



Career Connect Washington 2026 Legislative Report

Executive Summary

83.6% reductions to State operating appropriations for Career Connect Washington (CCW) have significantly impacted Washington's career connected learning system. The elimination of Career Launch Enrollment funding forced some colleges to reduce course offerings which limited student access to paid internships and industry-aligned academic instruction. The removal of state appropriations for all nine Educational Service District Career Connected Learning Coordinators, OSPI's CCW Program Specialist, and Tribal Liaison positions caused a substantial loss to the career and technical education system, diminishing relationships between industry and education. Grant pools that supported Regional Networks, industry Sector Leaders, and Program Builders were also eliminated, further reducing program development capacity necessary to sustain and expand high-quality learning pathways.

CCW 2025 – 2027 State Grants initiatives delivered results with some programs exceeding early targets, demonstrating a strong return on investment and effective use of the sole 2025 – 2027 biennial operating appropriation for career connected learning. Federally funded projects, Washington Jobs Initiative (WJI), Apprenticeship Building America (ABA), and Round 13 Program Builders, also demonstrated strong performance with positive outcomes. WJI partners provided job training to more than 5,000 Washingtonians and placed more than 3,150 into living-wage careers in high-priority industries. Apprenticeship system partners utilized ABA funding to add 110 new employers as training agents, hire 497 individuals in Registered Apprenticeships, and enroll 583 individuals into Recognized Pre-apprenticeships. Round 13 Program Builders created and scaled programs across regions and industries to meet industry needs. These results demonstrate measurable returns on CCW investments.

In 2019, the Legislature passed the Workforce Education Investment Act, and with it established Career Connect Washington, so that more students would have access to high-quality career connected learning, post-secondary credentials, and careers and more Washington businesses could hire Washington talent. The substantial reduction in CCW funding now puts Washington's training-to-employer pipeline at risk - at a time when industry demand for skilled workers continues to grow.

Impacts & Outcomes at a Glance

83.6% cuts to State operating appropriations

- \$4,684,000 in BIEN 2025 – 2027, from \$28,489,000 in BIEN 2023 - 2025
- All student enrollment funding eliminated for Career Launch programs
 - Annual funding losses ranged from \$48,000 to \$208,000 per program
- All base funding eliminated for regional and industry leadership
- Local, regional, and State staff losses



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Students enroll in active Career Launch programs

- 14,790 Career Launch enrollments (partial school year, July 2025 – March 2026)
 - 84% are in Registered Apprenticeships
- 12,753 Career Launch completions since 2019

State funds directed to critical program needs

- 13 industry-led and regionally driven CCW State Grants show promising results
- 17 capital equipment grants for Career Launch programs at community and technical colleges
- 39 capital equipment grants for Career Launch and Career Prep programs at local school districts

Federally funded projects deliver measurable results

- 3,164 living-wage jobs achieved by Washington Jobs Initiative
- 497 new apprentices hired, 583 new pre-apprentices enrolled, and 110 new employers as training agents by Apprenticeship Building America partners
- 20 new and expanded opportunities in development using WIOA discretionary dollars

Stakeholders face an uncertain future

- Significant reductions in operating dollars, program offerings, and intermediary capacity
- Advisory Board recommends prioritizing:
 - Scaling industry-led pathways
 - Restoring funding for industry and regional leadership
 - Restoring funding for student enrollments and expanding access to proven pathways
 - Strong accountability and performance standards

System Change and Funding Reductions

State operating appropriations for career connected learning were reduced across agencies by 83.6% for the 2025 – 2027 biennium. Operating funds were eliminated entirely for the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC), Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), and State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) (Table 1). The Employment Security Department (ESD) appropriation for career connected learning was shifted from the Workforce Education Investment Account to the ESD Administrative Contingency Account and reduced by 70%.

As a result, funding for student enrollments in Career Launch programs was eliminated at community and technical colleges, K-12 schools, and public 4-year institutions. Funding was also eliminated for Career Connected Learning Coordinators, OSPI's Tribal Liaison, and career connected learning staff. ESD's designated staffing for the grant program was reduced.



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Table 1. Funding reductions for ESD Grant Pool, Career Launch Enrollment, and K12 Partnership

BIEN 2023-2025		BIEN 2025-2027	
ESD Grant Pool			
CCW Grant Program	\$15,510,000	CCW Grant Program	\$4,684,000
Career Launch Enrollment			
K12 (OSPI)	\$960,000	K12 (OSPI)	\$ -
CTC (SBCTC)	\$6,000,000	CTC (SBCTC)	\$ -
4-year (WSAC)	\$2,000,000	4-year (WSAC)	\$ -
K-12 Partnership & Misc.			
Tribal Liaison (OSPI)	\$300,000	Tribal Liaison (OSPI)	\$ -
Expanding CCL (OSPI)	\$919,000	Expanding CCL (OSPI)	\$ -
CCL Coordinators (OSPI)	\$2,700,000	CCL Coordinators (OSPI)	\$ -
CCL Implementation (OFM/WSAC)	\$100,000	CCL Implementation (OFM/WSAC)	\$ -
TOTAL	\$28,489,000	TOTAL	\$4,684,000

Impacts of Budget Reductions on Career Launch Programs

Career Launch programs are State-endorsed programs which combine: a supervised, paid internship with an employer; post-secondary credits, degrees, and credentials; and academic learning aligned to industry standards. Since 2019, 128 new Career Launch programs have been endorsed across 43 academic institutions, each with at least one sponsoring employer providing a paid internship. In prior biennia, State operating appropriations to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), and the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) provided Career Launch Enrollment grant funds for academic institutions providing Career Launch programming to students and businesses.



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The elimination of Career Launch Enrollment funding had significant consequences for participating institutions. Annual funding losses ranged from approximately \$48,000 to \$208,000 per program in the community and technical college system. For programs unable to replace the funding with local resources, reductions in course offerings became necessary, limiting opportunities for student participation and workforce preparation.

The funding reduction also affected participation in the Career Launch Endorsement Review (CLER) process administered by SBCTC. Without access to Career Launch Enrollment funding, interest in pursuing new endorsements declined substantially. Applications decreased from 24 in FY25 to 10 in FY26, reflecting reduced incentives and fewer opportunities for programs to expand Career Launch capacity.

As of March 2026, Career Launch programs have seen the following outcomes:

- 14,790 enrollments (July 2025 – March 2026). 84% of these were in Registered Apprenticeship (CL-RA) programs.
- 12,753 cumulative completions (since 2019). 90% of these were in CL-RA programs.

See [Appendix A](#) for graphs of Career Launch Enrollment and Completions for the 2025-2026 partial school year and over time. The [data dashboards on the CCW website](#) will also be updated with the 2025-2026 partial school year data around late September.

Impacts of Budget Reductions on Partners, Institutions, and Agencies

The eliminations and reductions in State appropriations prompted layoffs and the losses of career connected learning positions at OSPI, ESD, educational service districts, and other institutions.

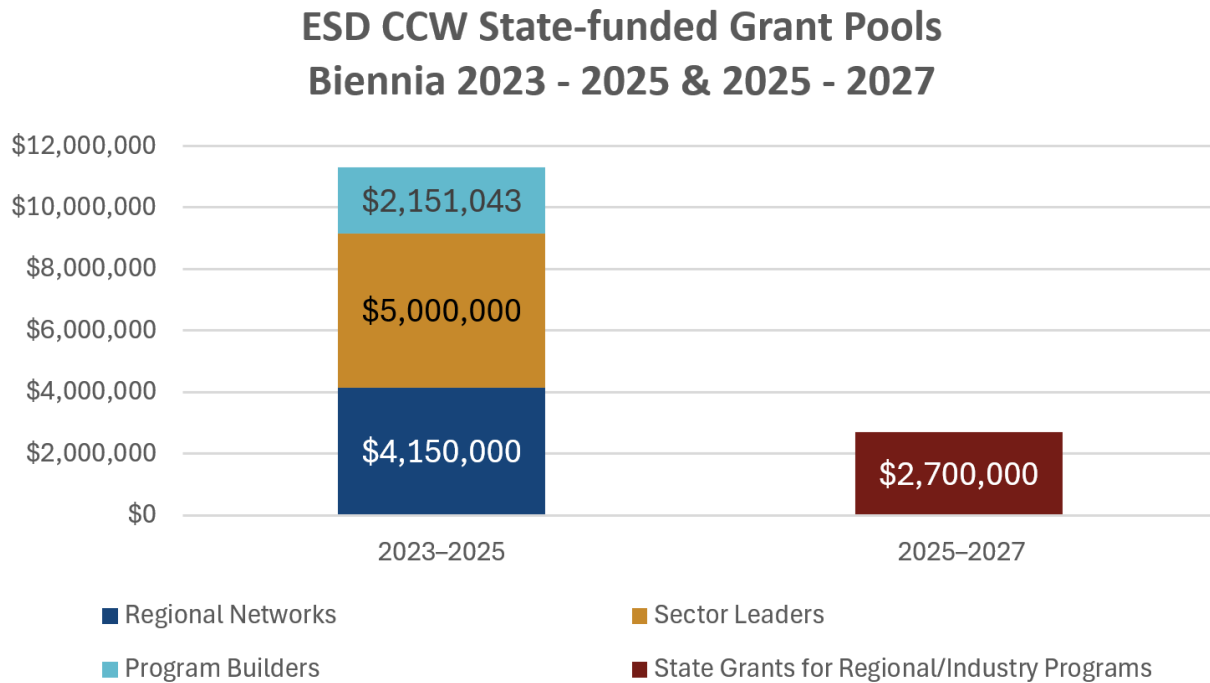
State appropriations were eliminated for all nine Career Connected Learning Coordinators at Educational Service Districts. These dedicated staff were subject matter experts in career and technical education who provided critical regional coordination and leadership, expanded access to K-12 and post-secondary learning pathways, and strengthened relationships between industry and education.

ESD grant pools were also eliminated, including funding for the Regional Networks, industry Sector Leaders, and Program Builders. Program development grants, responsible for the creation and expansion of more than 200 programs since 2019, were placed on indefinite hold by ESD. Previously-funded Regional Networks and Sector Leaders became eligible for 2025 – 2027 State Grants established under new criteria.



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Figure 1. ESD CCW State-funded grant pools for biennia 2023-2025 vs. 2025 - 2027



State Funded Activities

2025-2027 State Grants

In response to an 83.6% reduction in State funds and guidance from the Governor's Office, the Employment Security Department established a single, streamlined grant program for the 2025-27 biennium. The new grant criteria prioritized industry-led, regionally coordinated projects that respond to employer needs and expand student opportunities.

Regional Networks and Sector Leaders submitted applications to a selection committee of CAWG members. Funding was awarded to 13 projects, representing a \$2.43 million investment. All projects are on track, with some already exceeding early targets in student participation, recruitment, training progress, and credential attainment. Grantees report steady implementation, strong partnerships, and consistent progress toward outcomes. These projects demonstrate a strong return on investment and effective use of limited resources. At the same time, the funding reduction required a shift from broader systems work to more direct services, narrowing the scope of systemwide impact.



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Each project has unique performance measures defined by industry and student needs. ESD summarizes these performance measures into statewide outcomes, and presents current statewide results, in Table 2 below.

Table 2. 2025-2027 State Grant Outcomes Summary

Outcome	Projected By June 2027	Actuals By June 2026	Status
Employers engaged in career connected learning Employers are participating as hosts, mentors, trainers, and partners across multiple sectors.	650	631	On Track
School districts participating statewide Districts are adopting programming, supporting student participation at events, engaging in curriculum pilots.	112	143	Exceeding Target
Students engaged in career exploration and learning experiences Students are participating in exploration events, sector-specific programming, workplace visits, and hands-on activities.	5,350	5,193	On Track
Students progressing toward postsecondary and career pathways Includes dual credit enrollment, postsecondary course participation, and/or completion of competency-based milestones that demonstrate skill development.	3,046	3,006	On Track
Students earning industry-recognized credentials or micro-credentials Students are completing certifications, micro-credentials, and other recognized credentials that signal readiness for high-demand fields.	416	98	On Track*
Students participating in internships or worksite learning Internships and worksite learning experiences give students direct exposure to real workplaces and help them build practical skills.	166	75	On Track*
Educators trained or supported to deliver career connected learning Teachers, faculty, and staff are receiving training, professional development, and curriculum support.	245	137	On Track*

*Note: These outcome measures are lagging indicators, with increased results projected in SFY 2027.

More information on the 13 funded projects, including outcomes, challenges and impacts, can be found in [Appendix B](#).

Regional Networks and Sector Leaders report on the impacts of changes and funding cuts, along with concerns and recommendations for sustaining progress, in [Appendix C](#).



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Capital Equipment Grants

Career Launch Programs at Community & Technical Colleges

The SBCTC received \$3 million in Career Launch Capital Equipment funding for the 2025-27 biennium. Through a competitive grant process, funding was made available to existing Career Launch Endorsed programs and Washington State registered apprenticeship programs that partnered with colleges to deliver related supplemental instruction. The entire appropriation was awarded during a single funding round in September 2025.

As shown in Table 3, seventeen programs across nine colleges received awards totaling \$3 million. Recipients included nine registered apprenticeship programs and eight Career Launch Endorsed college programs, supporting workforce training in advanced manufacturing, transportation, construction, culinary arts, marine maintenance, and other high-demand fields.



