

Postsecondary Benefits Promotion Pilot

Recent research points to high levels of basic needs insecurity among postsecondary students, including one in three students reporting food insecurity. However, less than half of students reporting basic needs insecurity report accessing public benefits and campus resources that could better support their needs.¹

Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) invites postsecondary institutions to participate in a **Postsecondary Benefits Promotion Pilot in Academic Year 2024-2025** to test strategies for targeted outreach and support to students who are likely eligible for benefits. The goals of the pilot are to:

1. Test a new approach to identify students who are income-eligible for public benefits but who are not currently receiving them, and
2. Test the effectiveness of targeted outreach strategies to connect these students with benefits, resources and staff support.

How will the pilot work?

The pilot will enhance institutions' efforts to support students' basic needs:

- Pilot institutions will receive contact lists of their enrolled students who are likely eligible but not currently receiving state benefits. These lists will be generated through a data sharing agreement between WSAC and Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), and provided quarterly by WSAC to each pilot institution.
- Pilot institutions will provide targeted outreach to students on the contact list, including engaging messaging and navigational support for benefits application. WSAC will provide to institutions technical support and cross-college engagement on best practices for targeted outreach and messaging.
- Pilot institutions will participate with WSAC on data collection and evaluation of the pilot learning and student outcomes.

What are the benefits to colleges?

There are many benefits to participating pilot institutions, and the learning will benefit all:

- The pilot will provide institutions tailored student contact information – enrolled students likely eligible, but not receiving benefits – that streamlines institutional efforts to connect students with benefits and other resources. This tailored contact information is a unique resource for outreach that has not previously been available to institutions.
- The pilot will support institutions' efforts to provide effective messaging and outreach strategies about benefits and resources.
- Evaluation of the pilot will help pilot institutions – and all institutions – learn about effective outreach strategies to connect students with public benefits.

The learning outcomes of the pilot will be a new contribution to both the state and the nation as a strategy to connect likely-eligible students with supported access to public benefits and resources.

¹ Basic Needs Security Among Washington College Students (2023)
<https://wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2023.BasicNeedsReport.pdf>

How can institutions participate in the Benefits Promotion Pilot?

The pilot is open to both two-year and four-year institutions in Washington. To participate, institutions will complete two steps:

1. A simple interest survey, completed by **July 30**:
<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7912193/Benefits-Promotion-Pilot-Survey-July-2024>
2. A memorandum of agreement, defining roles and committing to participation. An MOA template will be available in early August, and MOAs will be signed by **October 1**.

Pilot participation will include:

- Completion of a memorandum of agreement with WSAC by October 1.
- An estimated four virtual meetings of pilot institutional teams during the year.
- A requirement to conduct quarterly targeted outreach campaigns to students on provided contact lists, with technical support from WSAC.
- Participation in limited data collection and evaluation of the pilot led by WSAC.

What's the timeline?

- **July 1:** **Completion of the Interest Survey**
- **Aug 1:** **Interested institutions receive MOA template**
- **Oct 1:** **MOAs complete and pilot Institutions confirmed**
- **Oct:** Virtual meeting of pilot institutions, with focus on targeted outreach messaging
- **Nov:** First contact lists received by institutions, outreach launches
- **Jan:** Virtual meeting of pilot institutions
- **Feb:** Second contact lists received by institutions, outreach continues
- **March:** Virtual meeting of pilot institutions
- **May:** Third contact lists received by institutions, outreach continues
- **July:** Virtual meeting of pilot institutions
- **Aug:** Initial findings and next steps

How can I learn more about this pilot?

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