

PROGRAM BRIEF

OCTOBER 1, 2022

“I can’t wait to actually be a part of the problem-solving community and hopefully come up with solutions to combat the climate crisis.”

~ Student at North Seattle after learning about climate justice in her chemistry course

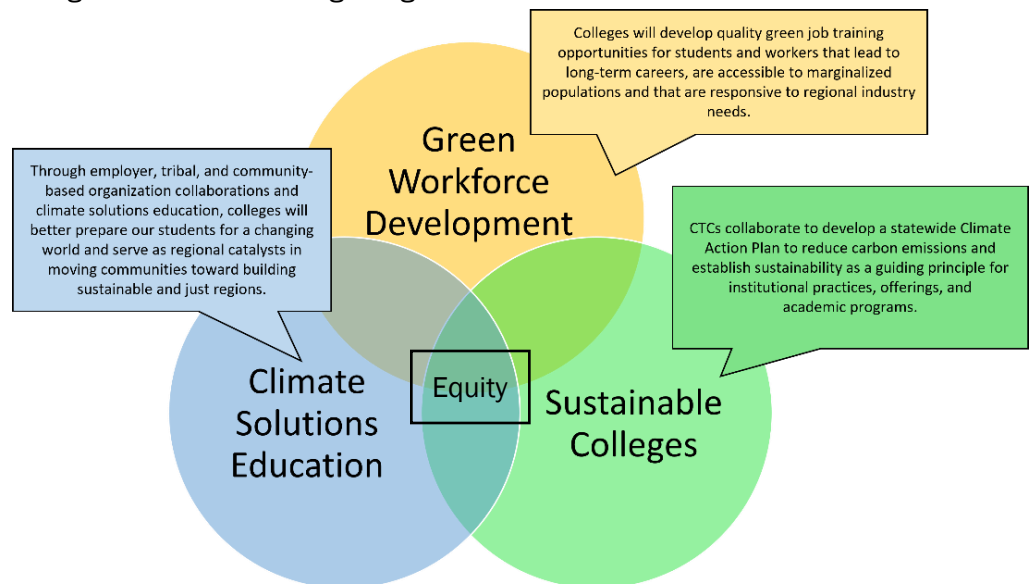
THE CLIMATE SOLUTIONS PROGRAM

Washington Community and Technical Colleges have an opportunity to lead in preparing their diverse students to equitably benefit from an emerging green economy and to create just solutions that contribute to community resilience in the context of a changing environment. Central to the community college mission is the commitment to sustainability—building healthy and economically viable communities by equitably preparing students for lifelong learning opportunities and meaningful employment. In the context of an *emerging* green economy and rapidly changing environment, community colleges— as responsive, forward-thinking, conduits between employers, students, and communities—are well positioned to be one of the most influential and impactful networks to lead in preparing diverse students to be at the forefront of community-based solutions and to thrive in a green economy. Our system has many existing strengths in this area; many programs are already training students for a green workforce or are well positioned to do so; many faculty are already teaching climate solutions, and many colleges have taken steps to become more sustainable. Through coordination, we can strategically advance these efforts into a cohesive approach and ensure equitable access and outcomes. In February 2022, the State Board received \$1.5 million in funds to initiate a statewide Climate Solutions Program focused on integrating **climate solutions education** across the curriculum, coordinating

green workforce development, and making our colleges more sustainable.

Climate Solutions Education: Establish faculty leadership, and provide training and professional development for college faculty and staff. Develop curricula in concert with local community-based organizations, relevant initiatives, employers, and tribal communities to address the needs of

frontline communities and identify and overcome the barriers that prevent these communities from fully



CONTACT INFORMATION

Irene Shaver
Program Manager
Climate Solutions
ishaver@sbctc.edu

benefitting from emerging green economic opportunities and from being climate solutions leaders in their fields.

