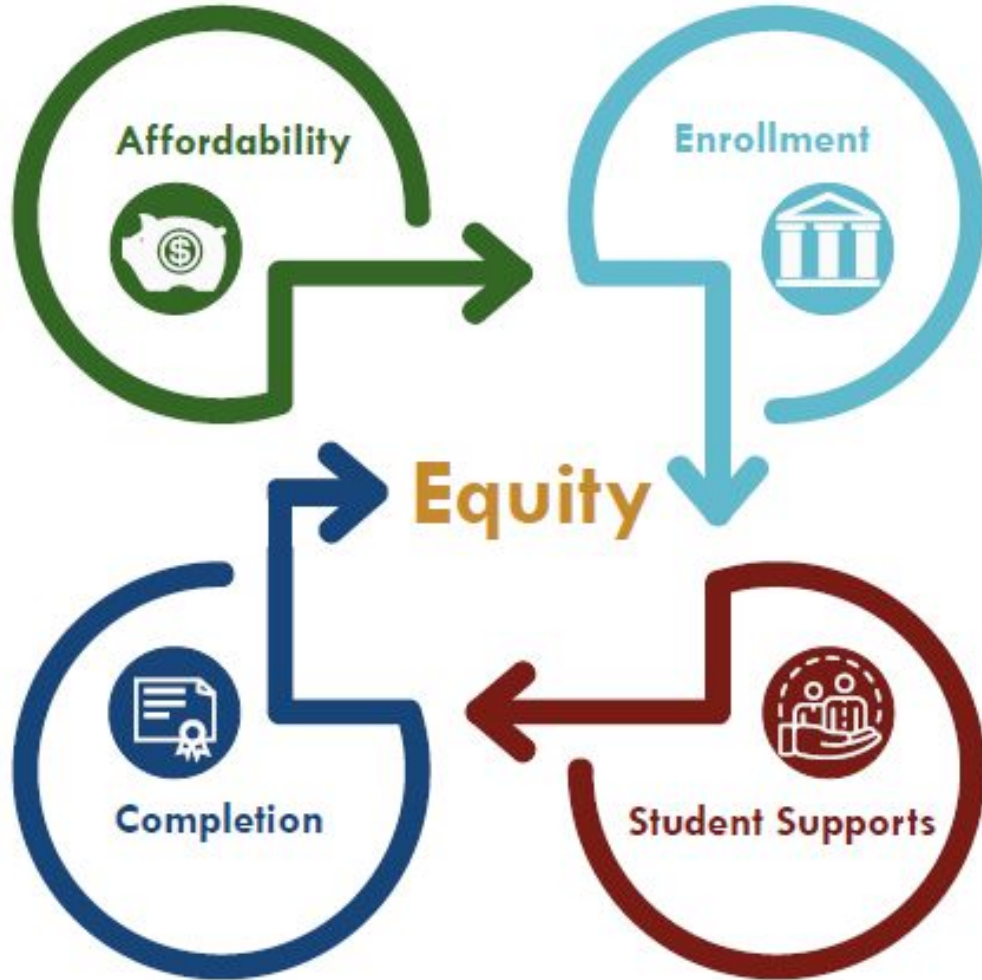
Postsecondary Attainment Goal and Equity

Proportion of WA adults, age 25-44, with postsecondary credentials, 2019.





Strategic framework



If we build an **affordable** and **supportive** educational environment, more Washington residents will **enroll** in and **complete** a credential-bearing program.

