



Senate Higher Education & Workforce Development Committee: Work Session

January 23, 2025

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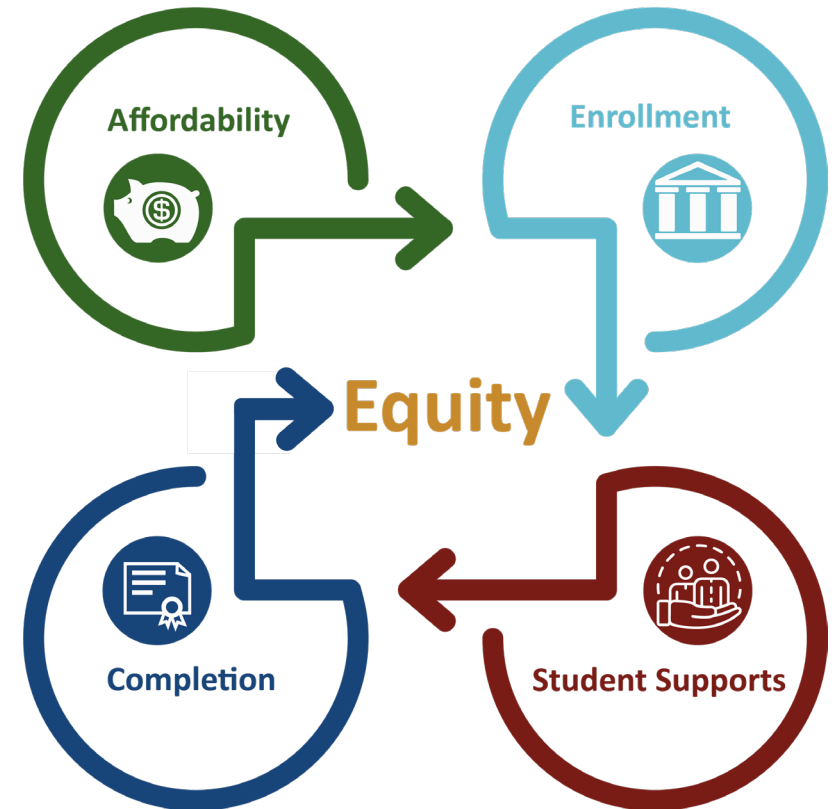
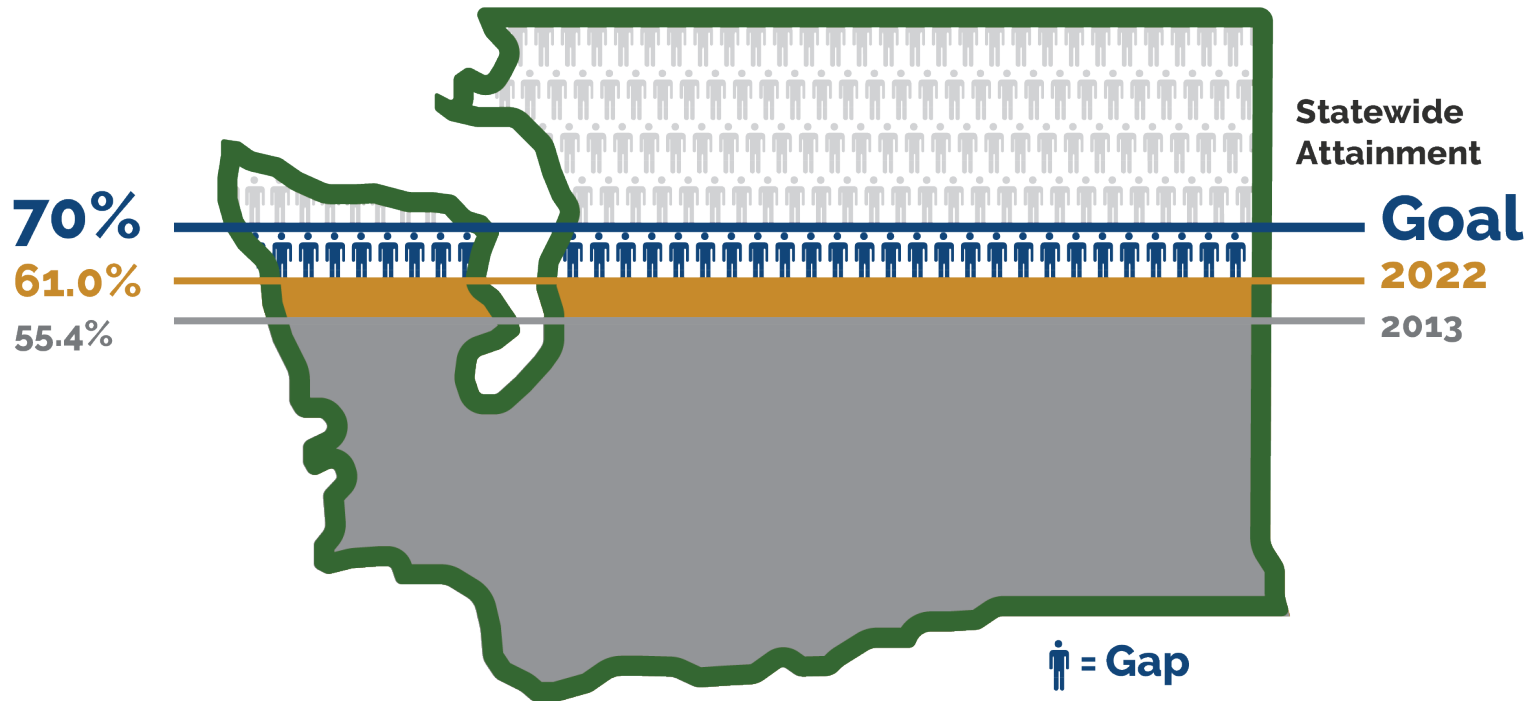
Agenda

