



## EXPAND ACCESS TO BASIC EDUCATION FOR ADULTS

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Washington state's 34 community and technical colleges serve students of all ages, incomes and backgrounds, including adult students who need basic education. Nearly 36,000 students in the 2020-21 school year enrolled in our colleges' Basic Education for Adults programs to learn foundational skills for life and career success. Estimating the number of full-time equivalent students who will enroll in Basic Education for Adults programs through a caseload forecast — **HB 1943** and **SB 5771** — would create stability in these programs so colleges can more effectively plan and distribute resources, thereby better serving students.

### Serving Thousands, Ready to Serve Thousands More

Whether because of family or work obligations, disability, or another reason, the students enrolled in Basic Education for Adults programs may never have had an opportunity to learn basic skills before enrolling at one of our colleges. Since enrolled, these students are motivated and ready to learn. Of the almost 36,000 students enrolled in Basic Education for Adults programs<sup>1</sup>:

- 66% are students of color
- 33% have dependents
- 62% are women
- 47% are aged 30 or older

Our colleges' Basic Education for Adults programs are not precollege or remedial classes. Programs in reading, writing, math, technology and English are designed to teach people who have a below-high school graduate level of education what they need to know to take college-level classes and secure family-sustaining employment.

### Strengthening Our Workforce

Nearly 70% of all projected job openings in Washington state will require at least some education beyond high school<sup>2</sup>, putting the estimated 535,000 Washington adults<sup>3</sup> who lack basic education or English language skills at a severe disadvantage in the job market. The people in this demographic already faced higher average unemployment rates and lower wages, a situation only made worse by COVID-19 pandemic-related restrictions.

### Serve Students Better with Caseload Forecast Estimates

The community and technical college system-supported bill would ask the Caseload Forecast Council to estimate the number of full-time equivalent students aged 18 to 44 who will enroll in Basic Education for Adults programs. Estimates would allow colleges to more effectively serve students, increasing access, support, and program completion, ultimately helping students transition to college-level programs and into the workforce.

Sources: 1. "Enrollment Dashboards." SBCTC. <https://www.sbctc.edu/colleges-staff/research/data-public/enrollment-data-dashboard.aspx>. 2. "Washington's Skilled and Educated Workforce 2019-20." WSAC. <https://wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2019-20.WASkilledEducatedWorkforce.pdf>. 3. "Educational Attainment Dashboards." WSAC. <https://wsac.wa.gov/roadmap/attainment>.

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

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