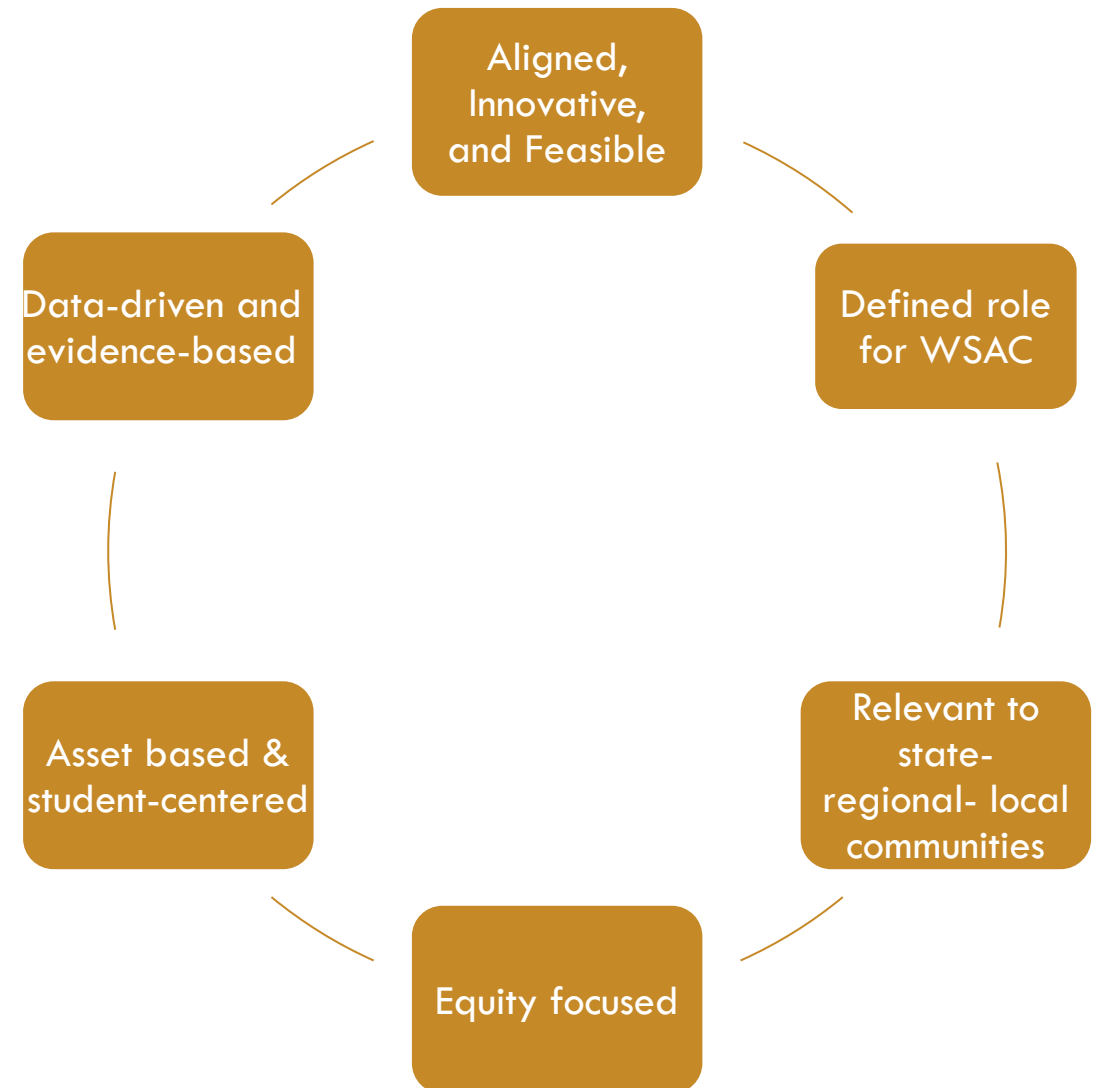
Equity is an outcome in which justice is realized within our society through a continuous, intentional process of identifying and abolishing racism and all forms of oppression designed to marginalize students, communities, and families who are Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, regardless of immigration status, and all oppressed groups.

WSAC Equity Definition



Approach for considering state policies

1. Will the policy help students of color and low-income students?
2. Is there evidence or data that the policy will advance the cluster?
3. Does the policy center and value students' experience?
4. Do regional and/or local communities or partners see value in the policy?
5. Is there a clear opportunity for WSAC and others to play a role?
6. Is it feasible to accomplish the policy (\$, political will, alignment with other initiatives etc.)?





Equity in postsecondary enrollment and completion

Context and Proposals



Equity in Postsecondary Enrollment and Completion

- Students are experiencing **profound disruptions in learning, with disproportionate impacts on communities of color and low-income students**
- WA K12 direct **postsecondary enrollment has been stagnant - 60% for the past ten years**. Postsecondary enrollment in Washington was down 14% in the fall of 2020 compared to the prior year, with a greater decline in 2-year institutions and a greater decline for many students of color
- **FAFSA completion rates are down, and for low-income students and students of color, completion rates are disproportionately lower**. Just over 45% of seniors completed a FAFSA as of the end of June 2022.
- Among students who graduated from Washington higher education institutions (public, private, 2 & 4 year) in 2019, **American Indian/Alaska Native, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander graduate at lower rates than their White and Asian peers**. For students who begin at CTCs and intend to transfer, only 22% enroll in a public 4-year institution within 2 years (2017). When disaggregated by race, American Indian, Black, and Hispanic students transfer at lower rates than their peers. Low income students are also less likely to transfer than non-low income peers.