- WSAC's Strategic Action Plan (*5 mins.*)
- Postsecondary Access and Attainment (*5 mins.*)
- Student Basic Needs Security (*15 mins.*)
- Q&A (*5 mins.*)



WSAC's Strategic Action Plan

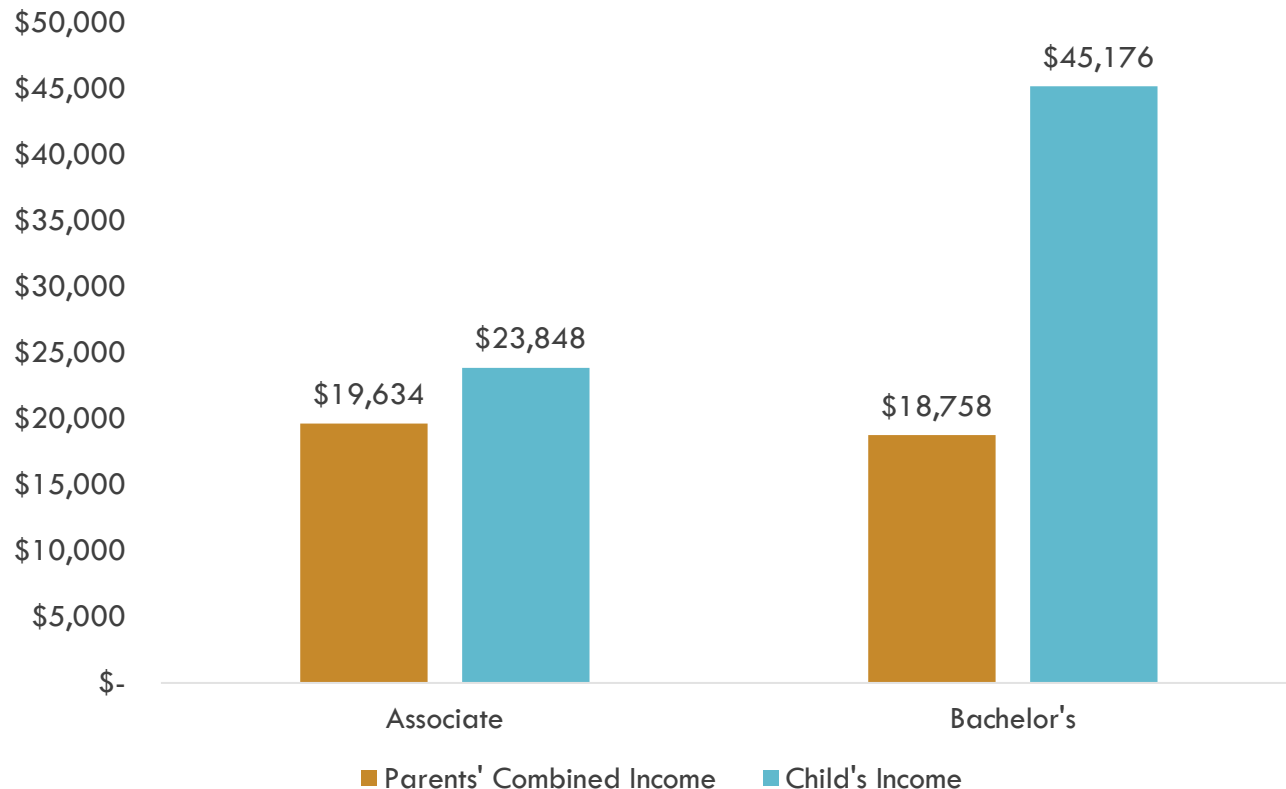
If we build an **affordable** and **supportive** educational environment, more Washingtonians will **enroll** in programs and **complete** credentials.