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Table 3. Career Launch Capital Equipment Funding 25-27 Biennium

	College	Program	Award Amount
1	Bates Technical College	Pacific Northwest Ironworkers Local #86 JATC (Apprenticeship)	\$54,074
2	Bates Technical College	AJAC Advanced Manufacturing (Apprenticeship)	\$109,904
3	Columbia Basin College	AJAC Industrial Maintenance and Machining (Apprenticeship)	\$110,024
4	Clark College	Automotive Technician Career Launch Partnership	\$141,487
5	Clover Park Technical College	HVAC Expansion Project	\$875,905
6	Everett Community College	AJAC Production and Maintenance (Apprenticeship)	\$89,508
7	Grays Harbor College	Diesel Technology Career Launch	\$383,287
8	Lake Washington Institute of Technology	Diesel and Heavy Equipment Technology	\$126,342
9	South Seattle College	Western Washington Masonry Trades (Apprenticeship)	\$71,629
10	South Seattle College	Culinary & Pastry Arts (Pastry Arts)	\$20,784
11	South Seattle College	AJAC Advanced Manufacturing (Apprenticeship)	\$76,264
12	South Seattle College	Cement Masons and Plasterers (Apprenticeship)	\$11,135
13	South Seattle College	Boilermakers Local 104 (Apprenticeship)	\$48,085
14	South Seattle College	Finishing Trades Institute of the Northwest, Commercial and Industrial Painting (Apprenticeship)	\$447,324
15	South Seattle College	Culinary & Pastry Arts (Culinary)	\$128,794
16	Skagit Valley College	Marine Maintenance Technology	\$114,343
17	Skagit Valley College	Welding Technology	\$191,111
Total Funding Awarded			\$3,000,000
Remaining Balance			\$0

Career Launch and Career Prep Programs at School Districts

The OSPI 2025–27 Career Preparation and Career Launch Grant program received nearly \$10 million in requests from 75 school districts. Through the \$4 million capital budget allocation provided in SSB 5195, OSPI funded 39 districts, with all funds awarded during the first year of the biennium.



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No additional state-funded CCW projects, programs, or equipment purchases were supported during the reporting year. The 2025–27 operating budget eliminated all dedicated CCW funding administered by OSPI, including funding for OSPI staffing, a Tribal Liaison, and Career Launch enrollment support.

Federally Funded Activities

Washington Jobs Initiative

Washington secured \$23.5 million through the federal Good Jobs Challenge to train 5,000 residents and place at least 3,150 into quality jobs by September 2026. WJI has leveraged CCW’s statewide infrastructure, allowing us to scale sectoral partnerships, expand equitable access, and connect more people to good jobs in high-demand industries.

As of June 2026, the Washington Jobs Initiative (WJI) has officially achieved its targeted enrollment, completion, and job placement outcomes a quarter early! Table 4 below displays WJI targets and cumulative actual outcomes.

Table 4. WJI Participant Outcomes as of June 2026

Outcome	Target (Number of Participants)	Cumulative Actuals (Number of Participants)
Enrollments	5,000	5,329
Completions	3,150	3,198
Job Placements	3,150	3,164

Due to the incredibly hard work of the sectoral partnerships and their strategic shifts to deal with significant economic changes over the past two years, we have already placed **3,164 participants into good jobs**. These are jobs that exceed prevailing wage, offer benefits and/or are union jobs, and create pathways to meaningful careers in advanced manufacturing, construction, clean energy, healthcare, and IT/cybersecurity. The remaining quarter of the grant will be focused on placing remaining participants in the pipeline and supporting sustainability for the sectoral partnerships.



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“Just knowing someone had my back meant so much... Because of Construct a Career, I've been able to focus on my apprenticeship, keep providing for my son, and keep moving forward toward a career I'm proud of.”

— Alexandra Murray, participant, WJI Construct a Career Ironworkers Apprenticeship

As part of sustainability efforts, the full WJI technical assistance team (Washington STEM, WSAC, ESD, WSLC, and EQUITY) convened sectoral partnerships in person in June 2026 for a Community of Practice. The gathering created much-needed space for partners to build synergy

around sustainability — the kind of nuanced, candid conversation that only happens face to face. Partners reflected on their journeys, shared successes and lessons learned and explored what it will take to keep effective efforts going. Conversations centered on the future of apprenticeships in postsecondary spaces, the power of storytelling alongside data, and how to carry this work forward beyond the life of the grant.

Key Insights

- Apprentices are college students — they deserve wraparound supports and proactive outreach from colleges when enrolled in their RSI classes.
- Sharing successes broadly is key to sustainability.
- Stories anchor the work — it's about neighbors, not just numbers.
- Data provides evidence of impact but can create risk for the populations being served.

What Partners Need

- Ongoing spaces to connect across sectors and backbone organizations.
- Flexible funding and help leveraging successes into sustainable resources.
- Guidance on using data responsibly while protecting vulnerable populations.
- Support sustaining relationships and momentum after the grant ends.

Apprenticeship Building America

In 2022, ESD won a \$5.6 million Apprenticeship Building America (ABA) federal grant from the US Department of Labor (USDOL) to scale registered apprenticeships and recognized pre-apprenticeships in



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high-priority industries. ESD was the lead entity, working in partnership with L&I, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board), and a network of employers and programs across Washington.

26 Program Builder grants were issued to create, expand, and modernize apprenticeship programs across priority industry sectors like construction, advanced manufacturing, healthcare, information technology, and education.

Washington achieved key federal performance measures ahead of schedule:

- **497 new individuals hired** into Registered Apprenticeships;
- **583 new individuals enrolled** in Recognized Pre-apprenticeships; and
- **110 new employers** serving as training agents.

In addition, federal dollars were utilized to conduct an evaluation of initial results, provide technical assistance to apprenticeship partners, and implement upgrades to L&I apprenticeship tracking system (ARTS).

Apprenticeship partners gathered in person at Highline College on April 7 and 8, 2026, for an ABA Evaluation Convening, an extension of the ABA Community of Practice that met regularly online since 2023. During the first day of the event, representatives from Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) facilitated focus groups for apprentices, program builders, employers, and community partners. The focus groups are part of an evaluation of initial results conducted by the Workforce Board.

SPR's initial review indicates that ABA-funded CCW Program Builder grants:

- Increased ability to create and expand registered apprenticeship and recognized pre-apprenticeship programs due to equipment, curriculum, and instructor training investments;
- Increased capacity to engage employers and industry;
- Increased development of system-level partnerships across colleges, school districts, unions, local workforce development boards, and agencies; and
- Increased technical knowledge about the registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship system in Washington.

The Workforce Board's published evaluation highlights the successes, challenges, and lessons learned from expanding apprenticeship opportunities across the state (available online: <https://wtb.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/ABA-Qualitative-Evaluation-Final-07272026.pdf>).

Round 13 Program Builders



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In 2024, Employment Security Department reestablished the Program Builder process for Round 13, introducing a shortened application, a multi-phase review structure, and a new Convenience Pool that keeps accepted proposals active for up to 24 months. This approach made it easier for applicants to participate and allowed CCW's industry Sector Leaders and regional education partners to serve as subject matter experts throughout the review. Once an application is accepted into the Pool, organizations can continue improving their proposals, receive technical assistance and networking support, and be considered for funding as new resources become available.

ESD received **136 applications** from across Washington's regions and priority industries, reflecting demand for Career Prep, Career Explore, Career Launch, and Registered Apprenticeship program development. To ensure regional and industry alignment, CCW's industry and regional leaders conducted a comprehensive review of all submissions and identified **57 proposals** as high priority. These 57 organizations represented 13 priority sectors and every geographic region of the state.

Selection Outcomes

- **High-priority programs invited to interview and funded:** 20 programs were awarded WIOA Title I Governor's Discretionary funds, fully obligating available dollars.
- **High-priority programs invited to interview but not funded:** Several strong proposals were recommended but could not be funded due to limited resources. These remain eligible, should funding be made available.
- **High-priority programs not invited to interview:** Some proposals were identified as promising but did not advance. These also remain active in the Pool.
- **Programs not identified as high priority:** These applications were reviewed but not prioritized by industry and regional leaders.

The review committee recommended 20 programs receive WIOA-funded grants.

At present, there are no State appropriations or federal dollars allocated to these program development proposals. The number of high-quality proposals that remain in the Convenience Pool underscores the depth of statewide interest and the need for continued investment.

Table 5 contains a list of the awarded organizations and their program name.



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Table 5. Awarded Career Prep, Launch & Explore Programs

Intermediary	Industry	Program Name	Program Type	County
Big Brothers Big Sisters SW Washington	Finance	Career Mentoring and Exploration to Prep	Career Explore	Thurston
Student Research and Development	IT	CodeDay Software Development Technical Interview Prep	Career Prep	King
Educational Service District 123	Education	Early Learning Apprenticeship Pathway	Career Launch	Franklin
Northwest Education Service District 189	Education	Teachers for the People	Career Prep	Skagit
Skills USA Washington	Agriculture & Natural Resources	SkillsUSA Washington	Career Prep	Multiple
Edmonds College	Agriculture & Natural Resources	Sustainable Landscape and Restoration Management	Career Launch	Snohomish
Orion Industries	Advanced Manufacturing	NextGen Manufacturing	Career Prep	King
Methow Valley Sport Trails Association	Construction	Ski Trail Operations Pathway	Career Prep	Okanogan
Grays Harbor College	Maritime	Westport Maritime Futures	Career Launch	Grays Harbor
Lewis Public Transportation Benefit Area	Cleantech & Energy	Renewable Energy Vehicle and Infrastructure Technician	Career Prep	Mason
King County	Cleantech & Energy	JumpStart	Career Launch	King
Boys & Girls Clubs of the Columbia Basin	Cleantech & Energy	Green Horizons: Clean Energy	Career Explore	Kittitas
Educational Service District 123	Multiple	Signature Programs Advancing Real-World Knowledge	Career Launch	Benton
Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center	Multiple	Fred Hutch Career Awareness Network	Career Explore	King
Friends of KSPS	Multiple	Career Explore Northwest Expansion	Career Explore	Spokane
Lower Columbia College	Multiple	Lower Columbia College Career Launch	Career Launch	Cowlitz
FareStart	Food Service	FareStart Career Prep	Career Prep	King



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Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center	Healthcare	Providence Phlebotomy Training Program	Career Launch	King
Wenatchee Valley College	Life Science	NCW Mobile Science Career Connections	Career Explore	Chelan
Enterprise for Equity	Creative Economy	The Apprenticeship for the Creative Economy	Career Prep	Thurston

Agency Reports

State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC)

Since 2019, 128 Career Launch programs have been endorsed across 43 academic institutions, each with at least one sponsoring employer providing a paid internship aligned to academic learning. SBCTC developed the Career Launch Endorsement Review process in 2019, which it maintains currently.

Beginning in 2020 and continuing through the 2021 – 2023 and 2023 – 2025 biennia, the SBCTC received \$3 million per year of State operating appropriations to issue Career Launch Enrollment Expansion grants as well as \$5 million in capital appropriations to administer Career Launch Capital Equipment funding to community and technical colleges. Investments were issued through a competitive statewide process open to Career Launch Endorsed programs and Washington State registered apprenticeship programs that partnered with community and technical colleges.

The elimination of Career Launch Enrollment Expansion funding for the 2025 – 2027 biennium has had significant consequences for participating colleges and programs. Annual funding losses ranged from approximately \$48,000 to \$208,000 per program. For programs unable to replace the funding with local resources, reductions in course offerings became necessary, limiting opportunities for student participation and workforce preparation.

Without access to this Enrollment Expansion funding, fewer institutions pursued new Career Launch Endorsement and applications decreased from 24 in FY25 to 10 in FY26.

State agencies have yet to determine the full impact of the loss of student enrollment funding for Washington's participating students, employers, community and technical colleges, 4-year public universities, and K-12 schools.



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Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

State-Funded Capital Projects

The 2025–27 Career Preparation and Launch Grant program received nearly \$10 million in requests from 75 school districts. Through the \$4 million capital budget allocation provided in SSB 5195, OSPI funded 39 districts, with all funds awarded during the first year of the biennium.

No additional state-funded CCW projects, programs, or equipment purchases were supported during the reporting year. The 2025–27 operating budget eliminated all dedicated CCW funding administered by OSPI, including funding for OSPI staffing, a Tribal Liaison, and Career Launch enrollment support. OSPI continues to participate in the CCW Cross-Agency Work Group using existing staff resources.

Impacts of Funding Reductions

Funding reductions eliminated OSPI’s Career Connect Washington Program Specialist and Tribal Liaison positions, as well as Career Connected Learning Coordinators previously located within the state’s nine Educational Service Districts. The loss of these positions has substantially reduced dedicated K–12 coordination, regional alignment, employer and community engagement, technical assistance, and follow-up support needed to sustain and expand career connected learning opportunities.

Forecast and Concerns

Without adequate state funding, K–12 schools will have limited capacity to develop and expand innovative career preparation and pathway programs. Districts are already managing significant fiscal and staffing pressures, and the absence of dedicated funding makes it increasingly difficult to sustain partnerships, coordinate programs, and respond to student and employer needs.

Recommendations

OSPI recommends prioritizing stable, adequate, and flexible funding for the K–12 system. Districts must first have the resources needed to maintain core operations, support student well-being and engagement, and deliver high-quality instruction. A strong basic education foundation will provide schools and regional partners with the capacity to sustain partnerships, expand career-connected opportunities, and participate meaningfully in statewide education and workforce initiatives.

Labor and Industry

CCW Funding has been an important resource for developing and sustaining apprenticeship preparation programs, building partnerships with employers and training providers as well as removing barriers to entry into registered apprenticeships. The strength of the apprenticeship system depends on having a healthy pipeline of prepared candidates and the infrastructure to connect them with employers. This



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substantial reduction in CCW funding puts that pipeline at risk at a time when Washington employers continue to need skilled workers.

Looking Ahead

Career Connect Washington (CCW) is entering a pivotal stage in its development. Since its establishment in 2019, CCW has expanded career-connected learning, strengthened partnerships across education, workforce, and industry, and built a statewide network that includes employers, labor, education, government, workforce, economic development, and community partners. The Cross-agency Work Group established by the Legislatures has played a central role in aligning policy, funding, program implementation, data, and education-to-workforce strategies across systems. Together, these partners have developed and expanded career pathways that connect Washington learners to career exploration, education and training, work-based learning, credentials, apprenticeship, employment, and advancement.

Input from the Cross-agency Work Group (CAWG), the statewide CCW Advisory Board, state agency partners, and stakeholders across the CCW network now points to a clear direction for the next phase of the initiative: preserve what is working, strengthen statewide alignment and accountability, and build a more coordinated, sustainable, and outcomes-focused career pathway system for Washington.

