



Agency Recommendation Summary

Many marginalized communities in Washington face barriers to accessing quality jobs in the digital economy due to a lack of affordable and reliable internet, devices, skills, and support, with the digital divide disproportionately affecting the participation and opportunities of vulnerable groups. Continuing the 2024 state budget investment, public, private, state, and local partners will work together, building on existing infrastructures, to narrow this digital divide through expanded or enhanced career pathways leading to good jobs through the Workforce Digital Pathways Initiative. Initiative solutions include digital literacy education and credentials, rapid response skills gap programs to support training for new jobs created from federal Infrastructure Investment grants, work-based training and supports, and career readiness resources and tools.

Fiscal Summary

Fiscal Summary <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2026	2027	2025-27	2028	2029	2027-29
Staffing						
FTEs	2.6	3.5	3.05	3.6	3.6	3.6
Operating Expenditures						
Fund 001 - 1	\$10,968	\$16,188	\$27,156	\$10,341	\$10,166	\$20,507
Total Expenditures	\$10,968	\$16,188	\$27,156	\$10,341	\$10,166	\$20,507

Decision Package Description

Continuing the 2024 investment, this Decision Package describes a multi-pronged proposal that is a broad effort among many partners to narrow the digital divide by increasing digital literacy among disadvantaged and marginalized populations and enhancing training and education pathways to good IT-related or IT-enhanced jobs.

The Decision Package is longer than most as it describes the historical and current context affecting this issue area, the solution-finding approach with multiple partners, as well as clear descriptions of each of the proposal's component parts. We've created a package description outline for ease of reading. If you would like to jump to the initiative's detailed component descriptions, see Section VIII.

It's important to note that all aspects of this proposal were developed using cost-effectiveness guidelines. Programs leverage or build upon current structures or resources whenever possible; solutions are evidence-based, interdependent component parts will be implemented to be mutually reinforcing, and performance accountability will be transparent and meaningful to meet the agreed-upon goals and objectives. To make it easier for the reader to keep all aspects of the initiative top of mind, we've created a link to a summary document that describes each component. This link is provided throughout the DP for convenience: <https://wtb.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Digital-Equity.pdf>

In summary, this proposal requests funding support for 10 programs or functions within five key activity areas that will fill critical gaps and close disparities in the IT career pipeline:

1. Washington State Digital Literacy Curriculum and Credential (Multi-Tiered Digital Literacy Program)
2. Rapid Response Skills Gap Programs (flexible fund pool)
3. Work-Based Training and Supports
 - Advance Equity in IT Careers (AEITC)
 - IT Service Corps
4. Career Readiness Resources
 - Reentry Support Program
 - Devices for Job Seekers and Career Advancement
 - Occupation and Education Mapping Tool
5. Administration and Partner Coordination
 - Performance Dashboard
 - Industry Advisory Council
 - Contracts and Interagency Agreements, Compliance and Oversight

The initiative programs/functions are described in detail in Section VIII of the Initiative Decision Package Description Outline below.

Initiative Decision Package Description Outline

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- III. The “Digital Equity Ecosystem”
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 - 3. Work-Based Training and Supports
 - A. Advance Equity in IT Careers (AEITC)
 - B. IT Service Corps
 - 4. Career Readiness Resources
 - A. Reentry Support Program
 - B. Devices for Job Seekers and Career Advancement
 - C. Occupation and Education Mapping Tool
 - 5. Administration and Partner Coordination
 - A. Performance Dashboard
 - B. Industry Advisory Council
 - C. Contracts and Interagency Agreements, Compliance and Oversight
- IX. Why These Solutions and Why Now?

Historic Funding Table – One-time funds via 2024 State Supplemental Operating Budget proviso

Initiative Solution Funded	Amount
Washington State Digital Literacy Curriculum and Credential	\$425,000
Reentry Support Program	\$350,000
Occupation and Education Mapping Tool	\$150,000
Administration and Partner Coordination (B & C only)	\$150,000

Section I

Collective Impact and IT Careers Defined

This initiative was developed using the tenets of the Collective Impact model, codified through the research of the Stanford Social Innovation Center in 2011 (https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact). There will be references to this model throughout this proposal. The five core components of the model include:

1. Agreement upon a common agenda.
2. Develop common goals and a shared measurement system.
3. Engage in mutually reinforcing activities.
4. Maintain open and continuous communication.
5. Formation of a backbone organization, with staff dedicated to clear and constant communications, and coordinating the efforts of group members, and ensuring that partner activities remain in concert.

In 2022, a decade after the Collective Impact approach was initially announced, it was updated to center the framework around equity, which is

in alignment with this initiative’s approach. (https://ssir.org/articles/entry/centering_equity_in_collective_impact)

Technology supports and drives work being performed in every sector of Washington’s economy. Digital functionality is increasing in almost every occupational area, causing the digitally disconnected to lose ground economically. This reality was highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic, when those without digital access struggled to pivot to home or remote-based employment opportunities, or to find employment with technology-based or technology-related businesses.

The Computing Technology Industry Association (CompTIA) is a leading voice and advocate for the \$5 trillion global information technology ecosystem; and the estimated 75 million industry and tech professionals who design, implement, manage and safeguard the technology that powers the world’s economy. CompTIA defines Information Technology (IT) as the use of computer systems or devices to access information. Information technology is responsible for such a large portion of our workforce, business operations and personal access to information that it comprises much of our daily activities. Whether you are storing, retrieving, accessing or manipulating information, IT greatly impacts our everyday lives.

Information technology is used by everyone from enterprise companies all the way down to one-person businesses and local operations. Global companies use it to manage data and innovate their processes. Even flea market sellers use smartphone credit card readers to collect payments and street performers give out a Venmo name to gather donations.

The different occupation trends within information technology include, but aren’t limited to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analytics• Automation• Artificial intelligence• Cloud computing• Communications• Cybersecurity• Data/database management• Infrastructure• Internet of things• Machine learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintenance and repair• Networks• Recordkeeping• Robotics• Sensors and controllers• Software/application development• SCADA• Virtual Reality
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This list is by no means exhaustive and new applications for technology are constantly emerging. As we discuss IT and IT adjacent or IT related jobs throughout this proposal, we are referencing all of these areas within information technology.

Section II

Background: The Digital Divide

While developing the state’s [Workforce Economic Recovery Plan](#) in 2020, the Workforce Board uncovered a widespread digital divide across every region of Washington. This inequity issue isn’t unique to our state, a 2022 study by Jobs for the Future and the National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education (Digital Resilience in the American Workforce) found:

- 32 million Americans struggle to use a computer.
- Half of all Americans say they are not confident in using technology to learn.
- 14 percent do not use any form of technology.

While access to affordable broadband and devices are often cited as critical barriers, our findings confirm that many marginalized communities, even with broadband and device access, lack effective digital learning opportunities and pathways to tech careers. This digital divide is the focus of this request.

The National Skills Coalition indicates that 91% of Washington jobs now require digital skills. Demand is consistently high across industries, including priority sectors for Washington, such as information (99 percent); healthcare (95 percent); arts, entertainment, and recreation (90 percent); and agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting (86 percent). They also report that nearly 48 million US workers, (one-third of all US

workers) do not have the foundational digital skills needed to secure in-demand jobs.