Degrees and Credentials Offer a Path to Economic Mobility

Parents' Combined Income vs. Child's Income
Three Years After Degree Completion



Children from families in the **bottom 25%** earn more than their parents (combined) by the **third year after postsecondary graduation.**



FAFSA Completion in Washington vs. Nationally

- Washington's FAFSA completion rates had been increasing
- Rates were down nationwide for 2023–24 due to federal FAFSA issues

Graduating Class	WA's FAFSA Completion Rate
Class of 2021	49%
Class of 2022	50%
Class of 2023	52%
Class of 2024	50%

FAFSA Completion Decline

Class of 2023 → Class of 2024
Year-Over-Year Change

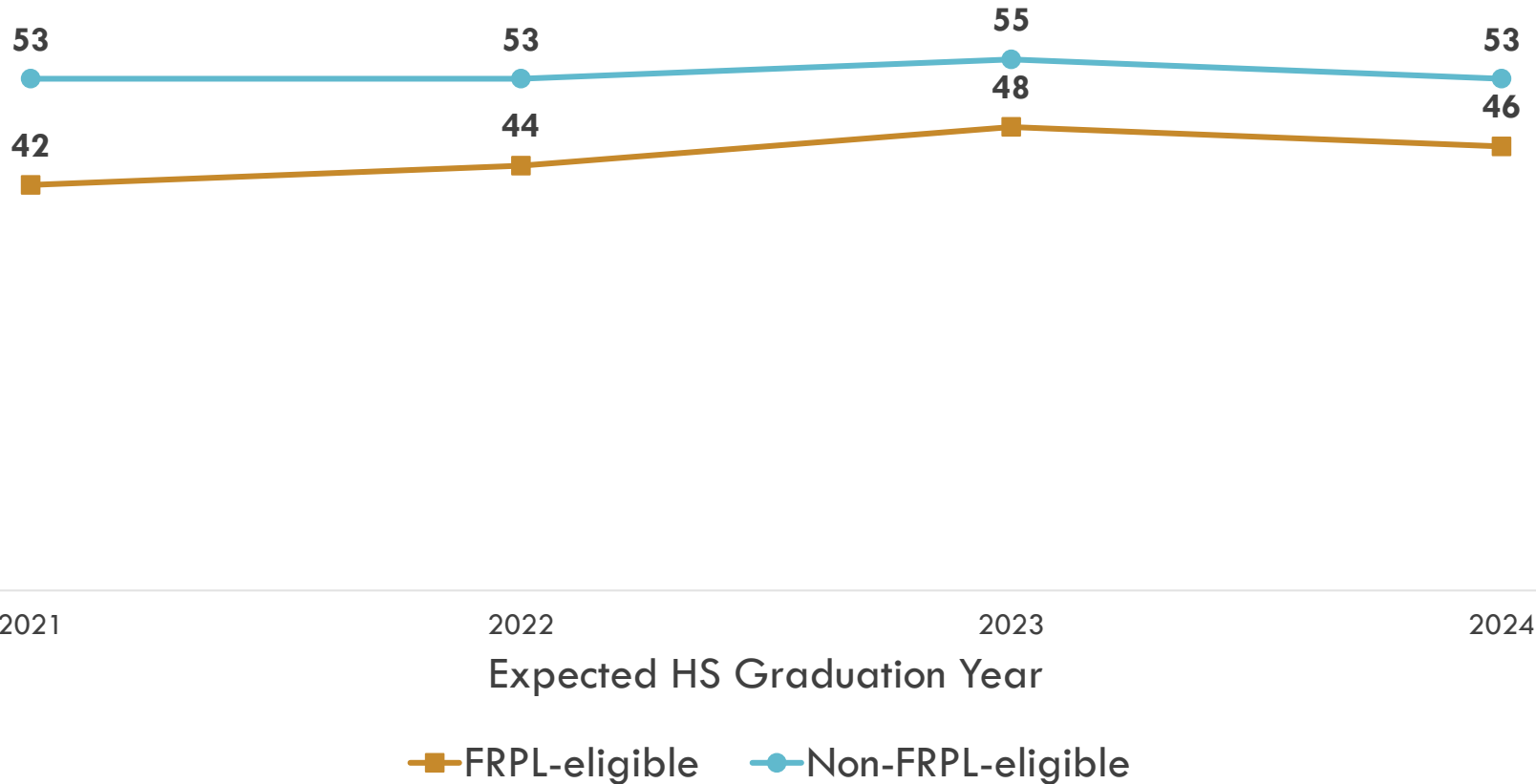
National -8.7%

Washington -8.8%



FAFSA Completion for FRPL-Eligible Students

FAFSA Completion Rate (%) of HS Seniors by FRPL Status





Statewide Financial Aid Trainings – Fall 2024