The future of CCW should build on the partnerships, regional relationships, sector expertise, technical assistance, cross-agency collaboration, and supportive-service connections that have produced value to date, while strengthening governance, common quality standards, accountability, sustainability, data use, and measurable outcomes across the statewide system.

Employers

Employers play a critical role in building strong talent pipelines and expanding career opportunities for young people. The Roadmap to ROI infographic in [Appendix D](#), developed with insights from employers and Sector Leaders, provides a practical framework to help companies design, pilot, and scale early talent initiatives that align with business needs. This resource supports stronger partnerships across education and industry while helping employers make informed decisions about investing in work-based learning and other career-connected strategies. Career Connect Washington appreciates the leadership and contributions of the Business and Philanthropy Leadership Group in shaping this resource. For more information visit <https://bit.ly/RoadmapToROI>.



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Summary of Stakeholder Feedback

Stakeholder feedback from the CCW Advisory Committee and CCW Cross-agency Work Group is consistent: stronger infrastructure would help align, sustain, evaluate, and scale effective pathways statewide.

Recent funding reductions have significantly reduced staffing, employer engagement, technical assistance, regional coordination, and the ability to scale promising models in Washington's higher education and workforce development system. The greatest risk is the loss of intermediary capacity—the organizations and people that connect employers, schools, colleges, apprenticeship, workforce partners, labor, and communities. Established in national best practice, Washington's intermediary infrastructure was largely funded by State appropriations for career connected learning. Without this connective infrastructure, programs may continue individually but become increasingly fragmented, harder to navigate, and less responsive to employer demand.

Implications for the Future of CCW

CCW Advisory Board members recommend that CCW build on its strengths and evolve into a statewide career-pathway system that aligns education and workforce investments with employer demand and economic opportunity and mobility.

Advisors highlight key priorities:

- Align existing programs and investments around shared statewide, sector, and regional priorities.
- Prioritize industry-led pathways tied to demonstrated workforce demand.
- Maintain sector expertise, and regional capacity.
- Establish common quality standards and outcome measures.
- Scale proven pathways rather than continually creating new pilots.
- Expand access in rural, Tribal, and underserved communities.
- Use employment, wage, employer, participant, and ROI outcomes to guide investment decisions.
- Embed successful pathways into schools, colleges, apprenticeship systems, employers, and regional workforce strategies.
- Coordinate roles and activities for statewide leadership, Sector Leaders, Regional Networks, and cross-system partners.
- Provide sustainable support with predictable multi-year funding.
- Create a statewide accountability framework.

Considering the above priorities could help promote a lean but durable statewide, sector, and regional infrastructure that coordinates existing investments, reduces duplication, strengthens employer engagement, and scales what works.



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Conclusion

Career Connect Washington enters its next phase with a strong record of results. Since 2019, CCW has established Career Launch, supported the development and expansion of more than 200 career connected learning programs, expanded apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship pathways, and through the Washington Jobs Initiative trained and placed more than 3,150 Washingtonians into high-demand, quality jobs.

The 2025–2027 funding reductions have significantly reduced Washington’s capacity to develop and deliver high-quality career pathways, even as employers continue to face persistent workforce shortages.

The CCW Advisory identified key priorities that can help create a more focused, accountable system that preserves what works: industry leadership, regional coordination, employer engagement, scalable pathways, technical assistance, and shared accountability. With sustained investment, and a focus on measurable outcomes, CCW can become a durable statewide career pathway system that strengthens economic mobility, meets employer talent needs, and supports Washington’s long-term competitiveness.



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Appendices

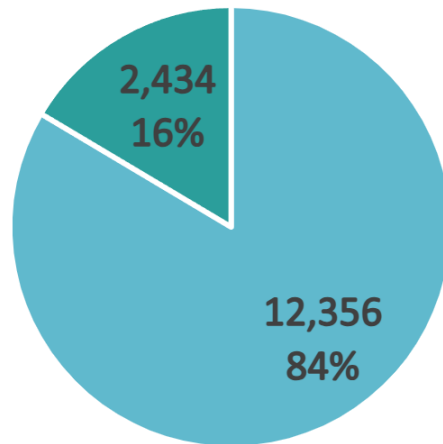
- [Appendix A: Career Launch Enrollment Graphs](#)
- [Appendix B: State Grants Projects](#)
- [Appendix C: Impacts, Forecasts, Concerns, and Recommendations from Regional and Industry Leaders](#)
- [Appendix D: Roadmap to ROI Infographic](#)

Appendix A: Career Launch Enrollment Graphs

14,790

Career Launch Enrollments

July 2025 - March 2026

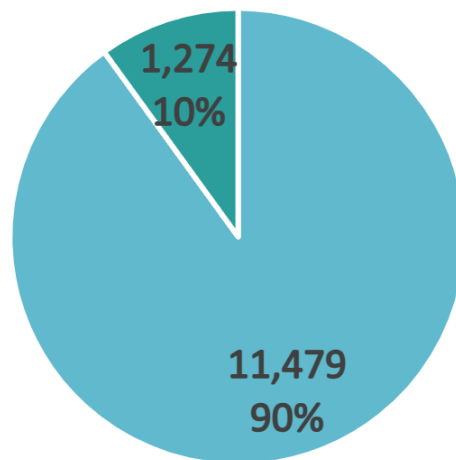


■ CL RA ■ CL Non-RA

12,753

Career Launch Completions

since 2019



■ CL RA ■ CL Non-RA

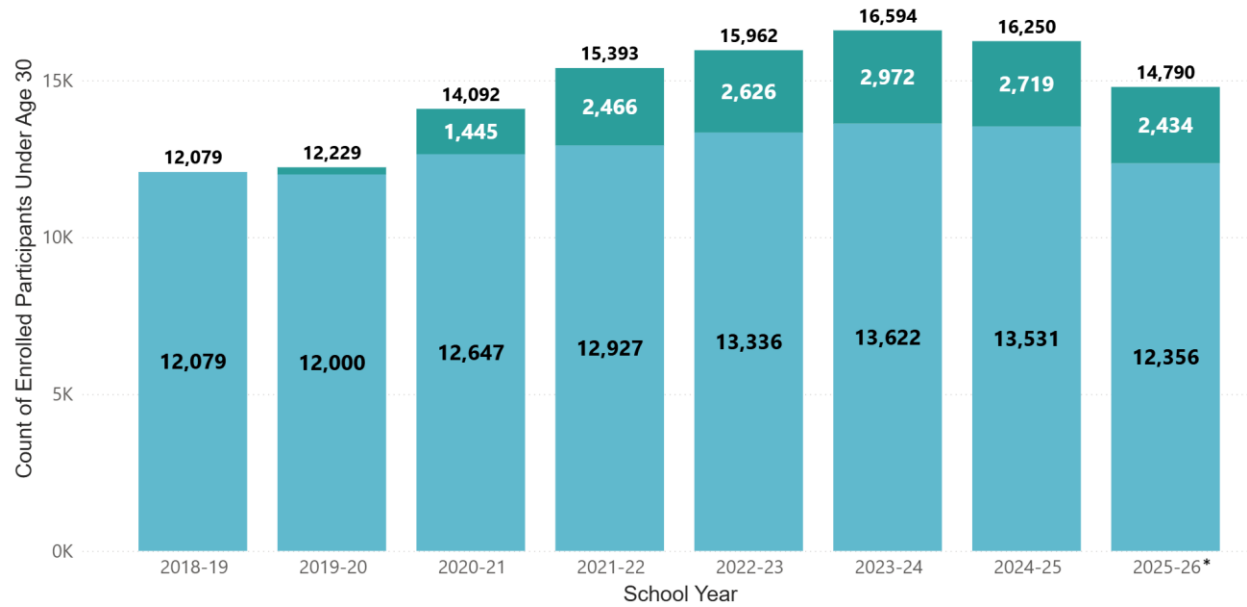


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Career Launch Enrolled Participants Under Age 30

CL Type ● CL RA ● CL Non-RA



* Note: 2025-2026 data is for a partial school year (July 2025 – March 2026). Full school year data will be available in early 2027.

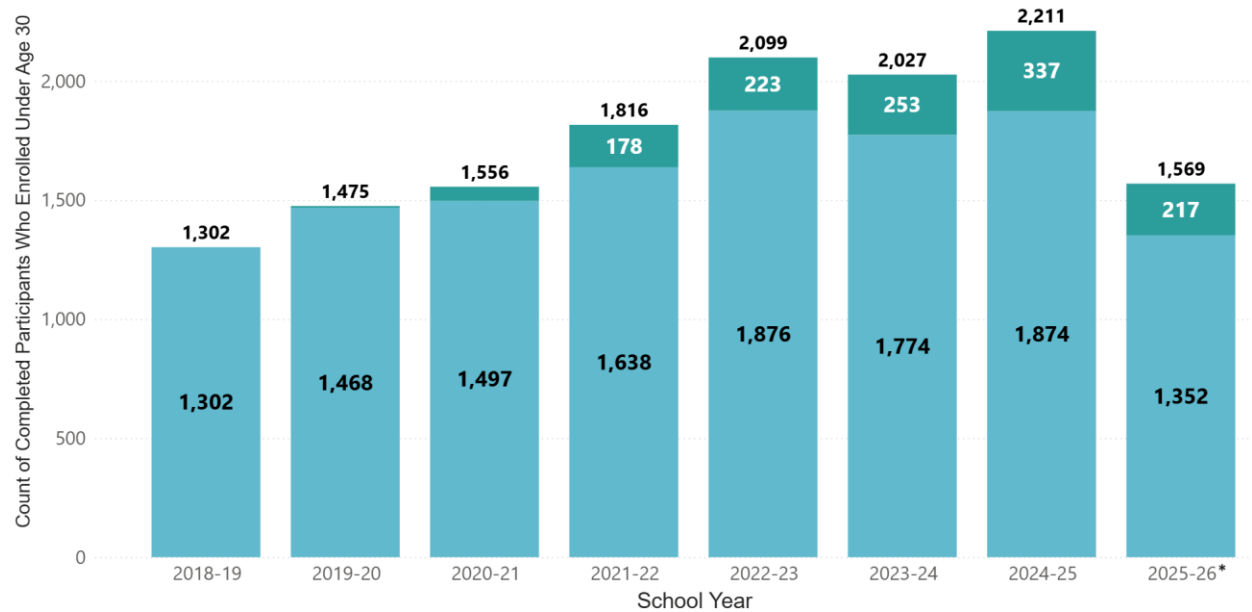


Career Connect Washington

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Career Launch Completed Participants Who Enrolled Under Age 30

CL Type ● CL RA ● CL Non-RA



* Note: 2025-2026 data is for a partial school year (July 2025 – March 2026). Full school year data will be available in early 2027.



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Appendix B: State Grant Projects

The following section provides a summary of the 13 State-funded projects and the intended outcomes for the biennium, accompanied by a chart of actuals to date against key statewide performance measures.

Construction CCL Accelerator

Sector: Construction

Lead Organization: AGC Education Foundation

Challenge: Construction employers face persistent shortages of applicants who understand the industry's skills, pathways, and opportunities. Students must develop their High School and Beyond Plans in 7th grade, yet many lack exposure to construction careers or graduation options.

Solution: Implement Core Plus Construction for middle school to build foundational skills, support early career exploration, and help students plan informed graduation pathways.

Project Outcomes:

- 200 student slots created
- 15 employers engaged
- 10 school districts participating
- 5 Core Plus Construction high schools partner programs
- 15 teachers receiving training

Project Impact:

- **Students:** Free, statewide, hands-on construction learning tools for grades 6–8 support early exploration and increase interest in CTE programming in high school and later, construction careers.
- **Employers:** A stronger early-stage talent pipeline for high-demand roles.
- **Educators:** Ready-to-use construction learning tools that support career exploration without additional burden.
- **Systems:** Better-informed High School and Beyond Plans and reduced strain on district budgets.



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Middle school students take part in construction job site visit bringing classroom learning to life.



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STEM360

Sector: Clean Tech & Energy, Advanced Manufacturing, Life Science, Maritime, and IT

Lead Organization: CleanTech Alliance

Key Partners: Aerospace Futures Alliance, Life Science Washington, Technology Alliance, Kinetic West

Challenge: Industries are evolving quickly, creating interdisciplinary jobs that require adaptable, cross-sector skills. Yet most career exploration is a one-time experience that doesn't help students compare industries or understand how their skills transfer across sectors.

Solution: STEM360 integrates STEM exposure into core academic subjects and connects students directly with employers across Washington's high-tech sectors.

Project Outcomes:

- 700-800 students participating
- 400 employers invited to participate
- 16 employers committing to participate
- 2 school districts participating
- 40 teachers participating

Project Impact:

- **Students:** Increased student awareness of high-demand STEM and non-STEM careers through interdisciplinary curriculum.
- **Employers:** Early engagement with future talent through STEM360 events and hands-on career exploration.
- **Educators:** Strong connections between academic content and industry applications through employer-supported activities.
- **Systems:** Data insights that inform program interest, credential pursuit, and pathway development





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Panel at Seattle Fusion Week 2025. Discussion included entry level workforce talent needs to grow the fusion sector; career and technical education; career exposure opportunities in new industries.

Teachers for the People Expansion Project NWESD 189

Sector: Education

Lead Organizations: Center for Strengthening Teaching Profession & NWESD 189

Key Partners: Teachers for the People Advisory and Design Teams, Mount Vernon's Northwest Career & Technical Academy and Marysville School District, WWU Woodring College, and Skagit Valley College, Everett School District

Challenge: Indigenous teachers make up less than 2% of Washington's educator workforce, leaving students without culturally grounded representation and districts without the talent needed to serve Indigenous communities well.

Solution: Expand the community-rooted Teachers for the People program to onboard additional districts in the Skagit Valley and Whatcom County, including Ferndale and Bellingham, and strengthen pathways for Indigenous paraeducators and future teachers.