The digital divide in Washington is a significant barrier to equal opportunity and economic growth. While likely a conservative measure, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that over 250,000 Washington residents still lack access to high-speed internet and the digital skills necessary to thrive in today's digital economy. Washington Digital Equity Partners, a broad coalition of over 70 organizations, is working towards revenue streams to ensure affordable broadband internet access to all, devices that meet all Washingtonians' needs, and access to broadband and basic digital literacy services and skills.

Funding is needed for access, infrastructure, affordability, adoption, devices, and digital skills. Public-private partnerships play a crucial role in addressing this issue leveraging expertise and resources to create scalable and sustainable resources. A variety of funding streams and solutions are needed to bridge the digital divide in Washington.

The advocacy group, [Digitalinclusion.org](https://www.digitalinclusion.org), supports the idea that digital Inclusion requires multiple intentional strategies and investments to reduce and eliminate historical, institutional and structural barriers to access and use technology. This collective impact initiative is an ideal example of one intentional strategy.

It is also important to understand the context of jobseekers' lives and experiences when making decisions that inform where investments are made. The [2023 Seattle Tech Access and Adoption Survey](#) did just that by reaching into communities to hear directly from the under-served populations. This work was funded in part by the Washington State Broadband Office and the City of Seattle. The survey found that people in poverty are 5.5 times more likely to not have internet. This survey also found that basic skill competence for this group is 42 percent compared to 78 percent for all individuals. Livable wage jobs in this region almost all require digital skills and competencies and access to high-speed internet. The FCC finds two or more broadband service providers are available to 100 percent of King County residents. Yet, the above-mentioned survey shows that availability is not the same as true access. The Seattle survey also details that the barriers to increased internet usage have lessened, but the primary reasons why some residents still don't use the internet more are:

- Internet service is too expensive (36 percent)
- Too slow/frustrating/internet doesn't work well (25 percent)
- Not interested or don't need/want to use it (25 percent)
- Service plans from internet providers are confusing (17 percent)

The [2023 Seattle Tech Access and Adoption Survey](#) also found that Seattle residents are increasingly concerned about protecting themselves and their children from harm on the internet, including concerns about the security of their personal information (84 percent), how their data/information is stored (83 percent), online viruses and malware (74 percent), protecting themselves from others online (55 percent), and protecting their children from others online (39 percent).

"I wish there was more security on the Internet when children surf. I also wish there were more resources to help buy a computer at low cost. I also wish there were more computer classes in community centers on weekends, because we single mothers, we are heads of households, and we work Monday through Friday and we leave very late. We can no longer go or take a knowledge course in English, computer or other programs because of our jobs. *---quote from a survey respondent*

This survey data underscores the magnitude of the digital divide in Washington. There is growing recognition that this divide is harming our communities in several ways and that a new under-culture is developing as a result. Many people and organizations are currently working to better understand the nature of the divide—the magnitude, complexities, impact, and root causes of digital inequity, and are coming together to develop solutions that will build a "Digital Equity Ecosystem" for Washington.

Section III

The "Digital Equity Ecosystem"

No single organization, however innovative or powerful, can accomplish on its own a task as large as solving digital inequity, digital illiteracy, and expanding access to IT-related careers. Instead, our shared agenda and collective mission is to bring forward policy and program concepts that complement previous and other current efforts. Through this proposal, collaborators have agreed to establish and track measurable goals, identify gaps or barriers in the pipeline, develop solutions together, and leverage existing resources to achieve our goals. This is not a request to create a new program, but to strengthen the existing public talent development pipeline so that all Washingtonians, in every community across the state, can benefit equitably from Washington's digital economy.

The "Digital Equity Ecosystem" will enable all Washingtonians to have full access to every critical opportunity with technological barriers. Whether needing access to handle the functions of daily living, such as banking, shopping, or recreation and socializing; situations important to

family and personal well-being, such as healthcare, social services, public safety or court involvement; meeting education and career goals; or running a successful business, a fully-fledged ecosystem will have the mechanisms and resources to eradicate digital barriers when and where they arise. The ecosystem will also lend itself to meaningful and transparent performance accountability, including the ability to track disparities across populations and communities.

Since the 2024 funding was received for this proposal, the Workforce Board has expanded the number of partners involved with this initiative and has been working with others to help develop and define the “Digital Equity Ecosystem” for Washington. Organizations such as Digital Equity Partners in Washington and the National Digital Inclusion Alliance bring together a wide spectrum of stakeholders to both identify and connect organizations from across the state and country engaged with technology and broadband development issues to advance digital equity by supporting community programs and equipping policymakers to act.

The optimal future for workforce digital equity in Washington State will benefit from the ecosystem model, which leverages, enhances, or scales existing resources, or innovates new supports where needed. The goal is to ensure that all residents, regardless of their geographic location, socioeconomic status, background, or lived experience, have equal access to digital tools, resources, and opportunities. This can be achieved through a comprehensive and inclusive approach to include but not be limited to universal access to high-speed internet, multiple pathways to digital literacy and skills training, access to digital devices, inclusive digital policies, digital equity in education, and employment opportunities. By proactively addressing all of these areas, Washington can create an environment where all residents can fully participate in the modern workforce, leading to greater economic opportunity and social inclusion.

Certain Federal and philanthropic investments have enabled early or partial development of digital ecosystems at the community level. Connect Across Tacoma (CAT) is a tremendous Washington-based example, co-led by the University of Washington-Tacoma and the Black Brilliance Research Project (BBR). CAT builds off the early work of the Detroit Community Technology Project, also supported by BBR, to have community members design and lead their own community wireless networks while learning how to create change in their communities. They began each project with a question posed to thousands of community members, “What do you need to thrive?”

This proposal is specific to one area of a “Digital Equity Ecosystem,” improving certain education, employment and economic outcomes for marginalized populations. Note that the component parts of this proposal are largely interdependent and mutually reinforcing. This is true of the many components of a full “Digital Equity Ecosystem.” For example, the availability and affordability of reliable internet must be an underpinning component of almost all other aspects of the ecosystem and efforts to fund that need are being pursued by other ecosystem entities.

Section IV

Federal and State Program Response

Despite the numerous programs and substantial funding dedicated to expanding broadband access and digital skills, these efforts still fall short of reaching the entire state's population. The workforce centered solutions outlined in this initiative complement the efforts being made at the federal and state levels. These solutions are the pieces that the collective impact group have identified as currently missing from Washington’s digital workforce system as a whole and that is why they are the focus of this initiative.

In recent years, the importance of IT has grown exponentially, becoming an integral part of not only our daily lives but also the global economy. There are a variety of federal and state funded programs devoted to ensuring that all people have access to the internet and the knowledge and skills to use it. We will explore those federal and state programs now.