Starting Early and Continuing Support for 2024–25 Academic Year

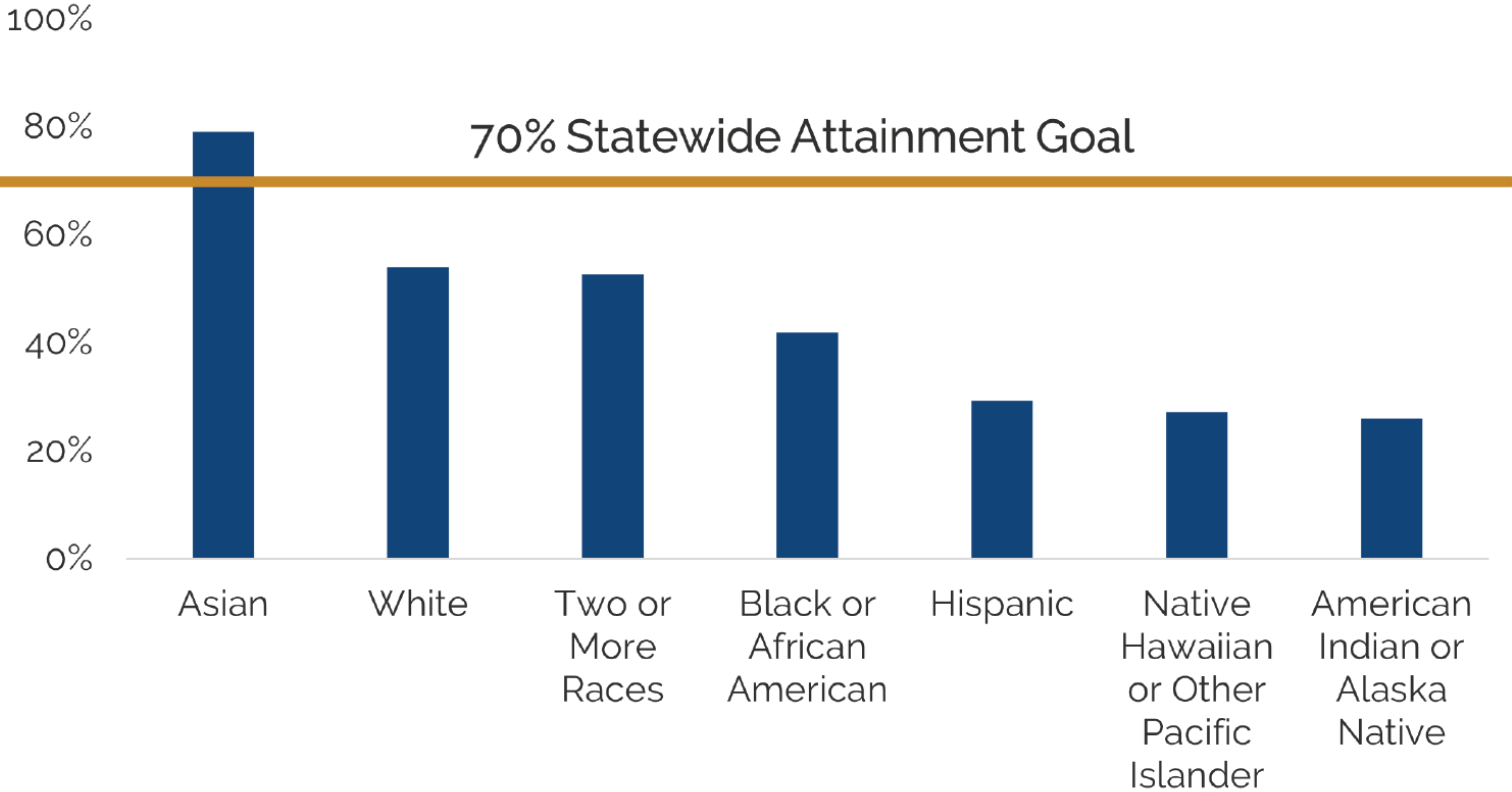
Quarter	Key message	Priority WSAC work
July-Sep	Get ready	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Educator/advocate trainings begin
Oct-Dec	Apply!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weekly virtual trainings• Monthly in-person and virtual student/family-facing events• WA Grant marketing planning
Jan-March	Consider your options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• WA Grant marketing campaign begins• OtterBot messages adjusted• Customized trainings based on partner needs
April-June	It's not too late!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trainings and conferences to connect with educators/advocates• “Last push” student-facing events for seniors• OtterBot final push of messages• Student-facing events for juniors



