

REGULAR ITEM (RESOLUTION 26-06-23)

June 3, 2026

Tab 3

Consideration of fiscal year 2027 Basic Education for Adults Federal Awards

Brief Description

The recommendation for the distribution of federal funds for Basic Education for Adults (BEa) programs to thirty-two college districts and four community-based organizations is based on the fifth year of awards resulting from the 2022-27 open and competitive application process. Approved applications detail each program's alignment with their local workforce development board's plan, including progress and planning toward meeting proposed levels of service; demonstrated effectiveness and planning toward meeting federal performance indicators; and progress toward integration within Guided Pathways. Colleges and community-based organizations provide assurance of specific program improvements and innovations that reflect their own data and validated research. Funds are received by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) through a formula grant authorized by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA.) SBCTC distributes funds to each approved program through subgrants of a pro-rata share among providers based on the following formula:

- 50% Enrollment
- 50% Performance-based
 - 10% Transitions
 - 20% Total Student Achievement Points
 - 20% SAI points per student

This funding formula is designed to prioritize and balance two key principles WIOA sets out for adult education programs: level of service (enrollments) and level of performance. Programs are required to provide a 25% match of the funds they receive through the subgrant.

How does this item link to the State Board's Strategic Plan?

The BEa team aligns their work closely to the goals of the State Board. The Strategic Plan is reviewed to identify objectives relevant to our programs, then strategies are selected to employ across the policy, program, and professional development units that comprise the BEa team. Highlights of actions taken this year include:

Goal 1

Increase access and retention among populations that can benefit the most from college.

Objective 1.1

Enroll more diverse students of all ages and backgrounds in our colleges.

Strategy 1.1.2: Work with colleges and K-12 schools to increase participation in the wide variety of dual-credit programs for all students but especially under-represented students of color.

BEdA Action: Colleges are taking an increasing interest in developing dual credit programs for returning adult students who seek both a secondary and post-secondary credential. Students can take college classes to fulfill high school graduation credits, saving them time and money as they more efficiently and effectively transition to college. The college can incentivize this approach by waiving the college tuition for students as they complete their high school diploma through High School Plus (HS+). This legislative session, agency legislation HB 1556/SB 5542 expanded these tuition waivers for high school completers by eliminating the age requirement.

Strategy 1.1.3: Improve colleges' understanding and use of the Ability to Benefit (ATB) option, which is a way for people without a high school diploma to apply for financial aid at both the state and federal levels.

BEdA Action: BEdA hosted a technical assistance webinar and released new supportive materials to the colleges in response to new federal regulations guiding the implementation of Ability to Benefit. BEdA also worked closely in consultation with individual colleges working to stand up their ATB offerings. BEdA continues to closely monitor the data around ATB usage.

As a sign of Washington state's leadership in ATB usage, BEdA staff were selected as subject matter experts (SME) for a Department of Education-funded initiative designed to support greater use of ATB nationally.

Objective 1.2

Recognizing that student success depends on the quality of college employees, support colleges in their efforts to attract and retain expert and diverse faculty and staff.

Strategy 1.2.3: Provide systemwide training and collaboration to help faculty and staff achieve their goals within a culture of focused excellence, innovation, and belonging.

BEdA Action: BEdA offers a robust calendar of training every year based on a survey that goes out to the colleges as well as staff input in strategic planning sessions.

Key offerings include:

- English Language and High School Plus Communities of Practice
- Team Teacher Trainings for Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST)
- Orientations for administrators, faculty, and navigators
- Teaching Skills That Matter (Dept of Education framework for basic skills content and instruction)
- Required training on testing and effective data management

Strategy 1.2.4: Provide training to help faculty use student-centered, culturally responsive, and anti-racist pedagogies.

BEdA Action: The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) team within BEdA worked closely with the agency's EDI office to create EDI training and opportunities for professional development for staff across the system. SBCTC's BEdA professional development offerings include sessions focused on anti-racist and EDI work, including:

- Leading with Racial Equity
- Equity Minded Leadership
- ABC's of EDI
- Beyond Accommodations 1.0

Objective 1.4

Use state-of-the-art online learning tools to enable students to better balance work, college, and life.

Strategy 1.4.3: Support colleges in bridging the digital divide between students with sufficient knowledge of, and access to, technology and those without.

BEdA action: BEdA's digital equity lead monitors and advocates for state and federal digital equity funding. BEdA and other departments within SBCTC put significant work into an application for federal Digital Equity Act funds. These funds would have supported the development of digital skills standards, curriculum, and training for faculty to integrate and teach the skills curriculum into BEdA and college-level classes. The current administration cancelled these congressionally appropriated grant funds, so there is no longer potential federal funding with which to carry out the work. BEdA is pivoting to identify foundations or other funders to support the advancement of digital skills in the college system.