At the Federal level, there were programs like the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) which ended May 31, 2024. This program, run by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), helped low-income households pay for internet service and connected devices. It provided discounts on broadband service and connected devices like laptops and tablets. There is also the Lifeline Program which is also administered by the FCC. Lifeline provides a monthly discount on phone or internet service for eligible low-income subscribers to ensure that all Americans have the opportunities and security that phone and internet service brings. There is an E-Rate Program which helps schools and libraries obtain affordable broadband, administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) under the FCC's oversight. E-Rate provides discounts for telecommunications, internet access, and internal connections. The Rural Digital Opportunity Fund, RDOF, also managed by the FCC, aims to bring high-speed fixed broadband service to rural homes and small businesses that currently lack access. The program funds the deployment of broadband networks in underserved rural areas. There is also the well-known Broadband Infrastructure Program, BEAD, which is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), and it supports the

deployment of broadband infrastructure to unserved and underserved areas.

At the State level the Washington State Broadband Office was created to coordinate broadband access efforts across the state. The office works to ensure all Washington residents have access to affordable, reliable high-speed internet by providing funding and support for broadband infrastructure projects. The Digital Equity Initiative and Digital Equity Forum, launched by the Washington State Department of Commerce's State Broadband Office, aims to address digital equity and inclusion. It focuses on increasing access to devices, affordable broadband, and digital skills training for underserved communities. The Washington State Office of Equity, located in the Office of the Governor, was also established to promote equitable access to opportunities and resources that reduce disparities across state government and improve outcomes statewide. There is also the Digital Navigator Program which trains individuals to help community members access and use technology. Digital Navigators assist with obtaining devices, securing affordable internet service, and developing digital literacy skills for underserved populations across Washington.

Additionally, the K-20 Education Network is a statewide network that provides high-speed internet access to schools, libraries, and colleges. It aims to ensure that students and educators have the connectivity needed for digital learning and collaboration. The Washington State Library Digital Equity Programs offer various programs to promote digital literacy and access. This includes providing training for library staff, offering digital skills workshops for the public, and distributing devices to those in need. There is also the No Kid Left Offline Initiative which is a program focused on ensuring that all students, especially those from low-income families, have access to the internet and digital devices necessary for remote learning. This initiative often involves partnerships between state agencies, school districts, and nonprofit organizations.

During the time the above listed programs were addressing broadband distribution and access issues, the Workforce Board has been focused on the pathways to IT-based or IT-related jobs for all Washingtonians. The Department of Commerce and the Workforce Board began working together with the enactment of the BEAD program, which will create thousands of new jobs across the state, while also supporting the goal of universal access to the internet. The two agencies are now linked together on a broader Digital Equity Initiative and have joined with many others to create the Digital Equity Ecosystem described above.

Section V

Washington's Economy—Technology driven success

Washington's economy thrives, largely due to the profound impact of technology in the state. The state's supportive environment fosters entrepreneurship and robust research and development efforts. This support extends beyond emerging tech products to innovative applications within established industries. Washington has become a magnet for scientists and engineers from across the globe, further bolstering its tech-driven reputation. Technological advancements and their swift integration into various sectors have boosted productivity, trade capacity, and the standard of living for working families. Access to and effective use of technology have revolutionized daily activities, enhancing banking, healthcare, education, and work processes for residents.

Home to tech giants like Amazon and Microsoft, Washington is experiencing a surge in demand for IT skills across various industries. Tech-based jobs are not only growing beyond our state's current workforce capacity, but virtually every occupation in every sector is seeing a growing reliance on IT functions within their workforce. According to recent projections from the Employment Security Department (ESD), there will be approximately 72,000 openings annually in the top 10 IT fields over the next four years, with this number increasing to about 81,300 new jobs annually from 2026-2031 (see chart below).

Projected Average Annual Job Openings in Washington State

SOC	Occupational title	Avg. Ann.Total Openings 2022-2027	Avg. Ann.Total Openings 2026-2031
15-1200	All Computer Occupations	72,052	81,299
15-1211	Computer Systems Analysts	7,080	7,674
15-1212	Information Security Analysts	1,645	1,936
15-1221	Computer and Information Research Scientists	808	924
15-1231	Computer Network Support Specialists	1,545	1,698
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	8,105	8,846
15-1241	Computer Network Architects	1,529	1,626
15-1242	Database Administrators	1,287	1,400
15-1244	Network and Computer Systems Administrators	3,759	4,052
15-1251	Computer Programmers	2,164	2,343
15-1252	Software Developers	32,598	37,751
15-1254	Web Developers	5,905	6,871
15-1299	Computer Occupations, All Other	5,627	6,178

Source: Employment Security Department 2023

More research is needed to determine the need for IT talent and technology skills for the majority of jobs outside the tech industry, yet it is clear that all aspects of medical care and government programs rely heavily on technology. We know that the U.S. Department of Labor’s STEM-identified occupations are projected by Washington’s Employment Security Department (ESD) to see a 21% increase in employment over 10 years. This compares to 14 percent for all occupations.

Washington’s top five fastest growing STEM occupations

Occupational title	Employment 2022	Avg. Ann. Growth	
		2022-2027	2027-2032
Data Scientists	2,489	3.78%	3.54%
Information Security Analysts	4,314	2.90%	3.26%
Web Developers	20,249	2.54%	2.97%
Software Developers	103,910	2.40%	2.88%
Computer and Information Research Scientists	2,852	2.63%	2.71%
Statisticians	1,484	3.15%	2.23%

Source: Washington Employment Security Department 2024

The occupational landscape in Washington is rapidly evolving, with tech skills becoming essential in almost every field. Employers are grappling with decisions about technology adoption and automation, which change skill requirements for workers. Workers need to understand these shifts, identify where to acquire new skills, and relate their existing competencies to new ones. For instance, individuals with foundational IT skills may need cybersecurity certification, but clear pathways are lacking. To address these challenges, the Workforce Board is leading a comprehensive design study to create an interactive tool for mapping the IT occupational landscape, one of the initiative solutions that was funded for one year in 23-24.

It would be remiss not to mention the recent tech layoffs. The course of the COVID-19 pandemic has played a major role in this activity. A recent [Berkley Economic Review article](#) details that the economic situation improved in the final quarter of 2020 with stimulus packages and increased unemployment benefits rolled out. There was a spike in demand for tech products at this time. With most people working from home soon after, many companies saw a surge in demand for software and cloud computing services. Many tech companies went on a hiring spree and expanded their workforces. Fast forward to the end of 2022, mass layoffs begin. The Berkley Economic Review article goes on to describe that tech companies overestimated the length of demand or surge in need for their products and services. There is also the idea of fear of a recession and increase in interest rates affecting tech stocks. A shift towards AI driven efficiency is also a factor. As a result, tech companies are trimming their workforce. The article highlights that most tech companies, at least for now, still have workforces that are greater than they were before the pandemic. And despite the layoffs, a recent [CompTIA article](#) and their [2023 Tech Jobs Report](#) details that the U.S. employment market for tech workers across industries remains strong, especially for candidates with cybersecurity skills.

