

# BASIC EDUCATION FOR ADULTS

HB 2329 & SB 6161  
Legislative policy request

## What would this bill do?

With this bill in place, the Caseload Forecast Council would add to its forecast the number of state residents between the ages of 25 to 44 who do not have a high school diploma or credential, and, as a courtesy, the number of students expected to enroll in basic education for adults courses at community and technical colleges. The council would provide regular, dependable forecasts to better understand the state's need for basic education for adults.

## Who would this bill affect?

About 650,000 to 700,000 Washington adults are without basic skills to pursue college for living-wage jobs and meet employers' needs. That's about the combined total population of Spokane, Bellingham, Vancouver, Richland, Everett and Wenatchee.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, Washington employers are looking for people qualified for jobs at their businesses and organizations. With an accurate caseload forecast, colleges would be able to anticipate demand for basic skills programs to help educate adults and get them on track to well-paying jobs.

## How much would this bill cost?

This bill would add minimal costs to taxpayers or the state.

## Why is this bill important?

Employers demand an educated workforce, with an estimated 72 percent of available jobs in the state requiring at least a postsecondary degree by 2021.<sup>2</sup> This is only expected to increase.<sup>3</sup> With a strong and efficient basic education system, we can help the thousands of adults without credentials get a leg up to be competitive in the job market.

In addition, the state's education system is working to meet the set educational attainment goals that all adults aged 25 to 44 have a high school diploma or equivalent by 2023. The community and technical college system is the ideal place for adults to learn basic skills and literacy. The caseload forecast will help the 34 colleges better anticipate the need for basic skills courses so they can adjust resources accordingly.

### Sources:

1. 2010 U.S. Census, 2013 city estimates.
2. Background analysis conducted by SBCTC, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, and the Washington Student Achievement Council for "A Skilled and Educated Workforce 2013 Update" published October 2013.
3. SBCTC research findings: "Washington State Population and Employment Data 2010-2030, Implications for Community and Technical Colleges," presented to House Higher Education Committee Jan. 14, 2014.

