1. The State’s Largest System of Higher Education
Washingtonians — at all ages and stages — rely on our open-door colleges to gain the skills they need, when they need them, and at a more affordable cost. Last year, over 278,000 students chose Washington’s community and technical colleges, making our system of 34 colleges the largest system of higher education in Washington.

2. A Vital Niche
Offering a mix of job training programs, degrees, and classes that transfer to four-year universities, community and technical colleges fill an important niche in higher education.

3. A Less Expensive Option
Our colleges are a considerably less expensive option at $4,343 per year for a full-time student.

4. A Pathway to Bachelor’s Degrees
Nearly 40% of public baccalaureate graduates in Washington start at a community or technical college. Students who transfer from two-year colleges to four-year universities do just as well as those who started as freshmen, with similar GPAs and credits earned.

Transfer students make up 39% of business majors, 44% of health field majors, and 37% of majors in STEM fields.\(^1\)

5. Training for In-Demand Jobs
Our colleges provide the job training students want and employers need. These “high demand” programs — in fields like dental hygiene, cybersecurity and advanced manufacturing — move people into good jobs and help us compete in the global economy. Ten percent of students in our workforce programs already have bachelor’s degrees or higher.\(^2\)

6. Value Added
Community and technical colleges and our current and former students add $20.5 billion to Washington’s economy each year.\(^3\)

7. A Diverse Student Body
The median age of our students is 23. Fifty-one percent have dependents, 24% receive need-based financial aid, and 49% are students of color.\(^4\)

8. A First Step
Our colleges provide adult basic education, high school completion programs, and precollege (or “remedial”) education, providing that first, most important stepping stone to job training, certificates, and degrees.

1. 39%: The Role of Transfer in the Attainment of Baccalaureate Degrees at Washington’s Public Bachelor’s Degree Institutions, class of 2016, May 4, 2018. STEM refers to science, technology, engineering and math.

2. SBCTC enrollment dashboard. Data sorted with “other” prior education category excluded.


4. SBCTC enrollment dashboard. In comparison, 32 percent of the state’s population identifies as people of color.