



2022 SUPPLEMENTAL OPERATING BUDGET REQUEST

SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

Our system's 2022 supplemental budget request takes aim at critical issues facing Washington state today: cybersecurity threats, disparities in access to financial aid, climate change and homelessness. The request also calls for funding to help Afghan refugees learn skills to start their new lives in The Evergreen State. The request leverages the very strengths offered by our state's 34 community and technical colleges. We are nimble, relevant, community-based and serve people of all ages, incomes and backgrounds.

Improve Washington's Cybersecurity Workforce (\$7.2 million)

Our state faces a daily onslaught of hacking and ransomware attacks and a dangerous shortage of cybersecurity experts. Investments will fund 500 more full-time cybersecurity students and put them to work protecting the privacy and economic health of people, businesses and agencies across Washington. Expanding cybersecurity training at community and technical colleges will also bring much-needed diversity to the cybersecurity workforce.

Unlock Financial Aid through FAFSA/WASFA (\$6.7 million)

Thousands of Washingtonians who are eligible for financial aid fail to file a FAFSA or WASFA each year, leaving money on the table that could pay for a credential leading to a well-paying career. The very students who could benefit most from financial aid are less likely to apply.¹ With additional investments, our colleges will expand financial aid outreach work in partnership with local community-based organizations, with a focus on people whose lives are most disrupted by COVID-19 – young adults, low-wage workers, people without college credentials and people of color.

Integrate Climate Science (\$1.5 million)

Climate change is a health issue, an economic issue and an equity issue that affects every community in Washington state. With investments by the Legislature, our colleges will be able to integrate climate change education and training into professional-technical programs that lead to well-paying jobs supporting the green economy. Colleges will also integrate climate change into teaching and student engagement across departments and disciplines.

Expand Assistance for Homeless Students (\$2.9 million)

Thanks to legislation passed in 2019 and 2021, eight community and technical colleges are participating in a pilot program to begin meeting homeless students' needs for short-term housing or housing assistance, laundry facilities, storage and showers, reduced-price meals, technology, and case-management services. This request expands the pilot project across all 34 colleges.

Support Refugee Education (\$3 million)

Afghan refugees will need educational services to rebuild their lives within local communities. Investments will allow colleges and community-based organizations to expand existing English language and citizenship programs to transition Afghan refugees while connecting them to state resources.

Source: 1) WSAC Equity Landscape Report: Exploring Equity Gaps in Washington Postsecondary Education, October 2020