Equity in Educational Attainment

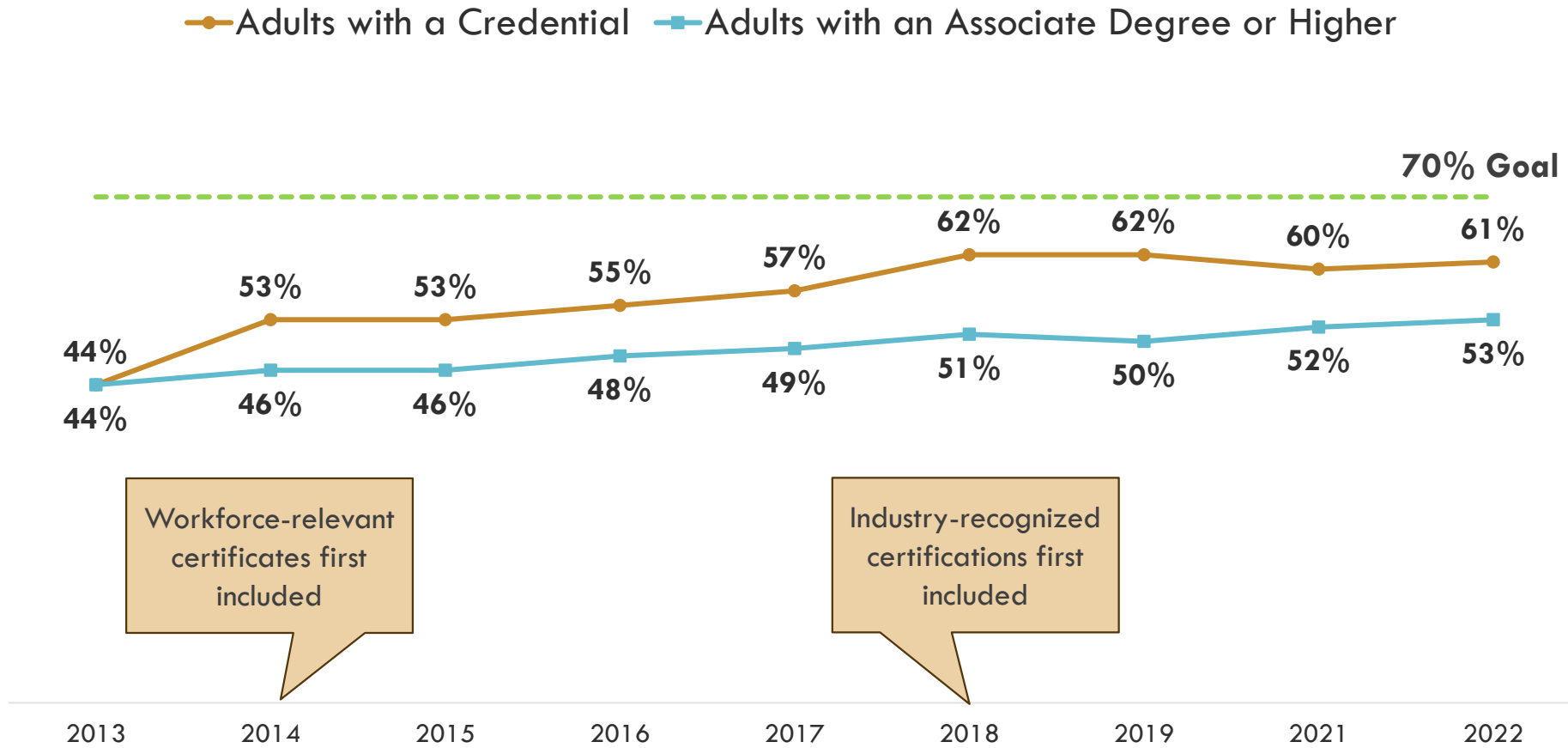
2022 Attainment by Race/Ethnicity

*Washingtonians, ages 25–44,
with postsecondary credentials*





Washington's Postsecondary Attainment by Year





Efforts to Increase Completion Rates

Accelerator Legend

- Alabama
- CVHEC-California
- Hawaii
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Maine
- Minnesota
- Missouri
- Mississippi
- New Mexico
- Ohio
- Pennsylvania
- Puerto Rico
- South Carolina
- Texas
- Vermont
- Washington
- Wisconsin



How do we increase completions at our colleges and universities?
Complete College America – National cohort

How does value and return on investment impact completion?
Education Strategy Group (ESG)'s Credentials of Value and Return on Investment Exploration Project

Postsecondary Basic Needs Security in Washington

“Pursuing higher education is challenging enough, but dealing with food insecurity and housing instability makes the journey even tougher. These basic needs become constant distractions, making it hard to focus on school. I often find myself sitting in class thinking about how I’m going to make ends meet, whether I’ll have enough money for food, or how I’ll pay rent.”