TOP INDUSTRIES: TECH JOB POSTINGS	
	JULY
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	46,154
Administrative and Support	20,960
Manufacturing	16,997
Finance and Insurance	12,429
Information	11,788

Source: CompTIA analysis Lightcast job posting data | For metro area table, a minimum of 500 job postings was used in the analysis

Source: CompTIA Tech Jobs Report July 2024

Industry trends show that tech employment is merely shifting and not shrinking. Management consulting firm McKinsey & Company reports that damage from cyberattacks will amount to about \$10.5 trillion annually by 2025, which will represent a 300 percent increase in 10 years. CompTIA also reports that the demand for tech talent of all kinds will continue outstripping supply through 2026. “Tech leaders simply don’t have the people they need to build effective teams,” James Stanger, Chief Technology Evangelist, CompTIA, wrote in his commentary about creating digital champions. That’s why, when seeking tech talent, organizations across the spectrum of industries seek candidates with growth potential. As one HR executive told CIO.com, “Now, it’s about managing people for who they can be tomorrow, not for who they are today.” This research underscores the importance of making investments in the IT workforce now to keep up with the shifting workforce need.

Washington’s policies and investments have been pivotal in fostering economic growth and enabling residents to fully engage and benefit from this progress, although some gaps still remain. The state has prioritized STEM education from K-12, expanding computer science and engineering degree programs to build a strong foundation for our workforce. Strides have been made with state policies that actively promote public-private partnerships, ensuring that the talent pipeline meets industry demands. Initiatives like the TEALS program, Governor’s STEM Alliance, the Opportunity Scholarship, and direct sponsorship of higher education programs exemplify this collaborative approach.

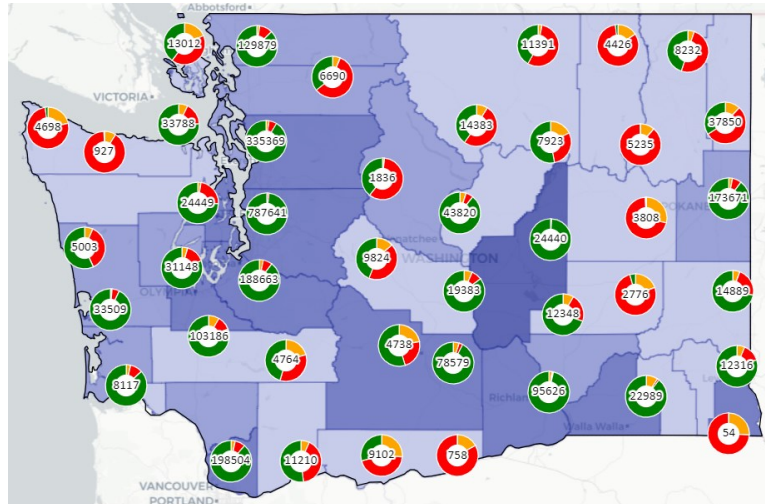
The business community has bolstered its commitment by creating the Workforce Education Investment Account, funded by increased Business & Occupation taxes, to diversify and expand the talent pool for high-demand tech jobs. Investments in the public library system have enhanced access to digital resources, online learning, and occupational certifications. Additionally, Washington established the nation’s first technology apprenticeship program, Apprenti, which has now expanded to 11 states, showcasing the state’s leadership in innovative workforce development.

Section VI

Underserved and Underrepresented—What can be done?

Despite Washington’s technology-driven economic success, the reality is that not everyone is reaping the benefits. The pandemic illuminated stark disparities in broadband availability and access to technology, underscoring the necessity of both access to technology and the skills to use it for economic success and resilience. Data reveal significant income-level disparities, with blighted communities particularly hard-hit. The below info graphic can be used as an indicator of the areas where the Workforce Digital Pathways Initiative’s solutions may be needed the most.

A visual representation of broadband service clusters in Washington State



These donut chart clusters provide a broad visual of Served, Underserved, and Unserved locations.

Underserved shown in yellow: Addresses with broadband service below 100 Mbps download speed and 20 Mbps upload speed but higher than 25 Mbps download speed and 3 Mbps upload speed.

Unserved shown in red: Addresses with broadband service below 25 Mbps download speed and 3 Mbps upload speed.

Source: Washington State Department of Commerce

During the pandemic, many schools distributed laptops to students, but without adequate training for them or their parents, the initiative was largely ineffective. Low-wage workers in retail and hospitality sectors, who often lacked digital literacy and access to broadband and devices, faced significant reemployment challenges. This example highlights the urgent need to bridge the digital divide to ensure equitable economic opportunities for all Washingtonians.

Washington's community and technical colleges (CTCs) are a tremendous support to the state's talent pipeline and actively hone their programs and processes to ensure access for marginalized populations. There are 34 community and technical colleges within the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges network, many offering computer science, cybersecurity, computer programming, software engineering, and similar degrees. Until 2022, the CTCs mostly provided these programs at the associate degree level. In 2022, in response to industry demand, the legislature authorized the CTCs to confer Baccalaureate computer science degrees to quickly increase the number of 4-year computer science degrees feeding the tech talent pipeline.

A study by the Center for an Urban Future (May 2024), focused on the 25 colleges of the City University of NY (CUNY) system describing many similarities to WA's CTC system, including the large proportion of low-income, racial and ethnic minority, and older students. They too, had low employment and earnings outcomes for their graduates. They found that only 10 percent of CUNY computer science students have been able to access internships in the tech industry, which is a mainstay for access to highly competitive jobs in the tech industry. Internship opportunities are often legacy opportunities, turned over to family and friends, and almost all to students in well-regarded 4-year institutions.

To address economic disparities and ensure equitable participation in Washington's technology-driven economy, we can draw lessons from history. Just as electrification, communications, transportation infrastructure, and postal services once required pioneers to demonstrate their value and the need for greater scale, modern digital infrastructure demands similar advocacy and investment. Federal, state, and local funding, along with leveraged private investments, historically built out essential infrastructure and supported low-income, rural, and marginalized communities' participation. These initiatives also underwent ongoing evaluation to ensure effectiveness and taxpayer ROI, balancing rights and privileges.

Similarly, many partners across the state have united to identify gaps in access and participation. Efforts focus on expanding digital infrastructure, ensuring broadband internet service and digital device availability, and promoting digital literacy education and support. Multi-tiered credentialing systems help communicate digital literacy attainment, empowering individuals to navigate their career and education paths effectively.

Additionally, providing validated, relevant information supports career and education navigation, while real-world experiences through earn-and-learn, work-based, and experiential learning opportunities further enhance economic success. Through these concerted efforts, Washington aims to bridge the digital divide and create an inclusive, resilient economy.

Section VII

Workforce Digital Pathways Initiative Overview

The Workforce Board has previously proposed variations of this request in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024. One year funding was provided by the legislature in 2024 via a budget proviso in the State Supplemental Operating Budget (ESSB 5950, 2024), to begin development of four of the initiative's solutions; the Washington State Digital Literacy Curriculum and Credential, the Digital Skills Reentry Program, the Occupation and Education Mapping Tool, and to establish the Industry Advisory Council.

The core focus of this initiative begins with the concept of "on-ramps" that address barriers that keep some disadvantaged populations from using technology in daily living, let alone as a career choice. Each solution in the initiative is designed to address one or more barriers as identified through stakeholder input and literature reviews and builds upon ongoing efforts and successful programs already in place.

