



2024 SUPPLEMENTAL OPERATING BUDGET REQUEST

DECEMBER 3, 2023

Washington's 34 community and technical colleges train people across our state for well-paying careers while providing businesses with the talent they need to thrive. Our college system's 2024 supplemental budget request focuses on a critical workforce need: preparing more Washington residents to fill jobs in the fast-growing computer science field while building a diverse, high-tech workforce.

Strengthening the Computer Science Workforce (\$9 million)

Our college system proposes to create at least 15 more Bachelor of Science in Computer Science programs as authorized by the Legislature in 2021 (SB 5401). With sufficient funding, these programs would help our state meet existing and emerging needs in the tech industry while expanding access to well-paying computer science careers for diverse community and technical college students.

High tech, low capacity

The demand for high-tech workers in Washington is high. Our state ranks first in the nation for the concentration of tech workers relative to the overall employment base: Nearly one in 10 workers (9.4%) in Washington is employed in the tech industry. High tech careers pay well: The median annual salary for people employed in tech occupations in Washington is \$130,000.¹

Despite this good news, local employers looking for tech talent continue to encounter a skills shortage. Colleges and universities do not have the capacity to educate enough students to keep up with employer demand. Additionally, access to high-paying jobs is not equitably distributed; Black, Hispanic, and women workers are under-represented in the high tech industry.' According to a 2023 report by CompTIA, in Washington:

- Black or African American employees make up 5% of workers in all jobs but 3% in tech jobs.
- Hispanic or Latino employees make up 12% of workers in all jobs but 5% in tech jobs.
- Women make up 48% of workers in all jobs but 25% in tech jobs.²

Expanding access to computer science bachelor's degrees will help fill skill gaps for Washington employers and provide community and technical college students —half of whom are students of color — access to these in-demand degrees right within their local communities.

Sources: 1) [CompTIA. \(2023\). State of the Tech Workforce. Downers Grove, IL: CompTIA](#); 2) Ibid