Project Outcomes:

- 200 students enrolled in Teachers for the People program
- 75 students earning industry-recognized credentials
- 80 BIPOC students participating in Teachers for the People program
- 10 Indigenous students participating in Teachers for the People program
- 30 Educators complete Teachers for the People program training
- 1 implementation guide published
- 1 district participating in or adopting Teachers for the People program

Project Impact:

- **Students:** Earn industry-recognized credentials and gain deeper awareness of Indigenous history and ways of knowing
- **Employers:** Stronger, more diverse paraeducator talent pipeline
- **Educators:** More paraeducators earn credentials that reflect the students they serve.
- **Systems:** Additional districts adopt TPP, expanding access for Indigenous students and future educators



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This is the beautiful wall of completed “Where I’m from and Who I Carry” collages done at Marysville Pilchuck High School by high school students!

Washington Life Science Talent Pipeline: Scaling Proven Workforce Models

Sector: Life Science

Lead Organization: Life Science Washington

Challenge: Washington’s life science sector continues to rely on out-of-state talent. As the industry grows into a top 10 national cluster, employers face an urgent need for locally trained biomanufacturing technicians, lab technicians, and quality control specialists.

Solution: Scale and strengthen high-demand training programs at Spokane Community College, Shoreline Community College, and UW Bothell’s Center for Biotechnology and Innovation Training (CBIT). Deepen partnerships with employers including Jubilant HollisterStier, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center, Pfizer, Plurystic, Just EvoTech, Inventprise, Bristol Myers Squibb and Allen Institute for Brain Science.

Project Outcomes:

- 330 students enrolled
- 26 students engaged in paid internships or worksite learning
- 53 employers actively supporting training and program delivery
- 40 students earning industry-recognized credentials
- 140 students applying for entry-level positions

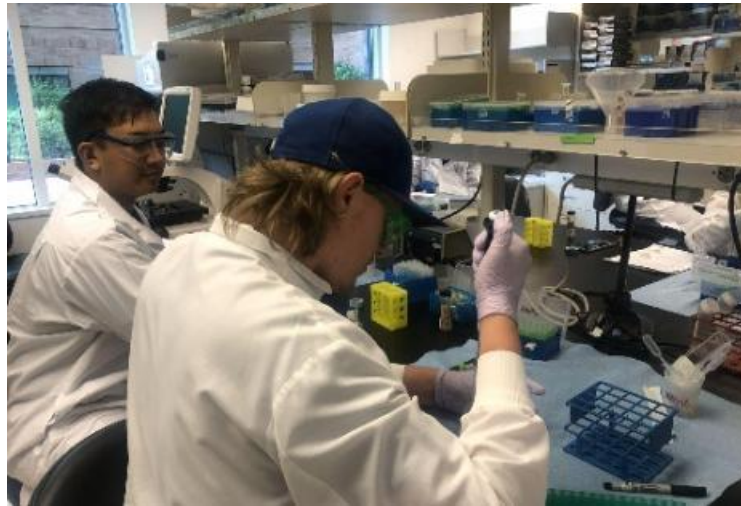
Project Impact:

- **Students:** Clear, reliable pathways into lab tech and biomanufacturing roles, supported by strong hiring outcomes across CBIT, Shoreline, and JHS–Spokane CC programs.
- **Employers:** A dependable local talent pipeline reinforced by consistently high hiring rates across regional training programs.
- **Educators:** Instruction aligned with industry needs, strengthened by collaboration with employers and shared program models.



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- **Systems:** Industry-approved curriculum scaled across multiple colleges, creating a more unified and aligned statewide life sciences talent-development system.



Students participating in FredHutch Lab Launch program.



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Scaling Career Pathways to Agriculture and Natural Resources

Sector: Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR)

Lead organization: Pacific Education Institute

Key partners: Sierra Pacific Industries, Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group, Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, Western Forest Conservation Association, Spokane Conservation District, WA Dept. of Natural Resources, Grays Harbor College, Maritime Sector Leader, OSPI, YVTECH and Riverview/WANIC Skills Centers, Ferndale/Onalaska/Spokane School Districts, and ESDs (South Central, Capital, Southwest, West Sound, Mid-Columbia, Northwest)

Challenge: ANR jobs are expected to grow, but employers across Washington continue to struggle to recruit applicants with the skills needed to enter and succeed in the sector.

Solution: Scale successful career pathway models statewide.

Project Outcomes:

- 123 students enrolled
- 1,000 new ANR CCL student slots created
- 25 school districts participating
- 25 employers engaged in CCL support
- 50 students completing industry-recognized credentials
- 4 new statewide equivalency CTE frameworks developed

Project Impact:

- **Students:** Expanded access to 2,243 new ANR CCL program slots and 35 dual-credit opportunities
- **Employers:** Early, structured support that strengthens hiring pathways through a statewide employer toolkit, webinars, and commitments to bring CCL students into ANR roles.
- **Educators:** A statewide teacher professional learning network strengthens instruction and supports consistent ANR career prep learning
- **Systems:** State-approved CCL pathways in ANR Mechanics and GIS and multi-agency training with WA Department of Natural Resources that strengthen alignment across the statewide ANR talent system.



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"I've been shown many different pathways that I can take in conservation. My best experience from this program was working with [Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group] where we got to do work that made me feel like I was making an impact." - YV
TECH Skills Center participant

MAC Welding Project, Phase II

Sector: Maritime, Agriculture & Natural Resources, Construction, and all industries that rely on welding

Lead Organization: Center of Excellence for Marine Manufacturing & Technology

Key Partners: AGC Education Foundation, Career Connect NW at NWESD 189, Walla Walla Community College and Agriculture & Natural Resource Center of Excellence, Skagit Valley College, Grays Harbor College, Capital STEM Alliance, Mid-Columbia Regional Network, and cross-sector industry partners

Challenge: Washington employers across sectors face strong demand for skilled welders, yet students and communities lack access to aligned training. Open-source instructional resources are scarce, faculty have few opportunities for industry-aligned professional development, and explore-prep-launch programming is inconsistent across regions scalable, standards-based statewide strategy has been needed to close these gaps.

Solution: Develop and implement industry-standards-based welding frameworks, approved by OSPI in September 2025, to serve as the foundation for statewide scaling.

Project Outcomes:

- 150 partners engaged across industry, K–12, and postsecondary
- 100 K–12 and postsecondary faculty receiving professional development
- 9 employers actively supporting training and program delivery
- 150 students earning industry-recognized credentials
- 150 K–12 students enrolled in welding dual-credit courses
- 250 high schools implementing standards-based welding
- 20 articulation agreements established with community and technical colleges
- K-12 welding curriculum with 36 units (Intro to Metal Trades, Welding Tech I, Welding Tech II), developed and reviewed statewide
- Professional development calendar published for K12 and post-secondary faculty statewide

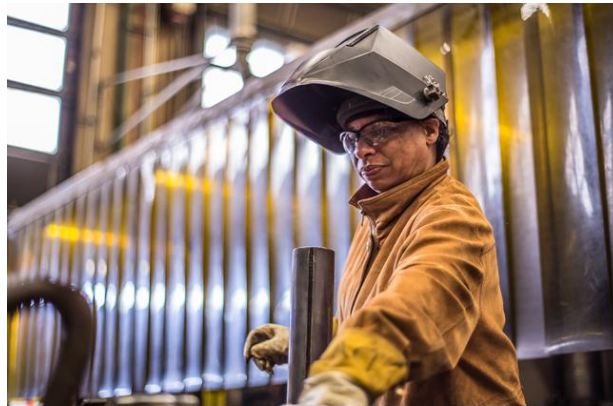
Project Impact:

- **Students:** Early access to aligned dual-credit welding courses that build confidence and readiness for high-demand maritime and trades careers.



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- **Employers:** Consistent statewide welding preparation that strengthens the talent pipeline and supports reliable hiring pathways.
- **Educators:** Industry-aligned professional development that improves instructional consistency and supports high-quality welding programs across regions.
- **Systems:** A scaled statewide welding curriculum and shared evaluation rubric that align K–12 and postsecondary programs and support seamless student transitions.



Welding student, South Seattle College Welding Program



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Regional Worksite Learning Coordination Hub

Sectors: Agriculture; Education; Healthcare; Manufacturing; Construction

Lead Organization: Educational Service District 105

Key Partners: Central Washington University; Central Washington Home Builders Association; Greater Health Now; Kittitas County Chamber of Commerce; Kittitas Valley Healthcare; Mid-Columbia Fisheries; Pacific Education Institute; South Central WEB Alliance; South Central Workforce; Yakima Valley College; Perry Technical Institute; Kittitas, Ellensburg, Cle Elum Roslyn, and Easton School Districts

Challenge: Districts across the ESD 105 region face limited capacity and complex compliance requirements that restrict equitable access to worksite learning. These barriers persist even as employers signal strong and growing demand for a skilled regional workforce.

Solution: The Regional Worksite Learning Coordination Hub will establish centralized systems, coordinated employer engagement, and clear accountability structures that expand access to compliant, high-quality worksite learning aligned with regional workforce priorities.

Project Outcomes:

- 500 students participating in Explore events
- 30 students engaged in internships or worksite learning
- 12 employers supporting training and program delivery
- 4 school districts participating

Project Impact:

- **Students:** High-quality worksite learning and broad career exploration give students clearer pathways into regional careers.
- **Employers:** Employers actively shape and support work-based learning, strengthening early talent pipelines across priority sectors.
- **Educators:** Aligned tools and supports help educators deliver consistent, compliant worksite learning experiences.
- **Systems:** A scaled, compliant regional worksite learning system strengthens coordination and expands employer partnerships across the region.



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Students learn about construction career pathways on a real home building construction site.

Reframing High Tech Manufacturing in Southwest Washington

Sectors: Advanced Manufacturing and IT

Lead Organization: Educational Service District 112

Key Partners: High Tech Council, Gorge Tech Alliance, Clark College, WSUV, Lower Columbia College, Centers of Excellence for Semiconductors/Electronics and Advanced Manufacturing/Aerospace, several K–12 districts

Challenge: Southwest Washington employers in Advanced Manufacturing and IT struggle to find enough prepared workers, even for roles that require little or no prior experience. Students and families often aren't aware of these high-opportunity careers, and schools lack clear, coordinated pathways that connect young people to local training and employment.

Solution: Create a coordinated regional system that helps students explore these careers earlier, aligns training programs with employer needs, and raises public awareness so more young people can step into high-demand, family-wage jobs.

Project Outcomes:

- 50 students participating in career exploration and sector-specific learning
- 215 students enrolled in manufacturing dual credit courses
- 15 employers engaging through the Regional Leadership Team and K–8 classroom activities
- 15 school districts and 15 postsecondary partners participating in the Regional Leadership Team
- 15 educators attending dual-credit and sector-specific professional learning

Project Impact:

- **Students:** More than 2,000 students and families gain early exposure to advanced manufacturing and IT careers through regional exploration activities.



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- **Employers:** Employers co-develop work-based learning experiences that strengthen early talent pathways from elementary through early college.
- **Educators:** Educators receive ongoing professional learning that deepens understanding of high-demand sectors and supports aligned instruction.
- **Systems:** Early-college pathways are aligned across K–12 and postsecondary, creating clearer transitions into advanced manufacturing and IT programs.



Students at Blueprints for Success—a partnership between ESD 112 and the Washington Women’s Commission—explored high-tech manufacturing careers, learned firsthand about women’s underrepresentation in the field, and even suited up to “try on” the roles for a day.



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Capital Apprenticeship in Meat Processing (CAMP)

Sector: Agriculture & Natural Resources

Lead Organization: Capital STEM Alliance

Key Partners: Thurston EDC, NorthWest Meat Processors Association and Centralia College

Challenge: Labor shortages limit rural ranchers' ability to increase production, and no regional community colleges or school districts offer CTE coursework, training, or certifications in meat processing occupations.

Solution: Develop aligned CTE curriculum and equivalencies, expand K–12 programming, and provide faculty training in meat processing. Submit and receive OSPI approval for free, statewide open resource frameworks (phase 1 – funded).

Project Outcomes:

- 10 employers attending industry roundtables
- 3 school districts participating in CCW programming
- 1 articulation agreement established with community or technical colleges
- Northwest Meat Processors Association with two south Thurston County school districts and Centralia College develop industry-aligned CTE coursework.
- Curriculum framework approved by OSPI
- Approved curriculum piloted at Centralia College

Project Impact:

- **Students:** Gain skills, dual credit, stackable credentials, and apprenticeship opportunities with local ranchers (phase 2 – not yet funded).
- **Employers:** Ranchers and processors benefit from a reliable, skilled talent pipeline aligned with regional training.
- **Educators:** Strengthen instruction in meat-processing pathways through aligned curriculum and professional learning.
- **Systems:** Districts launch CTE coursework aligned with Centralia College, creating a coordinated regional training model.



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Industry leaders and educators shaping Washington's agriculture future at the Tenino Agriculture Innovation Center.

TechReady Bridge Program

Sector: IT

Lead Organization: North Central Educational Service District 171

Key Partners: Regional school districts and participating employer hosts

Challenge: Chelan, Douglas, Grant, and Okanogan counties face persistent shortages of IT and data center talent, limiting employers' ability to meet growing technical and operational needs.

Solution: Expand internships, industry-recognized credentials, and aligned pathways that connect students with employe-driven technical and professional skills.

Project Outcomes:

- 750 students participating in Explore events
- 60 students engaged in internships
- 36 students earning industry-recognized credentials
- 18 students enrolling in postsecondary programs
- 12 school districts participating in CCW programming
- 7 employers supporting training and program delivery

Project Impact:

- **Students:** Hands-on exploration and internship experiences that build confidence, skills, and clearer pathways into regional IT and data-center careers.
- **Employers:** Stronger early-stage hiring pathways supported by employers who host, mentor, and help shape real-world learning.
- **Educators:** Aligned tools and programming that help districts deliver consistent, career-connected IT learning across the region.



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- **Systems:** A strengthened regional IT career-bridge infrastructure that connects K–12, postsecondary, and employers through shared pathways and training models.