Green Workforce Development: Prepare the future workforce for a greening economy by aligning existing programs to climate solutions, engaging industry partners who are already utilizing climate solutions-based technologies and practices to inform the curriculum, and by development of innovative programs to meet this growing demand and provide access to frontline communities.

Sustainable Colleges: Develop a statewide climate action plan for all CTCs to decarbonize their operations, build leadership capacity, and integrate sustainability throughout institutional practices and academic programs. This process will be leveraged to create learning living lab opportunities for faculty and students as institutions transition and develop local climate solutions on their campus and will support code compliance and significant reductions in carbon emissions from this statewide sector.

Centering Equity: On average, over 320,000 students enroll in a community or technical college throughout the state per year. Over half of our students are students of color. With statewide coordination and resources supporting this climate solutions effort, systemic inequities can be overcome to empower students of color from frontline communities who, due to structural racism, disproportionately experience the burdens and risks of a changing climate, are the least economically resourced to enact change in their communities and are the most excluded from the benefits from the green economy. Utilizing this specific educational lever for systemic change—expanding climate solutions education and green workforce development in CTCs and making our colleges more sustainable—has the greatest potential to increase equity in all areas—in higher education, in the workforce and economy, and in frontline communities across the state of Washington. This proposal expands climate solutions education and green workforce development to ensure that all people can be sustainability and equity minded leaders in their communities and professions, can respond to the impacts of a changing environment, benefit from the green economy, and can contribute to community-based and industry-led climate solutions.

AY 2022-2023 Priorities

1. **Climate Justice Across the Curriculum:** Faculty from 10 colleges will be trained as Climate Justice Faculty Leads. This train the trainer model will prepare faculty to host curriculum development workshops for faculty on their campuses to create climate justice modules.
2. **Workforce Faculty Retreats:** These are 2-day events where faculty will learn from industry leaders, engage in field experiences, and learn from each other. The focus will be on emerging technologies and practices that support climate solutions, green workforce development and training needs and models for integrating sustainability concepts throughout the professional technical curriculum. There will be three retreats that focus on these sectors: Built Environment (& HVAC), Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Energy, Manufacturing, and Transportation.
3. **Curriculum Development Workshops:** These will be 2–4-hour curriculum development workshops offered by faculty in our system who have successfully implemented climate solutions related hands-on projects and are ready to train their colleagues and share their curriculum. These are held virtually and are open to all faculty.

CONTACT INFORMATION

4. **Facilities & Sustainability Director's Retreat:** This 2-day event will convene sustainability and facilities directors to inventory assets, share needs and requests for support, and initiate a shared visioning and strategic planning process for creating a statewide climate action plan.
5. **Tribal Engagement:** Tribal consultation and co-creation of a strategy for engaging tribal employers, educators, and students in climate solutions education and green workforce development.

Partner With Us

- Support Professional Technical faculty by encouraging their attendance at our professional development offerings so they can engage with colleagues at other colleges and new industry partners to improve their curriculum and clarify their training goals and outcomes for the green workforce.
- Support Climate Justice across the Curriculum by helping identify two faculty leads (one from a STEM discipline, one from Social Science or Humanities) to offer professional development on your campus
 - Match our initial investment and commit to financially support professional development opportunities hosted by these leads for at least another year. (\$10,000/year for 10 faculty + \$16,000/year for two leads)
- Nominate and express support for your sustainability and facilities directors to get involved in a shared visioning and strategic planning process for creating a statewide climate action plan.
- Share your insights. What would you like to see happen? What are you doing that is advancing this work already? What do you need to take it further? Offer input and feedback on this program's design and annual priorities.
- Share exemplary sustainability and climate solutions related success stories. Help us celebrate innovators in our system, identify opportunities to share learning and models through cross-campus trainings, and draw attention to our existing assets.
- As the program grows, there will be more funding opportunities to individual colleges to support larger efforts. Start identifying your institutional aspirations in relation to this work now so we can incorporate them in our planning for scaling and align to existing efforts and needs.

CONTACT INFORMATION