

COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM WORKFORCE INVESTMENT REQUEST



Washington's 34 community and technical colleges teach students high-value skills that lead to well-paying careers and a strong workforce. Our students become nurses, dental hygienists, firefighters, manufacturers, mechanics, drivers, construction workers and other skilled employees who support local communities and allow businesses to grow and thrive. However, our colleges are struggling to sustain workforce programs because of high costs associated with small class sizes, specialized equipment, consumable materials required by these programs as well as inflation.

This session, Washington's community and technical colleges are requesting investments to keep workforce programs sustainable, modern and responsive to the needs of employers. This issue brief answers common questions about our college system's \$77 million 2023-25 operating budget request.

Why should the Legislature invest in college workforce programs?

Washington employers are having a hard time filling jobs in key industries – health care, manufacturing, and information technology, to name a few. These shortages affect everyone. They mean longer wait times to see healthcare professionals, delays in receiving key pieces of equipment, wait lists for construction projects, delays in auto repairs, and increased risks to computer networks. At the same time, people are looking for stable, rewarding careers with opportunities for higher pay and upward mobility. Workforce programs are the solution to both these needs.

Which industries are facing the greatest needs?

From 2024 to 2029, the greatest “middle skill” workforce needs will be in production and trades fields, which include maintenance and repair workers, mechanics, automotive service technicians and construction workers. Demand will also be high for health care workers and for computer and IT specialists.

These projections come from an analysis of workforce needs published every two years by the Washington Student Achievement Council, the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.¹

CONTACT INFORMATION

Why are workforce programs more expensive to offer?

Workforce programs require small class sizes, consumable materials and expensive equipment. For example, Commercial Drivers License programs are limited because of limited seating in a truck cab, advanced manufacturing programs need welding equipment while maritime programs need ships and aviation programs need planes. Safety and accreditation requirements also play a role in class sizes.

Three forces are also putting financial pressure on college workforce programs:

- Inflation is driving up the cost of equipment and consumable supplies. As inflation increases, college purchasing power declines. According to the November 2022 Washington state revenue forecast, the Seattle consumer price inflation of 8.9% outpaced the national average of 8.8% in the year ending October 2022.²
- The pace of change in the workforce is accelerating, requiring new programs, technology and curricula. Employees are increasingly being expected to work in environments with sophisticated automation, advanced technology and computerized equipment. For example, students who are studying auto and diesel mechanics must understand computer science and alternative fuel/battery technology.
- Tuition revenues are down due to national enrollment declines at community and technical colleges. Traditionally, our colleges have been able to cross-subsidize higher-cost workforce programs through enrollments in lower-cost general education programs, but enrollments have been declining over a number of years. This is true here in Washington and across the nation.

Why invest when enrollments declined?

Like other colleges across the nation, enrollments at Washington's community and technical colleges peaked during the Great Recession and then declined, with a steep drop during the COVID pandemic. Data from fall quarter 2022 indicate systemwide enrollments are stabilizing with some colleges seeing a slight uptick and others experiencing further declines. Our systemwide enrollments have still not recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Lower enrollments mean less tuition revenue for the colleges, which translates into less funding for workforce programs. And yet, employer demand for graduates from those programs remains high.

In many ways, college workforce programs serve as a talent infrastructure for our economy. And, like any infrastructure, our programs need to be sustained through good economic times and bad, and through periods of high enrollments and lower enrollments. Our colleges must always stand ready to meet the needs of employers, students and communities, who count on us to thrive economically. Legislative investments would help stabilize workforce programs while colleges work to bring more students back to campus.

Our college system deeply appreciates targeted workforce investments in the 2019-21 and 2021-23 biennial budgets. We urge the Legislature to now extend that support across programs and throughout Washington to keep our state's talent infrastructure strong.

