



## 2022 SUPPLEMENTAL OPERATING BUDGET REQUEST

DECEMBER 16, 2021

Our system's supplemental request focuses on critical issues facing Washington today: cybersecurity threats, disparities in access to financial aid, climate change and homelessness. The request also calls for funding to help Afghan refugees learn skills to start their new lives. We support compensation increases for all higher education employees, who are at the heart of all we do and everything we plan to accomplish.

### Invest in Employee Talent

We urge the Legislature to fully fund compensation increases for all higher education employees. Like our university partners, we are losing excellent staff and faculty—as well as job applicants—to higher paying K-12 schools and private employers. This investment will set the stage for progress in the next biennial budget.

### Improve Washington's Cybersecurity Workforce (\$7.2 million)

Our state faces a daily onslaught of hacking and ransomware attacks and a dangerous shortage of cybersecurity experts. Investments will fund 500 more full-time cybersecurity students and put them to work protecting the privacy and economic health of people, businesses and agencies across Washington.

### Unlock Financial Aid through FAFSA/WASFA (\$6.7 million)

Thousands of Washingtonians who are eligible for financial aid fail to file a FAFSA or WASFA each year. The students who could benefit most from financial aid are less likely to apply.<sup>1</sup> With additional investments, our colleges will expand financial aid outreach work in partnership with local community-based organizations, with a focus on people whose lives are most disrupted by COVID-19 — young adults, low-wage workers, people without college credentials and people of color.

### Integrate Climate Science (\$1.5 million)

Climate change is a health issue, an economic issue and an equity issue that affects every community. With investments by the Legislature, our colleges will integrate climate change education and training into professional-technical programs that lead to well-paying jobs supporting the green economy. Colleges will also integrate climate change into teaching and student engagement across departments and disciplines.

### Expand Assistance for Homeless Students (\$2.9 million)

Thanks to legislation passed in 2019 and 2021, eight community and technical colleges are participating in a pilot program to begin meeting homeless students' needs for short-term housing or housing assistance, laundry facilities, storage and showers, reduced-price meals, technology, and case-management services. This request expands the pilot project across all 34 colleges.

### Support Refugee Education (\$3 million)

Afghan refugees will need educational services to rebuild their lives in local communities. Investments will expand existing English language and citizenship programs to transition Afghan refugees and connect them to state resources.

Source: 1) WSAC Equity Landscape Report: Exploring Equity Gaps in Washington Postsecondary Education, October 2020

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

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