

Discussion & Council Action: 2026 Legislative Proposals

The following proposals are presented for Council consideration ahead of the 2026 legislative session:

Restore Regional Partnerships' funding to continue effective, efficient, and equitable implementation

Too few Washingtonians are completing education or training beyond high school.¹ WSAC requests \$1.25 million to reinvest in Regional Partnerships (RP) that implement community-led strategies that demonstrate increased postsecondary enrollment and completion. In the third year of implementation, 12 partnerships are building effective, community-led strategies to increase learners' economic mobility. However, the Legislature's 2025-27 operating budget eliminated \$16 million in ongoing funding for RP.

This proposal would reinstate one year's worth of funding cuts to partnerships, restoring effective strategies that serve learners' access to education and training.

Proposal cost: \$1.25 million

Guarantee WA Grant for former foster and unaccompanied homeless youth

Passport to Careers helps former foster youth (FY) and unaccompanied homeless youth (UHY) prepare for and succeed in college, apprenticeships, or pre-apprenticeship programs. This population faces significant barriers to postsecondary enrollment and completion. Young adults in Washington who have experienced homelessness or foster care are enrolling and completing at rates 20+ percentage points lower than their peers.² Passport provides support services and an annual scholarship of up to \$5,000.

The number of Passport students has grown significantly since 2019. More than 1,900 students received an average award of \$2,439 across all sectors during the 2024-25 academic year. Additionally, over 99 percent of these students already receive a maximum WA Grant award. This proposal would automatically qualify all Passport-eligible students for the maximum WA Grant award and enable WSAC to issue earlier guarantees of financial aid.

Proposal cost: None

¹ https://wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2026-Strategic.Action.Plan_.pdf

² <https://www.treehouseforkids.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Project-Education-Impact-Report-October-2023.pdf>