1. [Washington's Skilled and Educated Workforce 2021-22: An analysis of postsecondary education, workforce preparation and employer demand in Washington.](#)
2. [Washington State Economic and Revenue Forecast, November 2022, Economic Revenue and Forecast Council](#)

Community and Technical College System Workforce Investment Request

Sampling of Workforce Programs

Washington's 34 community and technical colleges collectively offer about 500 professional-technical programs. The programs are designed and offered based on partnerships with local businesses and communities. The following estimates and sample programs were provided by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and are for illustrative purposes only. While this issue brief estimates funds based on each college's percent of FTE enrollments in workforce programs, the final allocation method – and programs selected for funding – would be determined in the future after input from colleges and their community partners. (The [SBCTC website](#) features a systemwide program inventory. See “Resource Links” to the right.)

Note: Investment estimates are for the entire 2023-25 biennium.

[Bates Technical College \(\\$3.7 million\) – Districts 2, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31](#)

Fire Services, EMT, Denturist, Culinary Arts, Barbering, Electrical Construction, Digital Media, Software Development, Computer Networking Systems Technician, HVAC, Carpentry, Marine Technology, Sheet Metal

[Bellevue College \(\\$5 million\) – Districts 5, 12, 41, 45, 48](#)

IT, Software Development, Cybersecurity, Artificial Intelligence, Diagnostic Ultrasound, Neurodiagnostic Tech., Nuclear Medicine Tech., Radiation Therapy, Radiologic Tech.

[Bellingham Technical College \(\\$2 million\) – Districts 40, 42](#)

Automotive Technology, Welding & Fabrication Technology, Electrician, Fisheries & Aquaculture Sciences, Cloud Computing

[Big Bend Community College \(\\$700,000\) – Districts 7, 9, 13, 15](#)

Aviation, Aviation Maintenance, Advanced Manufacturing, Welding, Commercial Drivers License, Automotive Tech, Computer Science

[Cascadia College \(\\$500,000\) – Districts 1, 21, 41, 45, 48](#)

Networking Infrastructure Technology, Web Application Programming, Homeland Security & Emergency Management

[Centralia College \(\\$900,000\) – Districts 19, 20, 35](#)

Commercial Drivers License; Diesel Equipment Technology; Electronics, Robotics & Automation; Phlebotomy; Construction Management; Welding

[Clark College \(\\$2.7 million\) – Districts 17, 18, 20, 49](#)

Surgical Tech, Advanced Manufacturing, Clean Energy, Mechatronics

[Clover Park Technical College \(\\$3 million\) – Districts 2, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31](#)

Welding, Automotive Technology, Advanced Manufacturing, Information Security, Aviation Maintenance, Professional Piloting, Electrical, Hydraulics, Plumbing, Dental Assisting

[Columbia Basin College \(\\$3.8 million\) – Districts 8, 9, 15, 16](#)

Mechatronics, Automation and Robotics, Internet of Things, Chemical Technician, HVAC, Construction, Supply Chain and Logistics

COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM WORKFORCE INVESTMENT REQUEST

Edmonds College (\$2.3 million) – Districts 1, 21, 32, 38, 44

Advanced Manufacturing, Software Development, Maritime, Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, Construction pre-apprenticeship program, Dental Assistant, Medical Assistant, Nursing

Everett Community College (\$3.7 million) – Districts 1, 10, 21, 38, 39, 44

Aviation Maintenance Technology, Advanced Manufacturing, Nursing, Phlebotomy, Medical Assisting

Grays Harbor College (\$600,000) – Districts 19, 24

Nursing, Hospitality with training in culinary arts, EMT, Paramedic, Computer Science, Teacher Education

Green River College (\$3.2 million) – Districts 5, 11, 30, 31, 33, 37, 41, 47

Aeronautical Science, Automotive Technology, Welding Technology, Carpentry Technology, IT Software Development, Cybersecurity and Nursing

Highline College (\$2.2 million) – Districts 11, 30, 33, 34, 47

Respiratory Care, Nursing, Substance Use Disorder Professional, Global Trade & Logistics, Cybersecurity & Digital Forensics, Web Development, Multimedia Design, Hospitality and Tourism Management

Lake Washington Institute of Technology (\$2.6 million) – Districts 1, 5, 11, 39, 41, 45, 46, 48

Auto Body Technician, Machining Technology, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Electronics Technology

