



College Promise Coalition 2020 Priorities

Education beyond high school is necessary for our students.

Training or education after high school is key to giving Washington students the opportunities they need to be successful. Studies show that a credential after high school – such as a degree, apprenticeship, or certificate – is one of the strongest indicators of lifetime earnings. Expanding opportunities for education and training beyond high school and promoting credential completion helps ensure that students can succeed regardless of their family circumstances.

That's why the Legislature passed the Workforce Education Investment Act in 2019.

The Workforce Education Investment Act (HB 2158) makes historic investments in financial aid for Washington students, increases capacity for high-demand degrees, expands career connected learning programs and provides support for students to complete their degrees.

A cornerstone of the legislation is the Washington College Grant (formerly the State Need Grant). The Grant provides free tuition to a two- or four-year public or accredited private college, a community college or an apprenticeship program for families with incomes below the state's median. The result: more students will have the financial resources they need to pursue degrees, hone skills, or retrain for careers.

Washington state is projected to have more than 700,000 job openings in the coming years, most of which will be filled by workers who have a degree, certificate, apprenticeship, or other credential beyond high school. But today, just 40% of our students go on to complete a credential by age 26. That rate is even lower for students of color. The WCG is a critical improvement to our state's education system to better serve Washington students, because earning a credential of some kind after high school helps Washingtonians get family-wage jobs and produces well-rounded, informed citizens who make our communities strong.

This investment will ensure that our students have the opportunity to succeed here at home.

Our goal remains the same: 70% of our students earn a degree, apprenticeship, certificate or other credential after high school.

To get there, College Promise Coalition is focused on strategies that increase enrollment in programs after high school and provide supports to help students complete these programs. These strategies must focus on closing racial, gender and income opportunity gaps. Our priorities for 2020 include:

- 1) Protecting the investments in HB 2158/Workforce Education Investment Act. This legislation made historic investments in expanded pathways, increased affordability & equitable opportunity, student supports and accountability measures.
- 2) Increasing the number of people completing financial aid forms (FAFSA/WASFA) and accessing support from the Washington College Grant program.
- 3) Advocating for other avenues to support student success including programs that increase food and housing security as well as access to transportation and childcare.