Hands-on discovery at a Tech Career fair.

AI as a Cross-Sector Emerging Industry

Sector: IT

Lead Organization: West Sound STEM Network

Key Partners: Snohomish STEM Network, Mid-Columbia STEM Network, Overcast Innovations, ATCA Services Corp., Benton PUD, Snohomish County & PUD, WWU Poulsbo/Cyber Range, Peninsula College, WSU Everett, Everett Community College, Olympic College, Columbia Basin College, Everett School District, Kennewick School District, and 15+ additional districts across Kitsap and Olympic Peninsulas.

Challenge: Washington employers face a growing shortage of workers with AI skills across manufacturing, clean energy, cybersecurity, healthcare, and public services. Nationally, 71% of employers prefer candidates with AI skills, even if less experienced.

Solution: Embed scalable AI and data-literacy modules into CTE, STEM, and Running Start programs, paired with teacher training that supports long-term AI-enhanced instruction. These approaches ensure students gain employer-aligned AI competencies through programs they already access.

Project Outcomes:

- 1080 students participating in Explore events
- 1125 K–12 students receiving AI-enhanced instruction
- 75 students earning micro-credentials or certifications
- 20 educators trained in AI implementation
- 20 employers supporting training and program delivery



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- 6 school districts participating

Project Impact:

- **Students:** Gain early exposure to AI-enhanced pathways through hands-on learning and clearer transitions into postsecondary opportunities.
- **Employers:** Regional employers help shape AI-aligned learning experiences, strengthening future talent pipelines across sectors.
- **Educators:** Build confidence and capacity to integrate AI literacy and sector-specific skills into instruction.
- **Systems:** A coordinated regional approach to AI education emerges, aligning K–12, postsecondary, and industry around shared pathways.



Benton PUD volunteers engaged over 200 Highlands Middle School students.

Healthcare Pathways to Employment

Sector: Healthcare

Lead Organization: Washington Alliance for Better Schools and Healthcare Industry Leadership Table

Key Partners: Regional K–12 districts, community and technical colleges, and healthcare employers

Challenge: The healthcare sector continues to face persistent workforce shortages driven by rising patient demand, an aging workforce, and high attrition rates.

Solution: K–12, college, and employer partners will coordinate career-connected postsecondary pathways that help high school students furthest from opportunity envision and pursue high-opportunity healthcare careers in their own communities.

Project Outcomes:

- 1400 students participating in Sound Careers in Healthcare events
- 120 students participating in worksite visits to healthcare employers
- 30 rural-serving students participating in worksite visits
- 450 students interested in healthcare attending postsecondary visits



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- 20 students engaged in paid internships or worksite learning
- 12 school districts participating
- 5 employers participating

Project Impact:

- **Students:** Students gain direct exposure to healthcare careers through tours, events, and paid work-based learning that build confidence and clarify next steps.
- **Employers:** Healthcare employers strengthen early talent pathways by co-designing experiences and supporting regional events like Sound Careers in Healthcare.
- **Educators:** Educators deepen sector knowledge and expand career connected learning through collaboration with industry and regional partners.
- **Systems:** A coordinated regional approach to healthcare pathways emerges, aligning K–12, postsecondary, and employers around shared strategies and scalable work-based learning.



"[I liked] how hands on it was, it makes the information stick more when you do it yourself"

-High School Student, Sound Careers in Healthcare. [Video Link of SCIH](#)



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The Spokane Advanced Manufacturing Talent Pipeline Initiative

Sectors: Advanced Manufacturing, Clean Tech & Energy, Life Sciences

Lead Organization: Greater Spokane Incorporated/Career Connect Northeast

Key partners: Jubliant HollisterStier, Carbon Quest, Collins Aerospace, Avista Labs, ALK, Itron, Advanced Thermoplastic Composites, Spokane Colleges, Regional School Districts, Spokane County Consortium Career Technical Education, Greater Spokane Valley Chamber

Challenge: Spokane's manufacturing sector faces a critical talent shortage, with rural and underserved communities experiencing the greatest barriers to accessing high-opportunity careers.

Solution: Expand Manufacturing Business AfterSchool for students and launch a Teacher Cohort to strengthen school–industry alignment and build equitable, scalable pathways into high-demand manufacturing roles.

Project Outcomes:

- 480 students participating in Business AfterSchool events
- 12 manufacturing employers engaged in Business AfterSchool events
- 18 teachers participating in learning cohorts
- 22 school districts participating in BAS programming

Project Impact:

- **Students:** Gain hands-on exposure to high-demand manufacturing careers, building confidence and clearer pathways into the sector.
- **Employers:** Deepen engagement and help shape regional talent pathways through Business AfterSchool and ongoing partnership.
- **Educators:** Strengthen instruction by applying industry-aligned learning gained through cohort participation.
- **Systems:** A more reliable manufacturing talent pipeline emerges through sustained school–industry partnerships and shared measures of progress.



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"I bring students to workshops because it allows them to focus on careers. They get immersed in the workplace setting which makes the learning more realistic. They gain an inside view of what day-to-day responsibilities and roles actually look like"

Joe McCollum Educator, Central Valley School District

Appendix C: Impacts, Forecasts, Concerns, and Recommendations from Regional and Industry Leaders

Industry Sector Reports

Clean Technology & Energy

Sector Leader: CleanTech Alliance

Impacts of cuts

Three reductions have hit us, and they compound.

First, reductions to Career Connect Washington sector lead funding cut the staff hours we can dedicate to career connected learning. Sector lead work is relationship work, and relationship work is staff time.

Second, funding for the Pacific Northwest Center of Excellence for Clean Energy was eliminated entirely. The Center maintained the career pathway resources educators rely on and housed the industry intermediary function connecting employers to the education system. That side of the connection is gone.

Third, federal cuts to clean energy hubs and projects with workforce components continue to reduce the sector's capacity statewide. Employers who planned to host, train, or hire are pulling back.

We also lost the funding that sustained our industry workforce development committee, launched with Career Connect Washington funds and ended last year. It was where we shared resources and gathered updates from across the sector.

Our sector strategy is due for update — the same document the [Workforce Board's 2025 report](#) cites as the source of employers' greatest identified need. We lack the capacity to update it.

We are now delivering a single project rather than looking out for the needs of the entire sector.

Forecast and concerns

Employer demand in our sectors is accelerating while the capacity to connect employers to students contracts. Washington's electricity load growth, data center buildout, and expansion in fusion, sustainable aviation fuel, and battery manufacturing are creating hiring needs faster than the pipeline can respond.

The [Workforce Board's November 2025 report](#) to the Legislature documents the gap. Forty-six percent of surveyed clean energy employers with openings reported difficulty filling them, most often citing applicants' lack of education, certification, training, or experience. Lack of awareness of clean energy careers was the second most cited hiring barrier. One public utility district reported 80% of its workforce retiring within two years, with peer PUDs averaging roughly 40%.

That same report identifies career awareness as the largest need employers named in our June 2025 sector strategy. Our concern is that the state has correctly diagnosed the problem and simultaneously reduced the capacity built to address it.



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New employers are also arriving in Washington — data center operators, fusion companies, advanced manufacturers — with no existing relationship to the education system and no obvious way in. Opening that door is the sector lead function, and it is the function we now have least capacity to perform.

Recommendations

Washington has the most ambitious clean energy law in the country — 100% clean electricity by 2045 under the Clean Energy Transformation Act, and a cap-and-invest program under the Climate Commitment Act. Washington also ranks last in the nation for growth in green power generation. Commitment without workforce capacity will not move the needle.

Next 6–12 months - Restore predictable sector lead funding, even at a reduced level; flat, multi-year funding lets us hold staff and keep employer relationships continuous. Fund the critical functions the Pacific Northwest Center of Excellence for Clean Energy performed — career pathway resources and the industry intermediary role — so they can continue. Fund employer convening and the sector strategy update the state relies on.

Next 2–3 years - Fund sector work on a multi-year cycle that matches how long pathway development takes. Invest in shared data infrastructure so student interest, credential pursuit, and employer demand data inform pathway decisions across sectors.

Coordination and policy - A statewide clean energy career strategy requires funded sector leaders to execute it; a platform without staffed brokers does not reach employers. Washington's projects will not get built if the workforce is not ready to build them.

Construction

Sector Leader: AGC Education Foundation

Impacts of Cuts

During our first Sector Leader contract (2023-2025), CCW funding supported sector leadership on a broad range of statewide activities including cross-sector framework development with Maritime and Agriculture (MAC), College in the High School pilots across nine schools, CTC course alignment, teacher externships, regional employer events, informational apprenticeship support, and statewide distribution of instructional materials including TEACH Construction. These efforts leveraged our relationships with 100+ school districts, regional CCL efforts, and employers to serve the construction pipeline at every level.

Under current reduced funding, we have prioritized a single initiative: the development and launch of Core Plus Construction (CPC) Middle School. Activities such as regional employer events, teacher externships, the educator recruitment pipeline, CTC pathway coordination, and broader cross-sector collaboration are no longer funded through this contract.



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We remain grateful for continued CCW investment in the industry's workforce development ladder. The CPC Middle School project is executed with these limitations in mind and builds interest in CCL at the middle school grade level by providing free, hands-on construction learning tools for grades 6-8, supporting early exploration and increasing interest in CTE programming in high school and later, construction careers for high-demand roles.

Forecast and concerns

The construction industry in Washington faces persistent workforce challenges. In the 2026 AGC Outlook Survey, 77% of Washington contractors reported difficulty filling craft positions and 60% reported difficulty filling salaried roles. Employer consensus in our Sector Strategy is clear- every company, across all roles, reports high demand for talent.

Construction employed 214,700 workers in Washington as of July 2025 and contributed \$36 billion (4.1%) to the state's GDP. Median annual wages range from \$57,240 for laborers to over \$103,000 for supervisory roles (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics/AGC of America, 2024-2025). These are family-wage careers accessible without a four-year degree.

A lack of qualified CTE teachers continues to limit programming statewide. Districts are hiring educators without construction backgrounds, and professional development options remain extremely limited. Without investment in educator training, schools cannot offer the quality programming that builds student interest and feeds the workforce pipeline.

If investment in career-connected learning does not continue, the momentum built through sector coordination and programs like CPC Middle School risks stalling before reaching the students and schools that need it most, and the employers who have invested with the intention to build the future workforce.

Recommendations

Moving the industry forward requires a commitment to continue building and supporting the robust career connected learning network that benefits students and communities through successful careers.

Recommendation for investment:

- Middle school CTE programming that creates an on-ramp before students complete their High School and Beyond Plans.
- Construction educator recruitment and professional development.
- Sustained support for accessible, free programming

Restore funding for Career Connected Learning Coordinators in each region. These Coordinators served as key resources for schools and programs, connecting educators to opportunities, translating successful models from other regions into local contexts, and disseminating information that schools could not access on their own. Their absence has created a gap that Sector Leads and Regional Networks cannot fill alone.

Education

Sector Leader: Center for Strengthening Teaching Profession



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Impacts of cuts

Loss of Critical Infrastructure and Regional Intelligence - Eliminating the CCW Career Connected Learning Coordinated (CCLC) position severed our primary connections to regional insights and employer partnerships. The CCLCs provided essential intelligence about local needs and engagement potential that directly informed our outreach strategy. Without them, our relationships and the contextual knowledge necessary for effective statewide coordination were significantly impacted.

Fundamental Shift from Systems Leadership to Project Execution - The funding reduction forced a complete reorientation of the Sector Lead role. We transitioned from serving as system connectors and industry conveners with a 30,000-foot view of multiple initiatives to managing day-to-day implementation of a single project. This shift eliminated our capacity to address sector-wide challenges and reduced our ability to set realistic outcomes aligned with available resources.

Interrupted Momentum and Cancelled Strategic Convenings - We had successfully begun region-by-region gatherings to develop collaborative, system-wide solutions and were positioned to establish strategic priorities. The funding cuts forced cancellation of these follow-up sessions, halting progress precisely when stakeholder engagement was building. For a public-serving sector, addressing industry-wide challenges requires substantially more than \$40,000 to achieve meaningful impact.

Equity Implications of Resource Constraints - Reduced funding directly undermines equitable practice. Adequate resources enable inclusive processes: compensating community experts for their time, centering historically marginalized voices, and ensuring accessible pathways. When budgets tighten, systems revert to default practices that often perpetuate existing barriers rather than dismantling them.

Forecast and concerns

Strained Capacity and Sustainability Risk - Statewide K-12+ budget cuts have created significant strain across Washington's education systems. The most critical gap exists in dedicated FTE for relationship management and partnership oversight—the "in-between workspaces" that sustain projects beyond initial funding cycles. Education sector siloing makes this particularly acute. We propose restoring previously funded CCW coordinator positions and expanding them to include program-specific case managers who ensure continuity when startup funds expire. Currently, project staff and partners committed to this project because they deeply respect the vision and intended community to serve are already working beyond the scope of what was allocated in the budget for this project.

Ongoing Educator Training and Professional Development - Because this curriculum is rooted in Indigenous ways of being and knowing, it requires the utmost intentionality, care, and collaboration that a single training session cannot provide. Regardless of how transformative initial training may be, sustained professional development, structures, and protocols are essential for the program to flourish and maintain integrity in the region.



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Workforce Diversity and Representation - Indigenous students and certificated teachers represent the smallest demographic in Washington's public schools. Programs like Teachers for the People, that anchor Indigenous ways of being and knowing into educator pathways, create equitable opportunities for greater Indigenous representation in our public education workforce—addressing a critical systemic gap.

Recommendations

Partner compensation and capacity building are critical first steps. Funding must support compensating Indigenous partners and collaborators for their time and wisdom—expecting marginalized communities to contribute unpaid labor perpetuates colonial harm. Additionally, resources are needed to invite and train new partners in developing similar projects with local tribes and educator certification pathways, and to provide ongoing technical assistance so educators and districts can effectively integrate the curriculum.