Expand Otterbot

What's the background?

- Otterbot launched in the fall of 2019 and currently serves College Bound juniors and seniors with proactive texting nudges. It is also available 24/7 to answer student questions using artificial intelligence (AI) technology.
- In June 2022, WSAC received grant funding to expand and study Otterbot with MDRC from Capital One. However, this funding is time-bound, and to continue the expanded services, state funding is required.

What's the idea?

- Expand the Otterbot texting tool to support College Bound parents and 9th and 10th grade students with college access and financial aid information. Funding is to purchase additional chatbot licenses and for additional staffing to implement, evaluate, and improve the tool.

Why is this important?

- National studies show that students are confused about the financial aid process and are not always aware of the resources available to them. Otterbot provides this support via an accessible and used medium.
- In a recent survey to students, 84% of respondents said they find Otterbot helpful.
- The majority of students who receive Otterbot messages are students of color, offering an opportunity to increase financial aid access and postsecondary enrollment outcomes for these students. For example, more than half of Otterbot recipients are Hispanic/Latinx (53%), a much higher proportion than the K-12 student population overall (25%).



Transfer Student Tool

What's the background?

- Transfer students represent a critical group of degree seekers in our state. Students and advisors alike describe the transfer system as complex and difficult to find information because of the decentralization of information.

What's the idea?

- Centralize public facing information via an online tool to help students, their support systems (family), advisors and faculty access academic maps, match courses/course equivalencies.
- Explore the possibility of including transfer outcomes by institution such as time to degree completion for transfer students or other metrics.

Why is this important?

- Opportunity to help students make informed decisions and increase the number of successful transfers
- Transfer students represent a higher proportion of racial and ethnic minority students and adult learners than their peers at who began their higher education journey at 4-year institutions.



Expand Regional Challenge Grants

What's the background?

- WSAC received \$6M for Fy 2022-23 to grant awards competitively to local partnerships who will devise interventions to increase postsecondary enrollment with a focus on equity
- Preliminary survey and feedback session results show there is a great demand for both early stage partnership grants and program grants that cannot be accomplished at current funding levels

What's the idea?

- Expand the current granting capacity to support additional regional partnerships across the state in support of statewide attainment goals

Why is this important?

- Postsecondary enrollment continues to decline and is especially concerning for our CTCs. In addition, transfer applications have dropped as well
- Localized, intentional collective effort is needed to increase postsecondary enrollment and reach populations furthest from educational justice
- To continue expanding work in different areas of the state where there is a need for such investments and desire by communities to invest in postsecondary attainment goals



Breakout Discussions

- What do you think of these proposals? How do they align with your work and organizational priorities?
- What questions do you have? What, if anything, is missing from these proposals?
- How might any of these proposals positively impact students who identify as BIPOC, undocumented, and other students furthest from our attainment goal?

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|---------------|---------------|--------------------|
| RCG Expansion | Transfer Tool | Otterbot Expansion |
|---------------|---------------|--------------------|



Affordability and ensuring postsecondary students' access to basic needs

Context and Proposals



Ensuring Affordability for Postsecondary Education

Affordability is the most cited barrier to enrolling and continuing in education beyond high school. The financial barriers go beyond the cost of the education itself, expressed as tuition and fees. Many students must support, or contribute to the support, of their household.

Washington's primary need based program, Washington College Grant, is one of the most generous and equitable state grant programs in the nation.

- Guaranteed funding for eligible students since 2020-21 AY.
- The 2022 Legislature expanded the maximum grant from 0-55% Median Family Income (MFI) to 0-60% MFI. Prorated awards up to 100% MFI.
- Fewer students than expected are enrolling and receiving WCG.



WA Bridge Grants & Max MFI Range

What's the background?

