



2026 WSAC Stakeholder Engagement Forum

July 8 and 10, 2025



For Today

Objectives

- Discuss and gain insights from diverse stakeholders on emerging policy proposals that will increase postsecondary attainment equitably
- Share one WSAC priority project in affordability, enrollment, completion, and basic needs

Agenda

- Introductions and Framing
- Equity Overview
- Emerging Policy Proposals: Presentations and Breakout Discussions
- Priority Work by Cluster
- Next Steps



About the Washington Student Achievement Council

Our Mission:

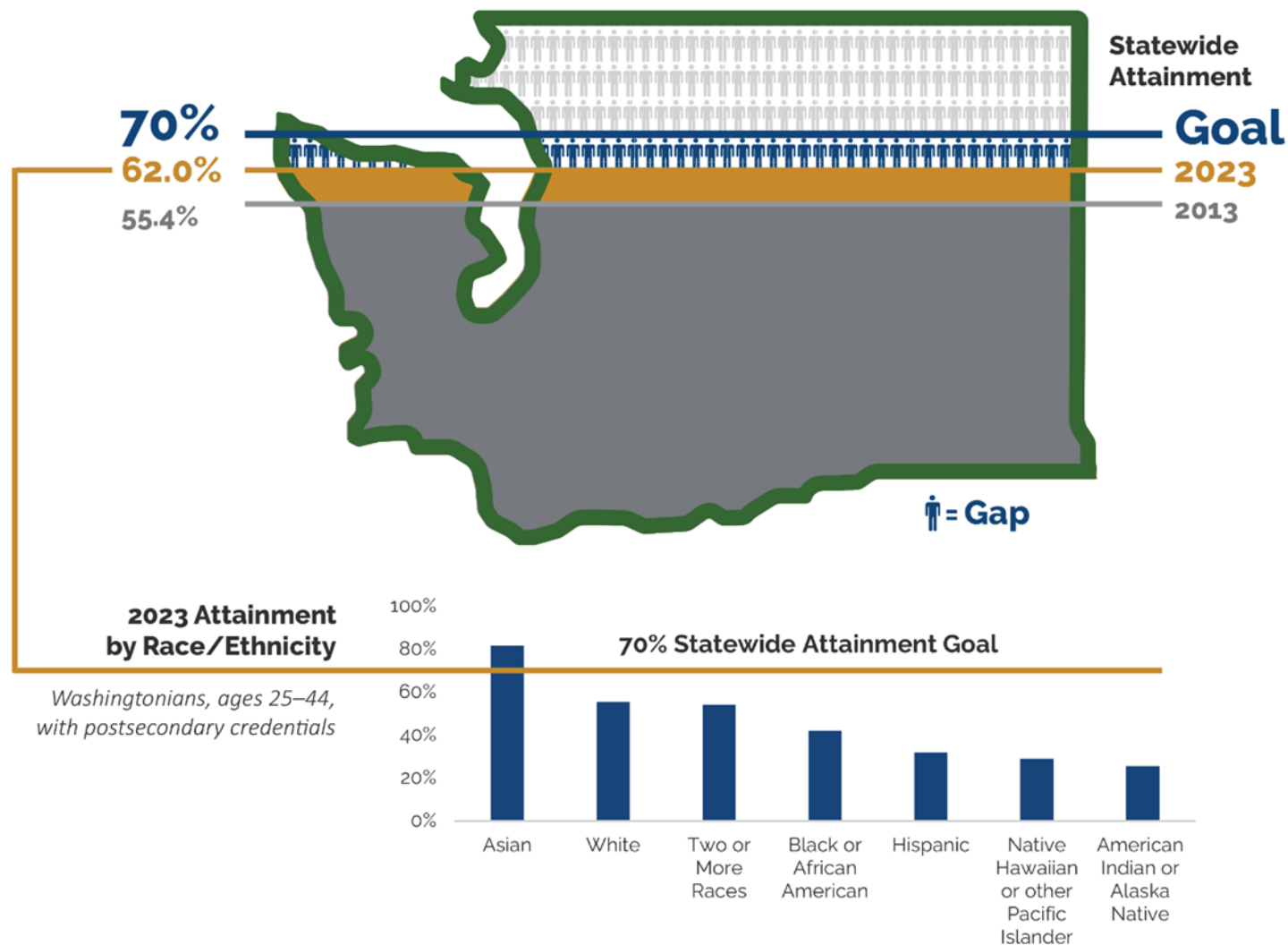
We advance educational opportunities and attainment in Washington. In pursuit of our mission, the **Washington Student Achievement Council:**

- 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.