Scaling and Sustainability (2–3 years) - Dedicated outreach and recruitment funding will enable broader adoption. While the implementation guide will be free and digitally accessible, scaling requires staff capacity to invite potential partners, provide implementation support, and facilitate knowledge transfer to interested regions. Without this infrastructure, communities eager to adapt the curriculum cannot access it.

Systemic Coordination - Sector leadership funding is essential for our role as system connector. Convening the right stakeholders to address regional challenges and coordinate collective, sustained efforts—rather than perpetuating rugged individualism—requires dedicated resources and policy support.

Life Science

Sector Leader: Life Science Washington

Impacts of cuts

The reduction in funding has scaled our ready to be implemented strategy. We have reduced our efforts to ensure programs that were created in biennium 2023-2025 are sustaining maximum enrollment capacity. This meant that out of the NINE high demand/high volume jobs we had identified, we are maintaining the demand for FOUR of the high demand/high volume jobs. The reduction in funds has meant that there is very little flexibility to update curriculum which is critical to ensure alignment with industry needs. Since there is no support to create NEW programs, it is extremely difficult to support the industry at an ecosystem level, impacting the momentum that was created and resulting in identifying other sources to ensure Industry involvement.

Forecast and concerns

We have not been able to effectively mobilize and create industry aligned programs to attract the recent series of layoffs within Seattle, which is negatively impacting the workforce and economic development. Workforce programs need sustained Industry support, the lack of funding for creating new programs has meant that programs supporting high-wage jobs are not available for local Washington students. With continued lack of funding, we will not be able to identify new programs and expand on existing programs to meet the needs of our industry



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workforce. The gap in Industry and Higher ed programming will continue to grow, with no clear pathways defined the enrollment numbers will continue to drop negating the FAFSA and Student Aide support for students. The drop in enrollments will result in lack of human and financial support for higher ed programs resulting in low investment in degrees that lead to high wage jobs. The drop in investment in STEM related programs will make higher ed programs pivot to programs that require low investment, but with no career or job opportunities for the graduates.

Recommendations

With continued deficit, decision makers need to identify sources that will incentivize higher ed and industry partnerships and keep the interest and success of the students and not one-off programs or higher ed programs that show high enrollment but poor employment.

- The Workforce Pell Grant model needs to be considered if the state wants to ensure success for students. Programs that show industry-alignment and 70% or more employment within Industry should be model systems and be supported to expand.
- The WEIA Fund should be appropriately structured to ensure higher ed funding is available for high demand programs that are associated with meeting industry needs. The removal of the supplant language has meant that baseline funding is being met, with very little support for high demand programs. This violates the fiduciary responsibilities towards companies paying into B&O taxes and the students.
- Sector Leads that are invested in developing workforce programs aligned with industry focused on training local workforce talent need to be supported to drive the ecosystem rather than one-off programs to ensure scalability and sustainability.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Sector Leader: Pacific Education Institute

Impacts of cuts

PEI is the new sector leader for agriculture and natural resources (ANR), so we have not individually experienced funding reductions from prior biennium allocations. In previous years, PEI's CCW work was funded by program builder grants.

With stable funding from CCW since 2021, PEI has been able to develop 12 career and technical education courses and four statewide industry recognized credentials that are now in use in high schools throughout the state. CCW has supported PEI in building a career connected learning model that is scalable and addresses ANR industry needs. Our new role as ANR sector leader has further elevated PEI's role as a mediator and translator between public and private industry, K-12 education, postsecondary, and tribes in order to build a comprehensive career pathway continuum that is responsive, locally adaptable, and implementable throughout Washington State. We are hopeful that at least some funding will be continued for CCW so that we can maintain the momentum that has been built as a sector leader. Our CCW funded work has widespread support from private and public ANR industry partners and shows promise for building the future of Washington State's economy by training the future workforce in the skills identified by industry.

Forecast and concerns



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PEI repeatedly hears directly from employers that they struggle to find employees with the skills needed for ANR jobs. At the same time, the ANR industry has a higher average age than all industries overall. The impending “silver tsunami” is top of mind for public and private ANR organizations, yet industry is simultaneously struggling with a variety of factors that include reduced margins, decreased public funding, automation and technology, AI, inflation, international market fluctuations, tariffs, and immigration policy changes. They often lack understanding of the education system and aren’t able to create an accessible pathway to their jobs at a systems level. ANR includes thousands of public and private employers, and many are small companies.

ANR employers often don’t understand why people are not applying and showing up with the skills needed to be successful in their industry. Employers report that entry level job applicants and apprentices lack technical, soft, and workplace skills. Simultaneously, young people often do not understand the jobs available in the sector. ANR must upgrade the perceptions of the industry from low paying manual labor jobs toward highly specialist professional jobs, technical opportunities, and career viability through advancement across the industry.

PEI uniquely addresses these career preparation gaps by building CTE courses that start with industry needs as a result of our extensive decades long employer relationships as well as our understanding of K-12 and postsecondary education.

Recommendations

PEI has been set up successfully by CCW to sustain our work through June 2027 with the currently allocated funding. However, we would benefit from extended funding in the next biennium to continue scaling our career connected high school programming and courses. CCW has provided the seed funding that made it possible for us to develop the models that have proved so successful. Additional support will pay back those initial investments. Now that we have done the hard work to build the career pathway models, we see an opportunity to scale these programs and courses throughout the state, and build on the initial momentum and support that has been built with both private and public industry, workforce systems, tribes, and K-12 and postsecondary education.

The courses we have built with CCW funding have received widespread support from across the state, with enthusiasm from public and private employers from across the political spectrum and representing urban and rural communities. We believe that PEI’s courses and models translate between education and industry needs.

We have welcomed the recent changes to CCW that have streamlined communication, reduced redundancies, and focused on tangible outcomes. We believe that continuing some aspect of CCW’s work will draw on the existing communication channels and infrastructure that have been built over time in order to support Washington’s career pathways in the coming decade and beyond. Rather than cutting CCW and starting again from scratch, we are eager to continue refining and strategizing with the CCW systems that are already built.

Maritime

Sector Leader: NW Center of Excellence for Marine Manufacturing & Technology



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Impacts of cuts

Funding reductions have affected our ability to coordinate and scale the MAC Welding & Fabrication Project, a statewide initiative supporting welding education across the maritime, construction, agriculture, and advanced manufacturing sectors. Reduced capacity limits our ability to expand faculty professional development, provide technical assistance, engage employers, and support implementation of shared curriculum and pathway resources across Washington.

To sustain project momentum, resources have been prioritized toward completion of core deliverables, including the development of 36 open educational curriculum units (11 Introduction to Metal Working, 13 Welding Technology I, and 12 Welding Technology II), statewide faculty engagement, industry validation, and dual credit alignment. As a result, regional outreach, employer engagement, partnership development, and implementation support have been reduced or delayed. Staff have assumed multiple roles, limiting the time available to support K–12 districts, community and technical colleges, and workforce partners.

The greatest risk is slowing implementation of a statewide model designed to increase access to high-quality welding education. Reduced coordination capacity will delay adoption of shared resources, limit professional development opportunities for more than 100 welding educators, reduce employer engagement, and make it more difficult to expand access for students—particularly in rural and underserved communities. These constraints come at a time when employer demand for skilled welders continues to grow across Washington's maritime, construction, agriculture, and advanced manufacturing industries.

Forecast and concerns

Demand for skilled welders continues to outpace the education system's capacity to produce qualified graduates. The American Welding Society projects a need for 320,500 new welding professionals nationwide by 2029, while the U.S. Navy has identified a need for approximately 250,000 additional shipbuilders over the next decade to support the Maritime Industrial Base. These workforce demands directly affect Washington's maritime, construction, agriculture, and advanced manufacturing sectors.

The greatest risks are shortages of qualified welding instructors, aging equipment and facilities, limited training capacity, and insufficient access to welding education in rural and underserved communities. Employers are also seeking graduates with stronger competencies in automation, robotics, digital fabrication, and industry-recognized quality and safety standards.

Without sustained investment, implementation of the MAC Welding & Fabrication Project will slow, delaying adoption of 36 open educational curriculum units, expansion of dual credit pathways, and professional development for more than 100 welding educators. Reduced statewide coordination also limits employer engagement and curriculum validation. If these conditions continue, Washington risks widening the gap between



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employer demand and workforce supply, reducing student access to high-quality career pathways and limiting the state's ability to meet the skilled workforce needs of critical industries.

Recommendations

Next 6-12 months

- Continued investment in statewide coordination.
- Support for the 36 open educational curriculum units.
- Supporting enhanced employer participation in curriculum validation and work-based learning.
- Targeted technical assistance for K12 and post-secondary programs to accelerate implementation and consistency statewide.
- Investment in a regional non-credit welding pilot as a proof of concept.

Next 2-3 years

- Welding & fabrication educational capacity through mobile training trailers to serve rural and underserved communities.
- Development of strategies to recruit and retain qualified welding instructors. These investments will help address growing workforce demand while increasing access to standards-based welding education.

Policy support should prioritize sustainable funding for statewide coordination, recognition of non-credit workforce training, streamlined articulation between secondary and postsecondary programs, and incentives for employer engagement. With the American Welding Society projecting a need for 320,500 new welding professionals by 2029 and the maritime industrial base continuing to expand, coordinated statewide investment is essential to ensure Washington develops the skilled workforce needed to support its critical industries.

Information Technology & Cybersecurity

Sector Leader: The Technology Alliance

Impacts of cuts

Coming in as a new Sector Leader, the timing of funding reductions has been significant. Without dedicated resources for convening and coalition-building, our visibility into what regional networks and program builders are doing has been limited, which makes it difficult to surface emerging needs or provide meaningful sector-level coordination at a critical moment of transition. The closure of the Centers of Excellence for IT and Cybersecurity has further reduced sector capacity. The COEs were identified as one of our key partners in our sector strategy and played an important role in credential alignment, industry engagement, and connections between employers and education providers.

As a result, our work has shifted toward maintaining existing activities and relationships rather than advancing broader coordination efforts. We continue to participate in STEM360 with 3 other sector leaders and engage employers through existing organizational relationships, including upcoming industry convenings. However, many of



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these efforts rely on non-CCW resources, limiting our ability to scale coordination and provide the level of sector leadership originally envisioned.

Forecast and concerns

We anticipate growing tension between employer demand and educational capacity, especially as AI and other technologies continue to advance. Employers are moving faster than curriculum can follow, and without a funded sector leader actively bridging that gap, the misalignment will widen. This is not a future risk, it is already emerging, and the conditions to address it are not currently in place.

Recommendations

Washington has an opportunity to take a more proactive approach to the workforce implications of AI and other emerging technologies. Employers are already adapting job roles and skill requirements, while education and training systems are still determining how best to respond.

Greater coordination across industry, education, and workforce development partners would help identify emerging needs earlier and support more responsive training pathways. This work is particularly important in IT, cybersecurity, cloud computing, and other technology-driven fields where change is occurring rapidly.

Over the next 2-3 years, maintaining visibility into evolving workforce needs will become increasingly important. As AI continues to reshape occupations, skill requirements, and hiring practices, it will be more difficult for individual organizations to track changes on their own. Continued investment in statewide coordination can help employers, educators, and workforce partners identify trends earlier, share information, and respond more effectively to emerging needs. Our recent exchange with workforce leaders in Wales reinforced the value of dedicated intermediary organizations that help employers, educators, and government partners stay aligned as workforce needs evolve.

Finance

Sector Leader: Washington Bankers Association

Impacts of cuts

The reduction in Career Connect Washington funding has significantly affected the Washington Bankers Association's work as the Finance Sector Lead. While WBA has remained committed to advancing BankWork\$ and BankWork\$ Academy, reductions in Education Service District capacity have substantially slowed implementation. Our collaboration with our ESD partners on educator supports, district engagement, and local implementation has been severely constrained.

The most significant consequence has been the delay of the Industry Recognized Credential implementation for BankWork\$ Academy by at least 18 months. This delay postpones the statewide deployment of an employer-validated credential that banks across Washington helped develop and committed to recognize. As a result, students have fewer opportunities to participate in a clear, career-connected pathway into the financial services industry, and employers continue to face talent shortages that the program was designed to address.

Forecast and concerns



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If current conditions continue, implementation of BankWork\$ Academy will remain slower than employer demand. Banks continue to express interest in engaging with students, offering work-based learning, and hiring graduates, but school systems require dedicated regional capacity to coordinate those relationships. The longer implementation is delayed, the greater the risk that workforce shortages in community banking will continue to grow while students miss opportunities to explore high-quality careers in financial services.

Recommendations

Restoring regional implementation capacity should be a priority. Continued investment in Education Service District coordination and Career Connected Learning infrastructure would accelerate adoption of employer-designed programs such as BankWork\$ Academy. Over the next two to three years, sustained support for industry-recognized credentials, educator professional development, employer engagement, and statewide coordination will allow Washington to build durable talent pipelines that respond directly to employer workforce needs while expanding meaningful career opportunities for students, especially those traditionally furthest from opportunity.

Regional Reports

South Central

Regional Leader: Educational Service District 105

Impacts of cuts

Regional Network Funding reductions significantly decreased ESD 105's dedicated Career Connected Learning capacity. The work is now distributed across part-time staff assignments along other responsibilities necessary to sustain those positions. ESD 105 continues its Regional Network role, but this structure limits the time staff can devote to career connected learning and slows implementation.

To preserve momentum, we have prioritized activities for greatest regional reach and continued coordinating systems so opportunities are easier for students and families to understand and access. However, reduced capacity required us to eliminate career awareness and exploration events that previously connected thousands of students across the region with employers, industries, and postsecondary pathways. Although the Work Site Learning Coordination Hub provides targeted funding, our Regional Network role spans the continuum from career exploration through work-based learning, postsecondary pathways, and employment.

Sector Lead collaboration and employer engagement continued, but activities had to be prioritized based on regional reach and the ability to align K–12, workforce, postsecondary, and industry partners. Progress was sometimes delayed because partner organizations were also navigating staffing and funding constraints.

These reductions have not diminished our commitment, but they have slowed direct support and placed greater strain on the regional systems and relationships built over the past seven years.