Lower Columbia College (\$1 million) – Districts 19, 20

Automotive Technology, Business Technology, Chemical Dependency Studies, Commercial Truck Driving, Criminal Justice, Diesel Technology, Information Technology, Machine Trades, Manufacturing, Welding

North Seattle College (\$8.1 million, shared across all three Seattle colleges) – Districts x

Mechatronics, Fire Science, Industrial Power, Pharmacy Technician

Olympic College (\$3.3 million) – Districts 23, 26, 35

Construction Trades, Marine Electronics, Aluminum Welding, Culinary Arts

Peninsula College (\$700,000) – District 24

Cybersecurity & Computer Forensics, Nursing, Maritime Manufacturing, Dental Hygiene, Electrical Vehicle Repair, Natural Resources, Phlebotomy, Computer Applications Technology, Multimedia Communications

Pierce College (\$2.4 million) – Districts for Fort Steilacoom: 28, 29. Districts for Puyallup: 2, 25, 27, 30, 31

Computer Network Engineering, Cyber Security, Construction Management, Dental Hygiene, Emergency Management, Emergency Med Services, Fire Services Leadership, Nursing, Teacher Ed, Vet Technology

Renton Technical College (\$2.8 million) – Districts 5, 11, 30, 31, 33, 34, 36, 37, 41, 43, 47

Automotive Technologies, Anesthesia Technologist, Commercial Building Engineering, Land Surveying Technician

Seattle Central College (\$8.1 million, shared across all three Seattle colleges) – Districts for all three colleges: 11, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 43, 46

Seattle Culinary Academy, Seattle Maritime Academy, Wood Technology Center, Apparel Design and Development

Shoreline Community College (\$2.9 million) – Districts 32, 1

Clean Energy Technology, Dental Hygiene, Medical Lab Technology, Automotive (including electric vehicle)

Skagit Valley College (\$2.3 million) – Districts 10, 39, 40

Basic Law Enforcement Reserve Academy, Fire Protection Technology, Marine Maintenance Technology, Nursing

South Puget Sound Community College (\$1.8 million) – Districts 2, 20, 22, 35

Nursing; Automotive Technology; Advanced Manufacturing; Computer Science; Architecture, Engineering and Construction Technology

South Seattle College (\$8.1 million, shared across all three Seattle colleges) Districts for all three colleges: 11, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 43, 46

Aviation Maintenance Technology, Diesel & Heavy Equipment Technology, Maritime Shipyard Welding, Sustainable Building Science Technology

Spokane Community College (\$6 million shared by both Spokane colleges) – Districts for both colleges: 3, 4, 6, 7, 9

Automotive Collision and Refinishing, Biomedical Equipment, Diagnostic Medical Sonography, Respiratory Therapy

Spokane Falls Community College (\$6 million shared by both Spokane colleges) – Districts for both colleges: 3, 4, 6, 7, 9

Orthotic & Prosthetic Lab, Hearing Instrument Specialist, Audio Engineering, Cyber Security, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Physical Therapy Assistant, Library Science, Addiction Studies

Tacoma Community College (\$2.5 million) – Districts 25, 26, 27, 28, 29

Computed Tomography, Diagnostic Medical Sonography, Emergency Medical Services, Networking and Cybersecurity, Nursing, Nursing Assistant, Radiologic Science, Respiratory Therapy

Walla Walla Community College (\$1.5 million) – Districts 9, 16

Energy Systems Technology, Welding, Cosmetology, Computer Technology/Cybersecurity, Agriculture, Culinary Arts, Enology and Viticulture

Wenatchee Valley College (\$1.1 million) – Districts 7, 12

Fire Science, Horticulture & Tree Fruit Production, HVAC/Refrigeration Technologies, Machining

Whatcom Community College (\$1.5 million) – Districts 40, 42

IT Networking – Cybersecurity, Nursing, Massage Therapist, Hospitality & Tourism Management

Yakima Valley College (\$2 million) – Districts 13, 14, 15

Agribusiness, Dental Hygiene, Nursing, Radiological Sciences, Surgical Technology, Information Technology, Veterinary Technology, Viticulture (Winemaking), Automotive Service Technology