BEdA continues to incent technological adaptation by designating a "digital skills" focus for any carryover funds that are released to colleges.

Goal 2

Improve completion and transfer rates for all enrolled students across all types of programs and credentials. Improve completion rates across-the-board for all students and improve completion rates faster for students of color.

Objective 2.1

Implement research-based strategies that have been proven to improve completion rates for all students.

Strategy 2.1.1: Support colleges in implementing the successful Guided Pathways framework.

BEdA Action: BEdA continued its prior year collaboration with the Student Success Institute (Guided Pathways) lead for math and conducted a joint tour of several colleges to learn more about how BEdA and college math departments collaborate to coordinate math pathways from BEdA to college-level. Further professional development will be created and delivered based on the learning that has taken place from these tours.

BEdA Action: BEdA was approached by the Community College Research Center (CCRC) to jointly propose a study for funding to look at assessment and acceleration strategies in English language classes. The proposal acknowledges the shortcomings of the current standardized testing options and seeks to explore other ways of assessing and giving credit to English learners in a Guided Pathways model. Currently there is interest from a funder, and we hope to conduct the research in the 2025-26 Academic Year.

Goal 3

Provide flexible career-training options.

Objective 3.1

Respond quickly to the changing needs of students, businesses, and the economy.

Strategy 3.1.7: In partnership with the Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD), track student wages, hours, wage progression, retention, and advancement after leaving college.

BEEdA Action: BEEdA reports yearly employment and wages and retention information to the federal Department of Education in collaboration with ESD. This year, BEEdA programs statewide met employment and earnings targets set by the Department for Washington state.

Objective 3.3

Support colleges in establishing work-based learning opportunities.

Strategy 3.3.1: In partnership with industry and labor organizations, provide assistance in expanding internships, registered apprenticeships, collaborative learning experiences, and employer-sponsored training across Washington.

BEEdA Action: Community Colleges of Spokane partners with their workforce development board offer the Inland Education Alliance, an employer partnership program. The colleges seek partnerships with employers who are looking for innovative ways to recruit and retain loyal, reliable employees. BEEdA lifted up this program, along with other college-workforce board partnerships, in a presentation at the yearly Washington Workforce Association conference in Tacoma, Washington, designed to share good practices and encourage further innovations among education and workforce partners funded through WIOA.

Background information and analysis

The Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges serves as the passthrough agency for formula grant funding authorized by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The Basic Education for Adults (BEEdA) office has administered some form of federal adult education and literacy funding since 1991. This funding supports adult basic education (ABE) that leads to a high school credential (diploma or GED), English language classes (English language acquisition, or ELA), and transition into college programs through the innovative, evidence-based, and highly successful Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) program.

The state plan for adult basic education is included in and aligns with the state Workforce Board Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP) Plan. The plan focuses on BEEdA's connection to workforce development and to the Guided Pathways work done on college campuses. BEEdA emphasizes alignment and connection to these broader systems so that students can have a clear transition plan to college-level programs and other training that leads to living wage work and further educational opportunities.

Recommendation/preferred result

Colleges offer BEEdA programs because their communities need them. However, because BEEdA classes are not financial aid eligible, colleges are not able to charge regular tuition. Thus, colleges operate BEEdA programs at a financial loss. The federal WIOA allocation provides base funding for

Washington state's community and technical college system to invest in a statewide adult basic education program that increases educational attainment and trains the workforce for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

Staff recommends approval of Resolution 26-06-23, awarding targeted funds to Basic Education for Adult providers for fiscal year 2027.

Policy Manual Change Yes No

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STATE OF WASHINGTON

STATE BOARD FOR COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES

RESOLUTION 26-06-23

A resolution awarding \$13,490,152 of federal adult and family literacy funds.

WHEREAS, the State Board has the authority to award federal adult and family literacy funds; and

WHEREAS, the requirements set forth in the request for proposals align with the State Board's Strategic Plan and priorities and the Board-approved plan for Basic Education for Adults; and

WHEREAS, individual applicants have fulfilled the requirements set forth in the request for continuation; and

WHEREAS, each application has gone through a state level continuation and review process and has been recommended to the State Board for funding;

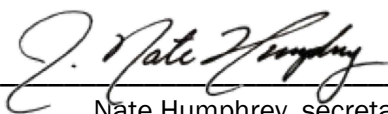
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges awards a total of \$13,490,152 of federal funds as outlined in Attachment A; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges grants the Executive Director authority to make adjustments to the proposed awards if the anticipated program funding changes due to state or federal action; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges grants the Executive Director authority to spend carryover funds and grant final spending authority to designated providers in a manner consistent with the *Washington State Title II Talent and Prosperity for All Plan* under the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act*, the terms of the Requests for Application, and this resolution.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED on June 3, 2026.

Attest



Nate Humphrey, secretary



Martin Valadez, chair