The primary objective of this initiative is to narrow the digital divide and close disparities in the IT-related workforce by:

- Reducing Digital Illiteracy: Implementing digital literacy programs targeted at marginalized populations to ensure they have the foundational skills needed for daily living and access to the digital economy.
- Building Accessible On-Ramps: Enhancing existing education and training infrastructure to create equitable and navigable pathways to good jobs in high-wage, in-demand careers.

This initiative's solutions put an emphasis on targeted populations among Washington's workforce with a focus on filling five major gaps. These solutions are interdependent and mutually reinforcing, which aligns with the collective impact approach.

Click the link below for a summary document that describes each component. This link is provided throughout the DP for convenience.

<https://wtb.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Digital-Equity.pdf>

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To ensure prioritization and to meet workforce and education equity goals, targeted populations of this initiative are those identified by the US Census Digital Equity Act Covered Populations as well as the populations identified by both the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education.

See the "How is your proposal impacting equity in the state?" section of the decision package for the full list of populations.

Section VIII

Initiative Solutions in Detail

1. **Washington State Digital Literacy Curriculum and Credential** (Multi-Tiered Digital Literacy Program)

This comprehensive digital literacy learning system that builds upon the work funded in 2024, fills one of the most critical gaps identified by the collaborative partner group in helping marginalized individuals and communities access technology for community living, education, and employment—the missing “on-ramp.” This solution of the initiative is for a multi-tiered digital literacy curriculum and credential.

Over the past five and a half years, the Workforce Board and its partners have explored various education options to combat digital illiteracy among disadvantaged populations in Washington. However, each option had limitations that hindered statewide expansion. Smaller privately funded digital literacy programs lacked evaluation and data collection, which made them difficult to scale. Public libraries and others offered online digital literacy programs, but they weren't employment-focused, lacked support for limited- or non-English speakers, and didn't provide follow-up data for evaluation. A workplace digital literacy curriculum or credential used by local employers was also absent.

Washington needs a comprehensive, customizable, and regionally adaptable digital literacy curriculum to meet diverse participant needs. Currently, digital literacy programs are available throughout the state, including online options. However, a review by collaborators found that most lack in one or more important aspects: technology comfort level (easing fear of use), cultural and language diversity, accessibility for individuals with varying abilities, adapting to future of technological change, awareness of security and privacy protection protocols, and preparation for the workforce or further education leading to tech careers.

A quote from a participant in the previously mentioned Connect Across Tacoma program underscores this need. “I would like to see more funding go into digital skills, cybersecurity, digital marketing certifications that leads to tech jobs. A "earn while you learn model". It would make it easier to transition to another job or gain skills that can go towards a promotion. Also, it would be a super plus to earn while you learn to help with Basic needs. I recently had a situation where I was struggling to pay rent and if I had a program that helped financially. I wouldn't be worried about how I am going to make it through the next month.”

A quote from the recent [Seattle Tech Access and Adoption Survey](#) also support the need for a multi-tiered digital literacy program, from basic computer skills to career prep skills.

“...There wasn't a lot of computer literacy courses available. And most positions today you have to be able to use like Google, Google Docs, Microsoft documentation, things of that nature. So just a basic community computer literacy course would go a long way... Actually, I think another really great idea would be a almost like an interview class on how to do an interview...because I know that that's relatively new for a lot of our folks you know, a lot of our older folks as well it's a bunch of different experiences of being able to walk in and look somebody in the eye or have a conversation...” —Participant from the Disability Housing Insecure focus group

Washington State University is the state Land-Grant institution with a presence in every county in Washington. Faculty and extension staff have been working in the area of digital literacy for decades. Furthermore, WSU Global Campus is uniquely qualified to develop and deliver quality educational programs across the state utilizing sound pedagogical principles and online infrastructure to ensure access at every level of educational attainment. Together with the Workforce Board, WSU has the ability to convene and collaborate with the numerous stakeholders in digital literacy program development, from industry to higher education, local workforce development councils to educational service providers. WSU has also implemented the “Drive-Fi” program to create Wi-Fi access in rural communities across the state, even in digital deserts, to allow access to online educational programs where most needed.

WSU Global will work with other education providers to create curricular packets to distribute to access points across the state where personnel can deliver the training in person where needed or most culturally appropriate. For instance, WSU Extension offices, workforce training locations, libraries, tribal community centers, community and technical colleges, and other service providers could provide in-person credentialing where online training programs are less desired.

Faculty from Basic Education for Adults (BeDA), teaching basic skills in the state's community and technical college system, libraries, and community-based organizations, have agreed to contribute their expertise to develop the multi-tier curriculum and credentials. They have also volunteered as pilot sites for the digital literacy program's rollout and evaluation, leveraging existing resources whenever possible. Washington State University Global is requesting resources to support subject matter experts and pilot efforts in targeted communities where other resources are insufficient.

WSU is seeking staff and collateral support for implementation but is not in need of funding to support IT infrastructure. The university and the Global Campus (specifically) has access to the technology needed to support this effort. WSU can support other partners in this as well, providing training and access to the hardware and software infrastructure that supports online and on-site education programs.

WSU currently provides certificates and micro credentials, such as badges, and that infrastructure will be leveraged to create the credentials that are identified as part of the scoping exercise. WSU Global Campus has generously offered their technological infrastructure for distributed learning, assessment. Without that support, this proposal would come with a significantly higher price tag. Requested funds will support WSU to

lead the development and ongoing implementation of the multi-tiered digital literacy education and certification system, including creation of the employer-endorsed Workplace Digital Literacy Certificate (WDLC). This comprehensive digital literacy learning system fills one of the most critical gaps identified by the collective impact partners in helping marginalized individuals and communities access technology for community living, education, and employment—the missing “on-ramp.”

The Washington curriculum will address these shortcomings and employ a badging system to credential learners at each level. Each badge will document the digital literacy, digital skills, and competencies achieved by program participants, helping them understand their progress in acquiring the essential skills that can be garnered at each tier of the curriculum. This badging or credentialing system aims to inspire and motivate participants to pursue further IT and computer skills demanded by employers. Once learners have attained their basic digital literacy badge, they can continue moving through the tiers preparing them not only for jobs that use computers and technology but up to careers in IT.

Employers will contribute to the top tier of the program via consultation, leading to the Washington Workplace Digital Literacy Credential. Employers will be engaged in developmental work being done by WSU via the FY25 budget proviso. This employer engagement work will continue into subsequent years of the project dependent on continued funding. A strategic approach will be used that aligns the goals of the curriculum with the interests and needs of the employers. Companies and organizations that are likely to benefit from or have a vested interest in a digitally literate workforce will be sought. We will consider many industries such as tech, finance, healthcare, and manufacturing. We will work with employers to inform them of how contributing to the curriculum can benefit them, such as by creating a pipeline of skilled workers, enhancing their brand's reputation, or meeting corporate social responsibility goals. Once the curriculum is implemented, it will be evaluated, and it will be scoped for improvements and expansion of the curriculum to a broader audience. Employers will be engaged throughout the full project lifecycle for ongoing feedback and reporting.