Postsecondary Attainment Goal and Equity





The Council



Jeff Vincent, Chair
Retired CEO & President
Laird Norton Company



Chris Reykdal
Superintendent
Office of Superintendent of
Public Instruction



Vacant
Graduate Student
Member



Jeff Charbonneau, Vice Chair
Principal
Zillah School District



Evangelina Shreeve
Chief Diversity Officer &
Director, STEM Education
Pacific NW Nat'l Laboratory



Monyu Yu
Undergraduate Student
Member



Chris Bailey
Interim Executive Director
State Board for Community &
Technical Colleges



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



Ruben Flores
Executive Director
Council of Presidents



Vacant
Citizen Member



Policy Development and Stakeholder Engagement Cycle

2025

2026

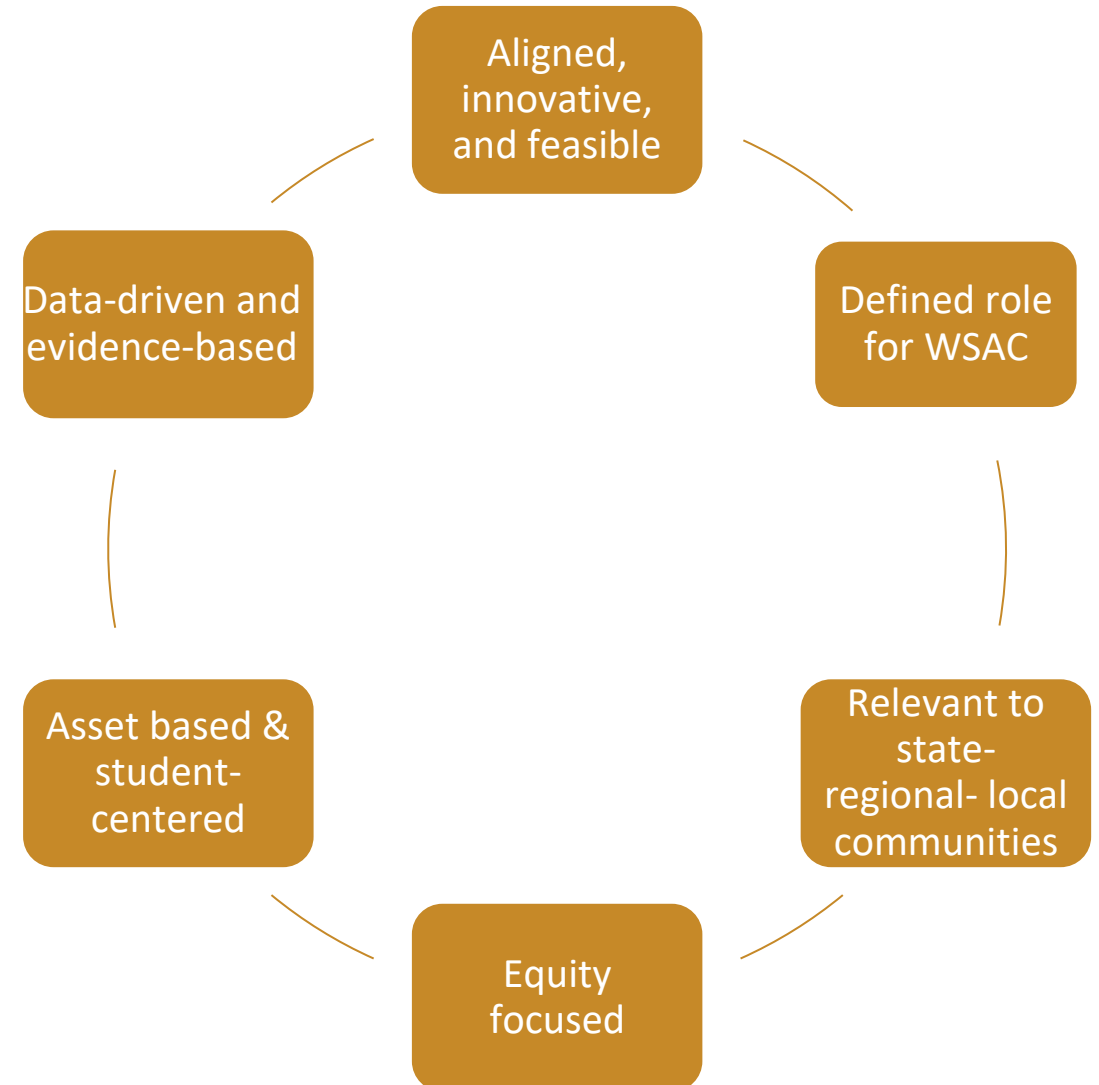
July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May
WSAC partner sessions	Council approves policy and budget requests	Policy and budget requests sent to GOV	WSAC program & policy webinar		GOV budget released	WSAC session preview Session begins		Session ends WSAC session recap		

Ongoing stakeholder engagement via policy cluster work groups



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 be effective?
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 and appropriate role for WSAC and others to play?
6. Is it feasible to accomplish the policy (\$, political will, alignment with other initiatives etc.)?