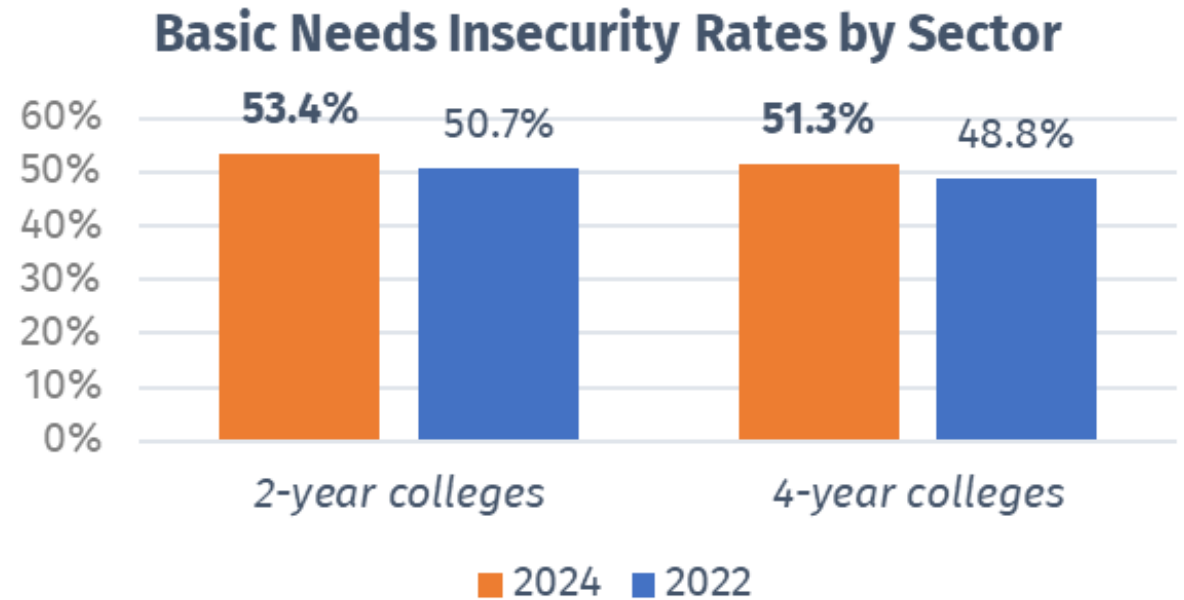
– Student Comment, 2024 Washington Student Experience Survey



2024 Postsecondary Basic Needs Security Survey

Over half of students responding experienced basic needs insecurity.

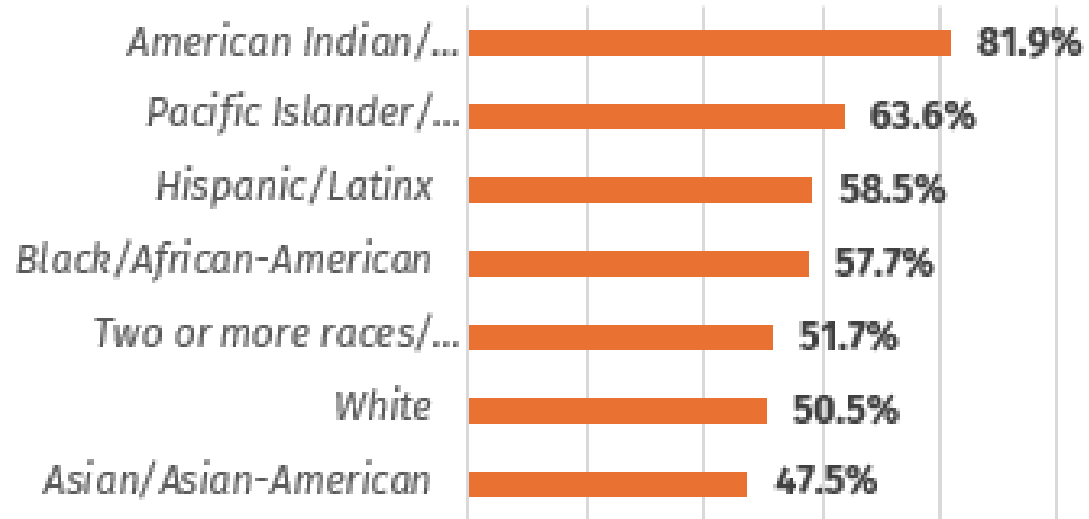
- **53% of students at two-year colleges, a 6.6% increase from 2022**
- **51% of students at four-year colleges, a 5.1% increase from 2022**





2024 Basic Needs Survey: Who's Most Impacted?

Insecurity Rates by Race/Ethnicity



American Indian/Alaskan Native and Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian respondents experienced *the highest rates of basic needs insecurity based on respondent race/ethnicity*, with significant increases in insecurity rates for these subpopulations since 2022.