Collaborators intend to enhance existing resources to create an accessible digital literacy program and credentialing system for students, employers, and the education community. The WSU Global Campus is leading this initiative, working alongside many partners to develop this crucial component. WSU Global will not only offer their state-of-the-art IT Infrastructure and online badging/credential system but will leverage other WSU resources and strategies to reach underserved communities, such as the planned expansion of “destination” video classrooms and other synchronous and asynchronous knowledge-transfer locations in rural and underserved communities, managed by WSU Extension across the state. This work will also be informed by the current Remote Worker Certificate offered by WSU Extension in collaboration with WSU. <https://extension.wsu.edu/remoteworkcertificate/>

WSU Global will also leverage subject matter expertise from a wide range of organizations that are providing digital literacy training, including, but not limited to education institutions, community-based organizations and workforce partners. A representative group will advise WSU Global at each step of the development and implementation of this program, including piloting and evaluating curricular resources as they are created. WSU Global is requesting resources to support subject matter experts and pilot efforts in targeted communities where other resources are insufficient.

Faculty from Basic Education for Adults (BeDA, teaching basic skills in the state's community and technical college system, libraries, and community-based organizations, have agreed to contribute their expertise to develop the multi-tier curriculum and credentials. They have also volunteered as pilot sites for the digital literacy program's rollout and evaluation, leveraging existing resources whenever possible. Washington State University Global is requesting resources to support subject matter experts and pilot efforts in targeted communities where other resources are insufficient.

This digital literacy program has been conceptualized to provide learners with credentials that recognize the digital skills and competencies they've attained. A single, common taxonomy will be used to describe skills and competencies, improving portability to further education and employment. Each learner will have a digital wallet that communicates skills and achievements by providing a visual representation with verifiable data and evidence. WSU is currently using Badgr (www.badgr.com) as their digital wallet for students.

In collaboration with state and local partners, we aim to provide digital literacy resources to 6,000 learners in the first two years, with a conservative annual growth target of 5,000 new learners. Many existing learners are expected to advance to higher levels within the system. Once learners have completed the first tier or tiers of the curriculum, we anticipate they will continue through the tiers as they become more comfortable with digital tools. By Year 3, we will have fully available the WDLC and relevant learning materials, with a goal of 5,000 individuals achieving this digital literacy credential within the year after launch. Our data collection system will also be operational, allowing us to monitor employment and earnings outcomes associated with completion of these learning tiers and WDLC attainment. Additionally, we will collaborate with community partners to establish metrics for tracking the impact on daily living improvements related to technology, such as accessing banking, healthcare, and housing services.

WSU Global has received one time, one-year funding from the 2024 Legislature in the amount of \$425,000 to do preliminary planning,

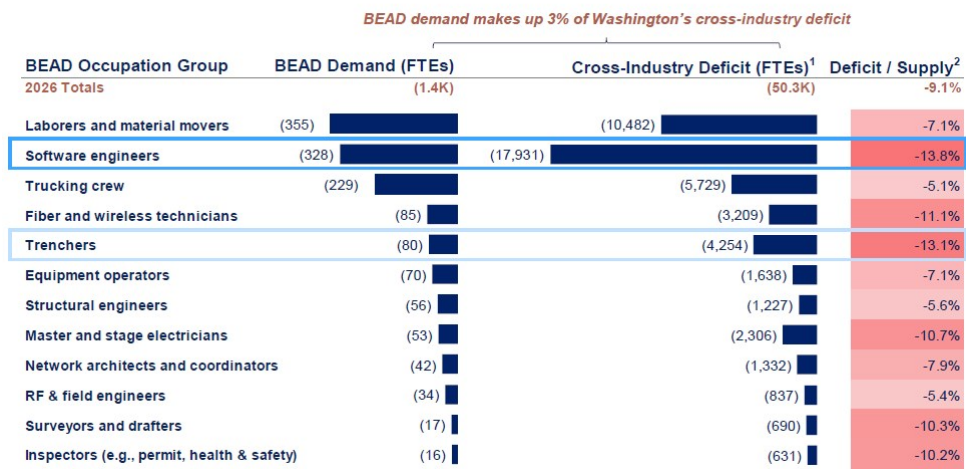
convening, scoping, and to develop a proposal for ongoing support.

2. Rapid Response Skills Gap Programs

The Workforce Board has partnered with the state’s Department of Commerce to assess the impact of new federal funding, specifically the federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program, on job opportunities in Washington. The BEAD Program allocated \$42.45 billion to expand high-speed internet access, with Washington receiving \$1.23 billion to ensure “Internet for All” in the state. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has assessed the impact of BEAD funding on our state’s workforce, estimating that approximately 50,000 new workers will need training and deployment to fully leverage the allocated BEAD funding.

This proposal seeks \$5,000,000 in year one, \$10,000,000 in year two and \$2,500,000 in years three and four to fund these programs. Funds will be disbursed via the 12 regional Workforce Development Councils. If funding is received, a formal application and distribution protocol will be established in year one.

NTIA’s projections for worker shortages in BEAD implementation are summarized below. A diverse range of jobs will be in high demand, offering salaries well above Washington’s median income (\$51,895). These roles require at least basic digital literacy, with many calling for significant skill development. The Department of Commerce’s State Broadband Office and Office of Digital Equity are key collaborators on this initiative. As BEAD funding details are finalized, partners will work together to address the workforce shortage. While leveraging existing resources in the initial approach, many required training programs are either non-existent or lack sufficient capacity. A new Rapid Response Skills Gap Program fund (described here and in Detailed Assumptions Section) will provide businesses with BEAD contracts swift access to financial support to train and hire new employees. It is the initiatives intention is to ensure that people have pathways to livable wage, good jobs, not one and done jobs only related to a single infrastructure roll out. Two of the key guiding principles of the Workforce Board’s 2024-2028 Talent and Prosperity for All workforce plan are to close economic disparities for marginalized populations and to focus on comprehensive support for individuals with barriers to employment. This rapid response program speaks to both principles.



Source: NTIA State Workforce Research Findings: Washington

Funds will be used to fill critical skills gaps at the local level, in partnership between employers and local workforce development and education organizations. As new programs are created or existing programs are built upon, curriculum will be made available to address similar skills gaps in other regions of the state. When warranted, industry and curriculum experts will be supported to provide faculty professional development on the subject matter. Resources are meant to be responsive to the major investments of federal funds, such as the BEAD program of the IJJA, as well as to the mapping process, supporting specific employment gaps identified. To meet local opportunities and local demand these funds should be matching wherever possible funds will be targeted to under-resourced communities. Additionally, the national Justice40 Executive Order, will ensure that 40 percent of the benefit from IJJA funds, like the BEAD Act, benefit overburdened communities and women and minority populations. The federal Justice40 program is similar to the state Healthy Environments for All, HEAL Act, which has similar requirements. In keeping with this policy objectives, emphasis will be placed on programs and tools to accelerate the learning of these minority groups allowing them the opportunity to fill many of the jobs needed in this sector.