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Forecast and concerns

Across Grant, Kittitas, Klickitat, and Yakima counties, the greatest risk is losing momentum on the regional systems, relationships, and shared vision built over the past seven years. Our region does not lack programs, partners, or commitment. The challenge is maintaining the intermediary capacity needed to connect these assets into a coherent career-readiness system.

Students and families must navigate complex education, workforce, and postsecondary systems that were not designed as a seamless pathway. Our Regional Network connects and coordinates these systems so opportunities are easier to understand and access. Without sustained coordination, work may again become siloed across K–12 education, postsecondary institutions, workforce organizations, employers, and community partners.

Fragmentation would disproportionately affect smaller and rural communities already navigating transportation and language barriers, long distances between schools and employers, limited district staffing, and the demands of coordinating career-connected learning experiences. It also makes it more difficult to help students progress from career awareness into work-based learning, dual credit, postsecondary education, credentials, apprenticeships, and employment.

If current conditions continue, individual programs may remain active while the regional system connecting them weakens. Part-time capacity and short-term, project-specific funding cannot fully support the ongoing coordination required to sustain a regional talent pipeline and provide equitable access across communities.

Recommendations

Washington should provide sustained, flexible funding for a cross-sector career-connected learning system in every region. Regional Networks should be supported as intermediaries connecting K–12 education, postsecondary institutions, workforce and economic development organizations, employers, and community partners. This state-backed infrastructure is necessary to develop a talented workforce in every Washington community.

Over the next 6–12 months, restoring sufficient dedicated Regional Network staffing and providing sufficient flexible operating funds would create the dedicated capacity needed to coordinate partnerships, support districts, engage employers, and help students and families navigate education, training, and employment opportunities. This would protect existing progress and reconnect career awareness and exploration to work-based learning and postsecondary pathways.

Over the next 2–3 years, Washington should establish predictable, multi-year support for Regional Networks and align career readiness and career connected learning policies, funding, data, and accountability across agencies. This would reduce duplication, strengthen implementation, and allow regions to retain expertise and deepen partnerships.



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Funding should support both student experiences and the coordination that makes them accessible. Sustaining Regional Networks will protect and extend seven years of public investment by connecting existing programs, employers, and postsecondary pathways into a coordinated system that expands access, reduces duplication, and strengthens Washington's regional talent pipelines.

Southwest

Regional Leader: Educational Service District 112

Impacts of cuts

The Career Connect Southwest Washington Governance Board was dissolved and transitioned to a more informal advisory structure, and direct district CTE technical assistance and regional Career Connected Learning coordination were scaled back to focus on sustaining only the highest-priority activities. Our regional network was reduced from 3.5 full-time staff to 20% of the Director's time and one Career Pathway Coordinator at 80% FTE.

With fewer resources, staff efforts shifted from broad network development and system-building to maintaining critical partnerships and delivering a limited number of high-impact initiatives. For example, rather than supporting multiple sector pathways and regional convenings, we concentrated efforts on advanced manufacturing pathway development, and supported the same initiative with a separate healthcare pathway investment.

Reduced funding also limited our ability to provide ongoing Career Connected Learning Coordinator support, expand employer engagement, and launch new regional initiatives. While partnerships with employers such as Lanxess, Kyocera, Siemens, Frito-Lay, and Willamette Technical Fabricators were maintained, growth of work-based learning opportunities and expansion into additional sectors was delayed. The funding reduction shifted our focus from scaling career connected learning across the region to preserving core functions and sustaining key partnerships that directly benefit students.

Forecast and concerns

The greatest risk facing our region is the growing gap between employer workforce needs and the regional capacity available to build and sustain career pathway systems. Employers continue to express demand for stronger talent pipelines, increased work-based learning opportunities, and greater alignment between K-12, postsecondary education, and industry. At the same time, reduced Career Connect Washington funding has significantly constrained our ability to respond.

This year's advanced manufacturing project demonstrates the value of regional coordination. Through pathway development, employer engagement, mentorship programs, career exploration activities, and the Purposeful Pathways Summit, we engaged more than 50 industry partners, over 250 students, 5+ school districts, higher education institutions, workforce organizations, and community partners around a shared workforce strategy. Student participation in career exploration activities grew from 24 students in January to 248 cumulative participants by May, illustrating strong demand for these efforts.

However, current funding and staffing levels do not allow us to expand this successful model into additional sectors such as healthcare, construction, information technology, education, or other high-demand industries. If current conditions continue, capacity will remain focused on maintaining existing partnerships rather than developing new



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sector strategies, employer networks, and career pathways. This limits opportunities for students, slows regional workforce development efforts, and reduces our ability to meet emerging employer needs across Southwest Washington.

Recommendations

To maximize the impact of future investments, Washington would benefit from a clearer statewide vision, stronger alignment across initiatives, and greater support for regional intermediaries that can coordinate efforts across K-12, higher education, workforce, community-based organizations, and industry. While many valuable programs exist, the system often lacks coherence, creating challenges for students, educators, employers, and partners trying to navigate multiple disconnected efforts.

Our work in advanced manufacturing, along with the transition from a Career Connect Network to a broader College and Career Pathways Partnership, has reinforced that three strategies consistently drive postsecondary success: access to high-quality advising, participation in accelerated learning opportunities such as dual credit, and early and sustained career-connected learning experiences. These foundational elements should be prioritized and aligned across sectors and regions.

Over the next 2-3 years, we recommend investing in fewer standalone programs and greater coordination around a shared statewide framework. Regional intermediaries, including ESDs, are uniquely positioned to convene partners, align education and workforce priorities, engage employers, and scale proven practices across industries. This year's advanced manufacturing work demonstrated that regional coordination can successfully engage school districts, higher education institutions, employers, workforce organizations, and students around a common strategy. With adequate funding and a coherent statewide approach, this model could be expanded into healthcare, construction, information technology, education, and other high-demand sectors, significantly increasing student access to high-quality career pathways across Washington.

Southeast/Mid-Columbia

Regional Leader: The STEM Foundation

Impacts of cuts

The STEM Foundation has embedded career-connected learning into its mission and regional work for many years, making it a foundational component of our programming and partnerships. As a result, career-connected learning activities continued following the loss of dedicated funding for the Career Connected Learning Coordinator position. Although the elimination of this role reduced dedicated capacity for coordination and outreach, career-connected learning remained a priority and was sustained through existing staff and partner support.

With fewer dedicated resources, staff prioritized sustaining key partnerships, supporting existing career-connected learning programs, and maintaining critical regional convening functions. Some activities, including expanded



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employer outreach, new partnership development, and enhanced student engagement opportunities, were delayed or scaled back. Capacity limitations also reduced our ability to provide individualized technical assistance to partners and pursue new sector-based initiatives at the pace originally envisioned.

Despite these challenges, the STEM Foundation leveraged existing relationships with education, workforce, industry, and community partners to maintain momentum and preserve essential regional partnerships and career pathway infrastructure. The primary impact has been a reduced ability to grow and deepen services rather than a complete loss of programming. Continued investment in regional coordination remains critical to expanding opportunities for students, strengthening employer engagement, and ensuring equitable access to career exploration and work-based learning opportunities throughout the Mid-Columbia region.

Forecast and concerns

The Mid-Columbia region continues to be one of the fastest-growing areas in Washington State, fueled by significant business investment and expansion across multiple industries. This growth increases workforce demand not only in emerging sectors but also among existing employers competing for talent. STEM industries, clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and agriculture continue to drive economic opportunity, yet workforce shortages persist across nearly every sector. Current education and training pipelines are not producing skilled local talent quickly enough to meet projected demand, particularly in technical and high-skill occupations.

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence and clean energy technologies presents significant opportunities for regional growth while increasing demand for specialized skills. As industries evolve, educators and training providers need stronger industry partnerships, up-to-date resources, and responsive career pathways to prepare students for these careers.

Continued investment in workforce development, career-connected learning, and regional coordination will help align education, industry, and workforce partners to build the talent pipeline needed to support business growth, expand access to high-wage careers, and remain competitive in emerging industries.

Recommendations

Meeting the region's growing workforce needs will require continued investment in career-connected learning, regional coordination, and workforce development. The Mid-Columbia continues to attract significant investment in clean energy, advanced manufacturing, agriculture, and other STEM-related industries, increasing demand across the workforce.

Support is needed to strengthen education-to-career pathways, expand work-based learning opportunities, and deepen employer engagement so students gain earlier exposure to high-demand careers. Sustained funding for regional coordination is critical to aligning education, industry, workforce, and community partners around shared priorities.

Continued investment in industry partnerships, educator engagement, and career-connected learning will help prepare students for emerging careers while strengthening connections between employers, schools, higher



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education, and workforce partners. Particular attention should be given to rapidly evolving fields such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and clean energy, where workforce demand is outpacing current training capacity.

A coordinated, long-term approach will help Washington develop the skilled regional workforce needed to support economic growth while expanding access to family-wage careers.

Capital

Regional Leader: Educational Service District 113

Impacts of cuts

With the reduction in CCW funding for the 2025-2027 biennium, the Capital STEM Alliance (CCW Regional Network) has been forced to reduce staffing by two thirds (from three staff to one), which in turn has drastically reduced capacity for the director. Adversely affected activities include suspension of our regional monthly newsletter and website maintenance, reduced support for regional program builders, limited program builder grant writing capacity, reduction in industry roundtables, reduction in travel to partner/potential partner sites, and has negatively impacted interface with K-12 and postsecondary institutions, community-based organizations, tribes, elected officials, and regional/state organizations.

As a result, the number of programs, partnerships, and projects in our region has been stalled or delayed, creating additional barriers to young people in our region who already face challenges in accessing career pathway opportunities. Alongside other barriers, like residing in a rural/remote community, living in poverty or in ALICE status, being unhoused, in foster care, having a disability, and many other issues, youth in our region now have even fewer avenues or opportunities to access post-secondary careers due to the recent CCW budget cuts.

Forecast and concerns

At the end of 2024, the five-county Capital region was enjoying unprecedented infrastructure and job growth in clean energy, construction, creative economy, wood products, maritime, agriculture, and health care job sectors. But with the drastic budget cuts beginning in 2025, reductions in funding to occupations and career pipelines were subsequently enacted. Furthermore, in 2026 the ten Centers of Excellence lost funding and had to close. These reductions have created an ongoing cascade of problems – growing gaps in the workforce (all industries), stalled hiring by employers, lack of capacity to do business, and hampered economic expansion - leaving thousands of potential employees adrift.

Today, students face mounting obstacles in obtaining employment post-graduation, including student loan debt, lack of housing, limited CTE skills alignment to industry standards, AI-created job redundancy, and fewer support and services from overburdened and underfunded nonprofits and state organizations. Our K12 education system now faces a potential loss of critical CTE programming that enables students to learn about local careers and the standards needed to meet entry level requirements once they graduate. Without these pathways, the bridge that



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connects education to industry will be broken, with no intermediaries like CCW regional networks to support youth access or opportunity to family-wage careers.

Recommendations

Aside from the obvious additional funding to increase the regional network's staff and capacity, short-term supports could include the provision of ongoing data around top regional job sectors, K-12 CTE courses offered, occupational employment gap data within sectors, CORI matrix data, ALICE population data, and postsecondary enrollment and completion trends. Additionally, sector and regional industry roundtables might highlight sector expansion and workforce/infrastructure gaps.

Going forward, our regional network would benefit from a continued flow of grant notices, both at the state/federal level, and through philanthropic channels. Long-term funding would reduce stress on the network and, at minimum, help us maintain our current momentum without interruption.

Looking ahead two to three years, policy shifts are critical to restoring the regional network to maximum capacity and service levels. Dedicated funding in the state budget would enable the network to fulfill its mission of connecting K12 and post-secondary education with strong career pathways, which in turn will contribute to workers with multiple transferable skills that prepare them to enter a variety of occupations within and across sectors. A healthy, expanding economy depends on such a system to remain competitive and to offer its citizens a healthy, productive lifestyle.

North Central

Regional Leader: Educational Service District 171

Impacts of cuts

Funding reductions have stretched Career Connected Learning Coordinator capacity across all 29 districts, the tribal school, and the charter school in Chelan, Douglas, Grant, and Okanogan counties, without added staffing to match. To protect direct student-facing programming, Explore events, internships, and credentialing, we prioritized those over employer-development and cross-district coordination work, which slowed the pace of new partnership building and left less time for sustained relationship management with regional employers. Some planned communication touchpoints with superintendents and site coordinators were consolidated, and expansion into new districts was delayed. Staff have absorbed broader portfolios to keep core commitments intact, consistent with NCESD's mission to lead, serve, and support our region even under constraint. Students in our most rural and tribal communities feel this first: they rely most heavily on Education Service District-brokered connections to employers and postsecondary partners, and have the fewest local alternatives when regional coordination capacity tightens. Employers report longer lead times getting connected to programming, and partner districts have had to wait longer for support standing up new CCW activities.

Forecast and concerns



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IT and data-center employer demand across our four-county region shows no sign of slowing, and we expect the gap between student participation and higher-value outcomes, credentials, postsecondary enrollment, and direct hire, to widen if coordinator capacity stays constrained. Covering 29 districts, a tribal school, and a charter school across a large, rural geography with limited staff strains our ability to sustain the relationship-building this work depends on, particularly with employers who need a consistent, known point of contact. Rural and tribal communities carry the greatest risk of falling behind, since they have fewer locally available alternatives to Education Service District-brokered pathways. We also see emerging employer needs for bilingual and multilingual technical talent that current capacity cannot yet address. If current funding conditions continue, we anticipate difficulty scaling internship placements to match employer demand, slower development of next-generation regional programming, and erosion of the employer trust that took years of relationship-building to establish, trust that is difficult and slow to rebuild once lost.

Recommendations

In the next 6-12 months, restoring dedicated, sustained funding for the Career Connected Learning Coordinator role would let us rebuild the regional coordination and employer relationship capacity that cuts have eroded, particularly across our most rural and tribal-serving districts. We recommend funding structured to support multi-year planning rather than annual uncertainty, since employer and district partnerships in workforce development take time to build and are easily set back by funding gaps.