2024 Basic Needs Survey: Who's Most Impacted?

Students who experienced homelessness in high school	88%
Former foster care	84%
Students with low incomes	70%
Students with dependents	68%
Students with disability	65%
LGBT+ students	58%
Students with military service	54%



Childcare and Healthcare Access



3 out of 4 of parenting students reported struggling to afford needed childcare.

Nearly 1 in 2 students reported inadequate access to needed mental healthcare and other healthcare.



**49%: inadequate access to needed mental healthcare
+31% increase compared to 2022**

**46%: inadequate access to needed healthcare
+6% increase compared to 2022**



Access to Existing Resources

Only half of students experiencing basic needs insecurity used available support resources.

- **53%** of respondents experiencing basic needs insecurity accessed *public basic needs support resources* in the past 6 months
- **41%** of respondents experiencing basic needs insecurity accessed *campus basic needs support resources* in the past 6 months

“I have a job, a child, and go to school and have to pay for childcare. I’m not making enough to be able to get by like I should. Just because I have a job I don’t qualify for resources. I make too much for help but not enough to survive.”

– Student Comment, 2024 WSES Survey



How Do We Address Postsecondary Basic Needs Insecurity?

Emergency strategies

Why:

Immediate aid to address unexpected needs can return students to stability and persistence

Examples:

- Pantries/cupboards/ basket of granola bars
- Emergency funds
- Homeless shelter, motel vouchers

Vision: All postsecondary students have access to resources to address emergencies

Proactive / preventative strategies

Why:

Promote longer-term solutions for stability when foundational needs for Cost of Attendance are unstable

Examples:

- Access to benefits like SNAP, childcare subsidies, housing, healthcare
- Food plan increase
- Affordable housing accessible to students
- Funding to cover actual cost of attendance

Vision: All postsecondary students have access to funds and resources for basic needs stability through their credential attainment.



Recent Statewide Postsecondary Basic Needs Legislation

Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness (SSEH) grant program

- Services to students who are experiencing homelessness or have aged out of foster care
- Available to public colleges and universities

Students Basic Needs Act

- Basic needs navigators
- Strategic planning
- Assessment of basic needs security
- Food security pilot



Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness program

6,700 students served

- **Persistence during term:**
 - Universities: 93%
 - CTCs: 87%
- **Retained or graduated in next term:**
 - Universities: 90%
 - CTCs: 77%

How were these students supported?

- **Case management** and connection to resources
- **Housing:** emergency, short-term, homelessness prevention, start-up costs to enter rentals
- **Food assistance**
- **Laundry, hygiene, storage, etc.**

Source: <https://wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2024-SSEH.Legislative.Report.pdf>



Basic Needs Act (2SHB 1559, 2023)

Infrastructure to support

- **Basic need navigators** are guiding students to access resources in all publics
- **Institutional strategic plans**
- **Fall 2024** Basic Needs Survey

Proactive food security pilot

- **Innovative strategies:** meal plans, prepaid cards, etc.
- Campuses with diverse assets and challenges
- Evaluation



2SHB 1559 Food Security Pilot – Snapshot

Western Washington University preliminary data

Percentage of participants reporting food insecurity:

- At start: **77%** | At end: **7%**
- **~ 90% decrease in food insecurity rate**

Reporting adequate food access to be successful in school:

- At start: **37%** | At end: **100%**

Student perspectives

“I struggled financially this year and don’t have much outside help so having access to healthy and good food was a lifesaver. It made me more secure in my food access and was able to still focus on other life things such as school. I hope this program can continue to be offered as time goes on.”

“I don’t think I would have made it this year without this program...I am so grateful to take part.”



Contact Information / Q&A

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Questions?