A 2022 program playbook focused on creating and expanding a diverse broadband workforce with good jobs and career pathways, co-authored by [America Achieves and Rural Innovation Strategies Inc.](#) indicates that after a deep dive into the research and interviews with several dozen key stakeholders in the field, several points became very clear. First, we as a nation likely do not have a large or diverse enough

workforce to make good on this investment, without taking significant steps, including engaging unemployed and underemployed workers from this sector and adjacent sectors. This is especially true in the communities and regions that need it the most.

A quote from a Connect Across Tacoma participant underscores the need for this type of fund pool at the state level. “To address the skills gap and provide more equitable access to employment opportunities, increased investment in paid job training programs like internships, fellowships, or apprenticeships, is essential. These programs offer individuals with limited skills or those seeking career transitions a practical way to acquire industry-specific knowledge, develop professional networks, and gain hands-on experience without the lengthy commitment of a four-year degree or costly training programs.”

The fund pool will address immediate job needs and resource gaps, such as those identified through the BEAD plan or occupational/educational mapping. In year one, we propose a \$5 million fund pool, with year two at \$10 million, years three and four at \$2,500,000. The first quarter of year one will focus on establishing fund parameters and distribution with program partners. We will also identify education and training partners that have the capacity and flexibility to develop and implement as-needed training across the state. Funds for new program development will be allocated in Year 1, quarters 3 and 4, and potentially late in the second quarter after the formal allocation protocol is established.

Performance outcomes year one:

- Criteria and rules established for distribution of funds
- At least six new or expanded existing effort rapid response programs funded serving approximately 1,000 workers in year one

Funds will be used to fill critical skills gaps at the local level, in partnership between employers and local workforce development and training organizations. As new programs are created, curriculum will be made available to support similar skills gaps in other regions of the state. Programs will be linked to existing resources whenever possible and will be deployed with the support of the 12 local Workforce Development Councils across the state. When warranted, industry and curriculum experts will be supported to provide faculty professional development on the subject matter. Resources are meant to be responsive to the major investments of federal funds, such as the BEAD program of the IJJA, but may also support specific employment gaps identified in under resourced communities.

Please note, funding for critical skills gap programs was not directed out of the federal BEAD money pool in Washington State. An example of where this was done is the Commonwealth Workforce Transformation Program. The executive order that was put forward is the first program of its kind in the nation and will expand Pennsylvania’s workforce, create opportunity, accelerate infrastructure projects, and grow the economy. The Commonwealth is reserving at least 3% of all funding it is receiving from the IJJA and IRA to fund workforce development and on-the-job training. The state of Colorado has added similar fund reserve language into their BEAD contractor RFP to ensure workforce needs are funded.

3. Real-World, Work-Based Training and Supports

These programs are targeted within existing education and training programs for college bound and non-college bound students.

A. Advance Equity in IT Careers (AEITC)

Mentorship from industry professionals can effectively reduce disparity gaps. This component of the initiative is based on the successful Mentors in Tech (MinT)/CodeDay program model, which aids Washington community, and technical college students enrolled in four-year applied bachelor’s computer science programs, helping them navigate and launch their careers through structured industry mentoring. This program aims to scale up the community and technical college program, extending it to the IT Service Corps participants, students in the Computer Science Associate of Arts programs, and those participating in the reentry program.

AEITC will support students in two-year CTC degrees, reentry support programs, and the IT Service Corps by extending a model that was jointly developed and implemented by Mentors in Tech (MinT), CodeDay, and five Washington CTCs offering Baccalaureate (BAS) programs in computer science. That program has served 450 students with support from 950 experienced technology industry mentors who were recruited, interviewed, trained, and supported by CodeDay and MinT. It was recognized by the Community College Baccalaureate Association as a Promising Practices to Advance Quality, Equality, and Success and featured by the Clayton Christensen Institute, which highlights disruptive innovations making meaningful and lasting impact. Students who completed the program were twice as likely to obtain an internship and 33 percent more likely to secure a full-time job within 6 months of graduation, despite coming from backgrounds underrepresented in the technology industry:

- 57 percent Students of color
- 41 percent First generation college students
- 28 percent Female

- 26 percent First generation immigrant
- 20 percent Have struggled with poverty (35 percent on Pell grants)
- 15 percent Parents
- Cohort average age range from 26 to 29

Disparity gaps continue to exist in the tech industry. For example, females make up 21.2% of workers in computer occupations, but 45.9% of all occupations. The AEITC program can help to bridge these gaps with industry mentorship and support.

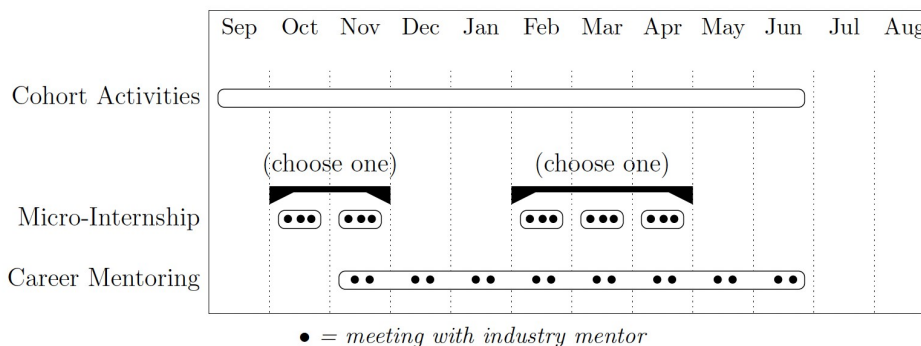
Washingtonians 18-65 Employed in the Civilian Workforce

	Computer Occupation	Not Computer Occupation	All occupations
Female	21.19%	47.54%	45.94%
Male	78.81%	52.46%	54.06%
Disability	4.26%	6.31%	6.19%
No Disability	95.74%	93.69%	93.81%
Hispanic	5.43%	13.32%	12.84%
Not Hispanic	94.57%	86.68%	87.16%
American Indian or Alaska Native			
Asian	33.33%	9.36%	10.82%
Black	2.39%	4.06%	3.96%
Pacific Islander			
Some Other Race	2.01%	5.64%	5.42%
Two or More Races	6.05%	8.62%	8.46%
White	55.72%	70.51%	69.61%

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) - 5-year estimates, 2018-2022

The Advance Equity in IT Careers program (AEITC) will build a diverse IT workforce by providing marginalized students with practical skills through open-source micro-internships and mentoring, ensuring they are well-prepared for the careers in this sector. The program will expand a successful model used by five state baccalaureate programs to students in two-year degrees at Community and Technical Colleges (CTCs), reentry support programs, and the IT Service Corps.

Participants will complete 1-2 micro-internships contributing to open-source software in use by industry, meet monthly with two assigned career mentors for eight months, and participate in cohort activities to connect with potential employers, such as “meet the hiring manager” sessions. The program is based around ongoing mentorship from industry mentors:



Thousands of Washington State students are pursuing pathways to an IT career other than a 4-year degree, many of whom come from marginalized backgrounds which are underrepresented in the technology industry. These programs—including two-year CTC degrees, reentry programs for incarcerated individuals, and the IT Service Corps—offer Washington’s employers an opportunity to grow and diversify our workforce while providing Washington’s residents with an amazing opportunity for economic mobility and the ability to have a say in building the future of technology. However, lack of industry professional connections and meaningful work experience are often cited as the largest unaddressed barriers to attaining employment. This programmatic component directly addresses these barriers and is well-supported by the evidence as significantly increasing completion, employment and earning rates for participants.