Equity gaps for Washingtonians

- Race/ethnicity gaps are persistent in both K-12 and Higher Education.
- 48% of adults ages 25-44 do not have a postsecondary credential.
- Nationwide and in Washington, the population of adults with "some college and no credential" increases year-over-year. National Student Clearinghouse data suggests this could be as high as 1.8 million Washington residents ages 25-44.
- Postsecondary attainment rates vary by region. King County is currently the only county where the statewide 70% attainment goal is met.



Pulse Check





2026 Legislative Session: Background

Washington continues to face budget shortfalls in the 2025-27 and 2027-29 biennia.

- **Guidance from Office of Financial Management (OFM)**
OFM has asked state agencies to limit their 2026 budget and legislative requests to non-discretionary, technical, administrative, and critical costs or topics.
- **2026 Supplemental Operating Budget**
There will be little to no capacity for larger 2026 budget requests.
- **WSAC Approach to Budget and Legislative Requests**
We're exploring opportunities to proactively respond to state/federal funding cuts and programmatic changes in higher education.



Student Loan Advocacy

Strengthening and Updating the Student Loan Bill of Rights

- **Annual Reporting**
Servicers must report all outstanding Washington-based student loans to the Department of Financial Institutions (DFI) and the Student Loan Advocate (SLA).
- **Private Right of Action**
Borrowers harmed by servicer violations can take legal action—individually or as a group—to seek damages.
- **Forgiveness Notice Requirement**
Servicers must send an annual notice listing all available loan forgiveness and discharge options.



Consumer Protection

Protecting Students When Institutions Close or Discontinue Programs

- **Guarantee a Path Forward or a Refund**

Update state law to require schools that close or cut degree programs to either offer a teach-out plan approved by WSAC or refund affected students.

- **Stop Unfair Debt Collection**

Schools that shut down without supporting students shouldn't be allowed to collect on outstanding balances or sell student debts to third-party collectors.

- **Expand Access to Relief Funds**

Let the Tuition Recovery Trust Fund help students not just in school closures, but also in cases of serious violations—so students get help faster and more reliably.



Increase Financial Aid Form Completion Rates

Stronger, More Coordinated Tools

- **Two essential and critical needs**
 - OtterBot – Ensure funding to continue services
 - WashBoard – Basic upgrades to continue access to scholarship information
- **What will be further lost?**
 - Without funding for OtterBot, parents will lose access to financial aid information
 - Access to scholarships in this time of reduced need-based financial aid for some
- **What will be gained?**
 - Focus on increasing financial aid form completion rates
 - Messaging to include all things related to postsecondary access and success



Basic Needs – Passport to Careers

- **Stabilizing Passport to Careers Funding**

As Passport to Careers serves more students each year, current funding through provisos isn't keeping pace. Investing in GET units could offer long-term scholarship stability and potentially support early engagement incentives—helping manage costs while better serving foster and unaccompanied youth.

- **Passport students: Auto-eligibility for WA Grant**

Former foster care students should receive auto-eligibility for WA Grant. This will increase early high school communication with them about postsecondary affordability. This will also eliminate the barrier of FAFSA/WASFA to access the WA Grant.



Breakout Discussions

We'd like to hear from you about the last two proposals.

Financial Aid Outreach:

- Role of parents
- Scholarship search

Basic Needs/Passport:

- Considerations or concerns?
- Messaging



Strategic Priorities in 2026

Simplifying access to education through public benefits

Increased transparency of credit equivalencies for students who transfer



Communications guide to leverage two powerful policies and reduce the decision-making burden on students

Targeted outreach to connect students to benefits and resources



Next Steps

For additional conversation/discussions:

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Completion: Abby Chien, AbbyC@wsac.wa.gov

Affordability: Armen Papyan, ArmenP@wsac.wa.gov

Basic Needs: Ami Magisos, AmiM@wsac.wa.gov

Legislative/External Affairs: Joel Anderson,
JoelA@wsac.wa.gov



THANK YOU for your participation!

Presentation slides will be posted here:

- <https://wsac.wa.gov/strategic-action-plan>
- Here's the link to our **mailing list for updates** like upcoming webinars: [Washington Student Achievement Council](#)