Over the next 2-3 years, we would benefit from support to scale internship capacity to meet growing employer demand and to develop emerging pathways, such as bilingual educator and technical talent pipelines, that reflect the needs our employers and districts are already voicing. Policy shifts that allow ESDs flexibility to blend state and local funding streams, and that recognize the added cost of coordination across large rural service areas, would help ensure students in every corner of our region, not just those near urban centers, have equitable access to career-connected learning and a genuine path into regional careers.

Northwest

Regional Leader: Educational Service District 189

Impacts of cuts

Reductions in state Career Connected Learning funding have significantly reduced regional capacity at a time when demand for implementation support continues to grow. Fewer staff and resources have limited our ability to provide technical assistance, coordinate employer partnerships, and expand career-connected learning opportunities.

The greatest impact has been on students. We have had to scale back direct-service offerings, resulting in fewer career exploration events, industry tours, work-based learning experiences, and employer engagement opportunities. These reductions disproportionately affect students who rely on school-supported experiences to explore careers and connect with local employers.



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To sustain essential services, CCNW has increasingly relied on braided funding through legislative provisos, grants, philanthropy, and regional partnerships. While this has preserved critical work, it has shifted staff capacity toward fundraising and grant management and is not a sustainable long-term model.

Sector Lead activities have also been constrained, limiting expansion into new industries and employer engagement. The elimination of funding for the Centers of Excellence further reduces statewide sector expertise and coordination. Without sustained regional infrastructure, Washington risks weakening education-to-workforce alignment and limiting equitable access to high-quality career-connected learning.

Forecast and concerns

The greatest risk ahead is the growing disconnect between Washington's priorities—expanding dual credit, increasing postsecondary attainment, strengthening career-connected learning, and building education-to-workforce pathways—and the capacity to implement them. While these priorities remain strong, the regional funding and infrastructure needed to support them have been significantly reduced.

As capacity declines, fewer students will have access to career exploration, work-based learning, industry engagement, and accelerated learning opportunities that prepare them for postsecondary education and family-wage careers. The impact will be greatest in rural and under-resourced communities, where limited local capacity may further widen inequities in access.

Continued reliance on short-term grants and philanthropy is not a sustainable solution. Without stable investment in regional coordination and cross-sector partnerships, Washington risks losing the expertise, employer relationships, and collaborative infrastructure needed to achieve its postsecondary attainment and workforce development goals.

Recommendations

Given the current fiscal environment, restoring previous funding levels is unlikely. Instead, this presents an opportunity to reimagine how Career Connect Washington is structured to maximize impact with available resources.

Over the next 2–3 years, the state should work with Regional Networks, education, workforce, industry, and community partners to identify the highest-value functions to preserve and where regional collaboration can improve efficiency, reduce duplication, and strengthen implementation. This includes shifting from direct service toward regional coordination, shared resources, technical assistance, professional learning, and other systems-level supports that enable local partners to deliver high-quality career-connected learning.

Washington should also explore more sustainable funding models that braid public investment, regional partnerships, philanthropy, and cross-agency coordination. At the same time, policies should better align dual



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credit, career-connected learning, advising, and workforce initiatives while reducing administrative burden and strengthening coordination across systems to improve student outcomes.

Northeast

Regional Leader: Greater Spokane Inc.

Impacts of cuts

- Career Connect investments enabled the development of a regional ecosystem that built the infrastructure, relationships, trust, and aligned education, industry, and community organizations around shared workforce priorities and created pathways for students into careers.
- Loss of Career Connect funding resulted in the elimination of two full-time GSI positions, significantly reducing our ability to convene partners, coordinate initiatives, and support employer engagement.
- Our regional Education Service District eliminated a full-time position dedicated to Career Connect work.
- Our partner, Greater Spokane Valley Chamber of Commerce, lost funding for its manufacturing-sector grant that supported another full-time position.
- This loss of four full-time positions dismantled a significant portion of the regional infrastructure.
- Many Career Connect Washington Program Builder programs were also directly impacted by the funding reductions.
- Many of these grants were designed to create long-term, sustainable partnerships and talent pipelines. The abrupt loss of funding left little time to stabilize programs, transition responsibilities, or identify alternative funding sources.
- The cumulative impact represents a loss of institutional knowledge, employer relationships, regional coordination capacity, and momentum around innovative partnerships.
- These cuts occurred at a time when workforce shortages, talent attraction, and talent retention remain among the most critical issues facing employers and our regional economy.

Forecast and concerns

- Employers across industries continue to identify workforce and talent as one of their most significant challenges, yet the capacity to coordinate solutions has been substantially reduced.
- Without reinvestment, our region risks losing much of the infrastructure, trust, and partnerships that took more than a decade to build.
- The elimination of multiple positions across partner organizations has created significant gaps in employer outreach, program coordination, and alignment between education and workforce systems.
- There is a real risk that successful employer-education partnerships built through Program Builder investments will weaken or disappear, requiring substantial time and resources to rebuild in the future.
- Industries such as manufacturing, healthcare, construction, technology, and skilled trades will continue to face workforce shortages, but the regional capacity to respond collectively is increasingly strained.
- The workforce ecosystem remains difficult to navigate for students, families, educators, and employers, underscoring the need for strong regional intermediaries and convening organizations.
- If current conditions continue, Washington risks losing not only programs and positions, but also the long-term talent infrastructure necessary to remain economically competitive.



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- Rebuilding this infrastructure in the future will require significantly more time and investment than sustaining it today.

Recommendations

- Restore and stabilize funding for regional Career Connect infrastructure, recognizing that intermediary organizations play an essential role in connecting employers, educators, and students.
- Provide transition or bridge funding when major program changes occur, allowing regions time to stabilize operations, retain key talent, and develop sustainable funding models.
- Support multi-year funding commitments that provide certainty for regional networks and the employer-education partnerships they support.
- Continue investing in Program Builder grants and regional coordination efforts that foster innovative partnerships and career pathways aligned with industry needs.
- Strengthen support for employer engagement, regional convening, and navigation functions that help align education, workforce, and economic development systems.
- Recognize career connected learning as both an education strategy and an economic development strategy that is essential to addressing workforce shortages, retaining talent, and ensuring Washington's long-term competitiveness.

West Sound

Regional Leader: South Kitsap School District

Impacts of cuts

Career connected learning is a core function of West Sound STEM Network. Many students have limited exposure to the variety of careers available in today's workforce. By connecting students with professionals from a variety of industries, the Network recruits volunteers, schedules events, and coordinates career exploration opportunities, including hands-on classroom experiences, guest speakers, industry site tours, job shadows, and internships. These experiences help students make more informed decisions about postsecondary education, training, and careers before they graduate. Many districts do not have the staff capacity to develop these opportunities independently, so the Network handles the recruiting, scheduling, and coordination, allowing educators and professionals to focus on students.

Funding reductions have required the Network to focus on sustaining existing partnerships and services in some programming rather than expanding them. Limited capacity reduces the ability to recruit new partners, respond to emerging opportunities, and increase the number of career exploration experiences available to students. The greatest impact is felt by rural districts, Tribal schools, and communities affected by poverty, where schools often have the fewest resources to build employer and community partnerships on their own.

Forecast and concerns

The need for career exploration opportunities continues to grow as students prepare for an increasingly complex workforce. Employers and professionals consistently express interest in working with schools, but most districts do not have the staff capacity to recruit volunteers, coordinate logistics, and sustain long-term partnerships. Without organizations like Regional Networks to bridge that gap, many opportunities simply do not happen.



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West Sound STEM Network's STEM Like ME! program and healthcare career exploration activities are two examples of what this coordination makes possible. During the 2025–2026 school year, 78 STEM professionals participated in 131 classroom events through STEM Like ME!, reaching 2,943 students across public, private, and Tribal schools. The Network also organized guest speakers and hands-on industry site tours in the healthcare sector across 7 districts, engaging 316 high school students. Continued reductions in Regional Network funding would make it increasingly difficult to sustain and expand these partnerships and experiences, limiting students' exposure to careers and the education and training pathways that support them.

Recommendations

Continued investment in Regional Networks should support both building employer and community partnerships and delivering career exploration opportunities to students. Funding should encourage Networks to move quickly from planning to providing hands-on classroom experiences, guest speakers, industry site tours, job shadows, internships, and other direct experiences that help students explore careers and make informed postsecondary decisions.

Additional investment in mobile STEM programming would further expand access, particularly for rural communities. Regional Networks are well positioned to leverage provider's services and connect them with schools, recruit participants, coordinate schedules, and manage logistics, ensuring these opportunities reach students who might not otherwise have access.

King and Pierce

Regional Leader: Washington Alliance for Better Schools

Impacts of cuts

The funding reduction has resulted in new approaches that are more focused and accountable, but harder to scale. However, we are developing diverse youth talent pipelines in both healthcare and IT with engaged and invested employers and have some great momentum and early outcomes, including a model with high employment outcomes directly out of high school. As more employers come on board, we need to continue to scale this work for greater impact, ensuring the state's investment continues to scale and grow in impact so that students furthest from opportunity can envision and achieve high opportunity careers in their own communities to meet the workforce needs of employers. While we have less capacity, we have benefitted from a more focused approach for workforce partnerships and are seeing strong results.

Forecast and concerns

In working with employers, it is always better to coordinate efforts with a group of employers with common interests so that each employer is not pinged by many individual organizations seeking to serve their workforce needs. By coordinating and scaling strategically, funding is optimized, employer and partner staffing obligations are lightened, and workforce outcomes improve in quality and scale. The key risk is that these coordinated efforts become increasingly disjointed, disconnected, and isolated because there is no one there to hold it together by convening and leading the change process, capturing the outcomes for stakeholders and elected leaders, and



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scaling the work. This would result in wasted effort and mediocre outcomes when viewed from an industry or regional perspective. Similarly, trying to coordinate or scale statewide without robust funding produces its own challenges that undermine progress. For the current fiscal environment, the legislature has identified a sweet spot for workforce outcomes. Continued strategic investments to build out our specific regional workforce strategy for scale will produce the best outcomes for taxpayers, employers, students, and families.

Recommendations

Funding to help scale the promising outcomes the legislature has supported through CCW grant funding is key. We have momentum and are building our network of employers who are willing to adopt our Career Academy model, which includes paid employment during the school day as an innovative talent development strategy for high school students. We need to routinize and embed these innovative programs with a growing pool of employers, colleges, schools, and community partners so that they become a fundamental component of our regional and sector-based talent development approach. We have great industry leaders who are helping champion our work with other employers. We are constantly pursuing and bringing in other funding sources to support this work. However, CCW funding for the legislature is covering a staff position to both grow funding and design and implement these programs. In other words, CCW funding is the foundation upon which we are building these programs. Without it, these programs may become a great one-off story rather than a strategic early talent pipeline strategy with dozens of employers collaborating and investing together to address critical workforce needs for healthcare and IT.



EARLY TALENT DEVELOPMENT A ROADMAP TO ROI

Businesses interested in building or strengthening early talent efforts—from first idea to long-term value—can use this roadmap to align investments with real strategic needs. It outlines the key decisions and actions that help employers start small, learn quickly, and grow intentionally. It also encourages employers to consider aligning with or replicating existing early talent programs, rather than starting from scratch. Use the roadmap as a planning tool, a conversation starter with internal leaders, or a way to share proven approaches with peer employers.

THANK YOU TO THE CAREER CONNECT WASHINGTON BUSINESS & PHILANTHROPY LEADERSHIP GROUP FOR SHAPING THIS RESOURCE.



1. GETTING STARTED WITH EARLY TALENT DECISIONS:

- Clearly define the business need you want to address: talent pipeline, community awareness, etc.
- Identify skills to build, with a focus on knowledge that becomes a strong foundation for employee success.

ACTIONS:

- Don't reinvent the wheel! Ask your industry associations about existing early talent programs.
- Connect with one school or skills center to build relationships and understand what students are studying.



2. PLANNING & PARTNERSHIP DECISIONS:

- Choose an early talent model to align with your identified business need.
- Clarify basics: timing, student age range and recruitment, compensation approach, supervision.
- Define internal bandwidth and design approach accordingly.
- Secure one internal leader or supervisor willing to pilot.
- Consider how your approach aligns with or could scale within the larger early talent ecosystem.



3. PILOT DECISIONS:

- Identify success measures.

ACTIONS:

- Run a small experience.
- Provide students with a simple orientation.
- Collect quick feedback from students and supervisors.



4. APPLY LEARNINGS DECISIONS:

- Decide whether to maintain or grow gradually.
- Identify any additional data collection needs to validate the approach.

ACTIONS:

- Adjust the scope, supervision model, or structure based on feedback.



5. FULL LAUNCH DECISIONS:

- Formalize program elements.
- Remember simplicity is easier to share and scale.

ACTIONS:

- Share outcomes with leadership to sustain momentum.



6. CHAMPION DECISIONS:

- Expand to more students, more schools, or more teams internally.
- Share your model with peer employers.
- Build alumni engagement: former interns return as mentors or ambassadors.
- Strengthen the ecosystem by collaborating with partners.

KEEP GOING & SCALE

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

[Creating High School Internships](#)



[The Trust Framework](#)



[The Early Talent Advantage: Turning Internships Into ROI](#)



For more information, contact Ingrid Stegemoeller, ingrid@partnership4learning.org

About the Washington Student Achievement Council

The Washington Student Achievement Council is committed to increasing educational opportunities and attainment in Washington. The Council has three main functions:

- Lead statewide strategic planning to increase educational attainment.
- Administer programs that help people access and pay for college.
- Advocate for the economic, social, and civic benefits of higher education.

The Council has ten members. Four members represent each of Washington's major education sectors: four-year public baccalaureates, four-year private colleges, public community and technical colleges, and K-12 public schools. Six are citizen members, including two current students (one graduate student and one undergraduate student).

If you would like copies of this document in an alternative format, please contact the Washington Student Achievement Council at:

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