- WA Bridge Grant was first introduced during the 2022 Legislative Session as a bill sponsored by Chair Slatter. The bill did not pass but the program was created via a budget proviso. Without Legislative action it will expire after the 2022-23 AY.
- The program provides an additional \$500 to Washington College Grant recipients with MFI between 0-60%, who are not College Bound Scholars.
- WCG statute sets maximum WCG award at 0-55% MFI, but a 2022 budget proviso expands the range for maximum awards to 60% MFI. Without Legislative action it will expire after the 2022-23 AY.

What's the idea?

- Make the “Washington Bridge Grant” program permanent.
- Make the maximum WCG award range from 0-55% to 0-60% MFI

Why is this important?

- Students face affordability barriers beyond tuition and fees. By working in combination with WCG, this program takes another step in closing affordability gaps.
- Without making the change in statutes, colleges will not be able to award Bridge Grant and 56-60% MFI as part of initial financial aid awarding.



State Aid - Innovative pilots

What's the background?

- The U.S. Department of Education has this type of authority via “Experimental Sites Initiative.”
- There is interest in testing out ideas as pilots and understand the impacts first before implementing program wide.

What's the idea?

- Allows for and provides funding for WSAC to test out innovative ideas for state aid programs. Pilot ideas would support equity goals, as well as post secondary and apprenticeship access, enrollment, persistence and completion.
- Pilots could be funded through caseload savings (when applicable), appropriations, or transfers from other state accounts.

Why is this important?

- Allows WSAC to test ideas that align with policy goals in a way that is flexible, adaptable and responsive to changes to environment.
- Ability to bring tested ideas to policy makers that support the goals of state aid programs.



Support for Postsecondary Students' Basic Needs

- **Postsecondary students' basic needs are not being met, their circumstances have been exacerbated due to the pandemic, and racial inequities have been exacerbated**
 - During the spring of 2020, almost three in five college students experienced some form of basic needs insecurity, including housing insecurity, food insecurity, or homelessness.
 - In Washington (in the fall of 2019), 41% students reported food insecurity and 51% students reported housing insecurity.
 - The pandemic has exacerbated inequities for BIPOC communities---of CTC students, 55% American Indian or Alaskan Native students, 54% of Black students, and 47% Hispanic or Latinx students said they struggled to put food on the table, compared to less than 40% of white students.



Hunger Free Campus Pilot

What's the background?

Student advocates are telling us they need comprehensive food security solutions. Volunteer-based emergency approaches do not meet the systemic need for food security, and students experience barriers with SNAP access.

What's the idea?

- Create Hunger-Free Campus legislation, defining a comprehensive plan for campuses to ensure students have access to support services for food security.
- Fund a Washington Hunger-Free Campuses pilot program that ensures food security for all students. Pilot institutions implement a comprehensive anti-hunger program, including support for SNAP uptake, coordination and community partnerships, emergency resources, and a proactive food plan for low-resourced students.

Why is this important?

- Research shows that food insecurity impacts postsecondary persistence and completion.
- Food insecurity disproportionately impacts BIPOC households and households with children – the same types of students most at risk for not completing postsecondary education.
- Running Start students who are eligible for free/reduced price meals are missing this benefit at college campuses.



Telehealth Pilot for Mental/Behavioral health care

What's the background?

- Institutions report lack of capacity to meet student need in campus AND community providers, particularly in rural areas. This has been exacerbated since the pandemic.
- Some 2 year and 4 year institutions have contracted with telehealth providers using pandemic relief funds or other temporary funds, but evaluation has been limited.

What's the idea?

Ensure mental/behavioral healthcare access for postsecondary students by investing in tele-health services to augment campus/community in-person care.

- Two year pilot: IHEs opt-in to join state contract with telehealth provider. Pilot colleges participate in evaluation of tele-health students' health and educational outcomes

Why is this important?

Mental/behavioral health issues are steadily rising nationally and impacting students' academic success, with disparate impact on BIPOC, low income and other marginalized populations.



Breakout Discussions AND survey

- What do you think of these proposals? How do they align with your work and organizational priorities?
- What questions do you have? What, if anything, is missing from these proposals?
- How might any of these proposals positively impact students who identify as BIPOC, undocumented, and other students furthest from our attainment goal?

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| Bridge Grants | State Aid Innovative Pilots |
| Telehealth Pilot | Postsecondary Food Security |



Thank you and next steps

- **Complete the survey**
- Council meeting discussion and vote (August 31)
- Final question: in chat or unmute

THANK YOU for your participation!