A subset of WA's CTCs (now up to seven) has been partnering with MinT and CodeDay to pioneer new approaches to connecting their students to industry in meaningful ways. They are focused on their baccalaureate computer science programs, as these seem of most interest to industry partners. Mentors in Tech is a program that helps overlooked and underserved tech students at smaller, less well known, yet accessible and affordable colleges, navigate and launch their careers through structured yearlong mentorship with industry mentors, class-embedded industry mentor-led sessions, open-source capstone projects via a CodeDay partnership, and tailored recruiting that connects employers to students.

It was important for the institutions and partner organizations to ensure that this new model was making a significant difference—or to understand where modification might be needed. With only one exit cohort at the time, they chose a qualitative evaluation paradigm, which included interviews and surveys of enrolled juniors and seniors, and program graduates. They also tracked employment status on student LinkedIn pages. Those who participated in the industry-linked components were more likely to persist to completion, had an employment rate within six months after graduation of 75 percent, and an average starting salary of \$95,000 per year.

AEITC will leverage learnings and experiences in working with four-year CTC Baccalaureate students to develop a sustainable and scalable program that is tailored for a broader range of participants with various backgrounds, lived experiences, and goals. Through this initiative AEITC will expand the success of the MinT/CodeDay model of providing:

- Structured mentorship with industry mentors from November through June.
- Monthly workshops on career opportunities and the culture of the technology industry.
- Twice-monthly student self-reflections and job application tracking.
- Tailored talent service connecting employers to students.
- Coaching on business professionalism.
- Hands-on micro-internships that provide participants with real-world work experience contributing to open-source software projects used by industry, which amplifies the work history of a resume.
- Hackathon/student showcase event to show student skills to employers

This quote from a recent mentee of the MinT/CodeDay program underscores the importance of mentorship; “Reviewing the final commitment made me realize the many topics we covered [over the course of the program]. With every topic we covered, [my mentor] always had great insight and ways of approaching a situation/problem. He has helped me reframe coding in a way that helped me get through stressful times. I plan to reach out to him whenever I need a second opinion or insight on approaching my career. Thank you for creating this program. With this program, I was exposed to all the resources that will help me assert myself in the tech industry.”

Year one activities will focus on expansion of the CTC Baccalaureate model to support IT and CS associate degree programs, reentry programs, and the IT Service Corps. Just as MinT and CodeDay used a culturally sensitive, research-based approach to develop the program for CTC Baccalaureate students, a similar approach will be used to develop the AEITC expansion model. The proposal would fund ongoing, participant-informed and employer-validated research and evaluation to ensure the program is as effective and will support improvements over time, including:

- Student voices and ethnographic research
- Business development with education stakeholders
- Development of partnerships with hiring managers and recruiters
- Ongoing curriculum updates
- Technical platform development
- State evaluation of program success

State funding would be used to build and prove the model with the vision to grow and sustain as a public-private partnership. Data from the existing CTC Baccalaureate program show that industry connections and meaningful work experiences significantly improved students' likelihood to gain employment, and that industry partners are willing to pay for access to this talent. The upfront investment to adapt this program for two-year CTC degrees, reentry programs, and the IT Service Corps will similarly lead to an employer-supported model after demonstrating positive results. If fully funded, the program would serve approximately 45 students in year one, scaling up to 140 students per year by year four.

Our state's community and technical college system, reentry support programs, and IT Service Corps play a vital role in providing accessible, affordable education and practical training for a diverse student population. Implementing a mentorship program can significantly enhance employment outcomes, particularly for those from marginalized backgrounds. Mentorships offer personalized guidance, career advice, and networking opportunities, helping students navigate academic and professional challenges. By connecting students with experienced mentors,

these programs foster a sense of belonging, boost confidence, and provide valuable insights into the tech industry. This support is crucial for leveling the playing field, ensuring that all students, regardless of their background, can successfully transition into the workforce, earn family sustaining wages and achieve their career goals.

A faculty quote from the MinT/CodeDay program from the 22/23 school year amplifies the need for this support; “MinT mentors are a bridge to help open doors to opportunities by supporting students in navigating internship/job/career search activities as well as fostering a culture of belonging. I have heard from multiple students who shared that through conversations with their mentors that they felt like they could see themselves having a career and a place to belong in tech.”

B. IT Service Corps

Lack of real-world IT experience is continually identified as a primary barrier to accessing the IT or IT-enabled talent pipeline. During the pandemic, with so many communities being thrown into isolation without digital access, collaborators developed a model to train individuals from under resourced communities as IT Help Desk associates or Digital Navigators. The model is based on the National Service Corps/AmeriCorps model, which braids together federal and non-federal funds to support local Corps members with training, a living stipend, and a grant to continue their education. The model was piloted with National Service Corps funds by the Washington Service Corps, part of ESD, which is Washington’s largest AmeriCorps intermediary, with over 40 years of experience deploying members to address community needs in areas like economic opportunity, education, and health.

The program is called the IT Service Corps (ITSC), and members would be able to continue bridging the digital divide by offering IT literacy education, help desk support for nonprofits, and telehealth assistance in low-income communities, to name only a few allowable activities. They may spend up to 20 percent of their service in education programs, so may choose from many options to prepare for IT-related work in their communities. They also receive assistance with transitioning to employment, including a small scholarship to pay for job-specific training.

The Washington Service Corps successfully piloted the IT Service Corps/digital navigator model in 2022, using ongoing federal AmeriCorps funds and partnering with the Washington State Libraries. The ITSC pilot program, which ended in August 2023, had a total of eight member positions across eight WorkSource centers throughout the state. Performance reports indicated that the IT Service Corps members were making big differences in communities, helping individuals who struggle with technology complete job applications, communicate via e-mail, and connect with social and health services. They also provided formal and informal digital literacy training and classes, all helping community members to navigate pathways leading to computer skill development and job opportunities. The Washington Service Corps utilized unexpended federal funds to extend the IT Service Corps programming for a second year and enrolled 20 members into WorkSource centers statewide.

This solution allows ITSC members to continue bridging the digital divide by offering IT literacy education, and telehealth assistance in low-income communities all while earning a stipend. A quote from a recent Connect Across Tacoma participant underscores the importance of offering wages or stipends and wrap around services to those participating in these programs. “Training programs are hard for people who do not have extra income to commute or survive outside of the training program. Even if they have a job outside, a lot of people are barely making it and would love opportunities to train for work where the struggle is less pronounced. More hands-on training opportunities where participants are paid steady income would be awesome. Or maybe even transportation stipends for bus fare or gas would be awesome. I’m finding that the \$5 a day I get for a different training program does not even begin to pay for gas, or a meal while I’m out.” Members will be trained to provide IT literacy education to economically vulnerable individuals. They may also provide telehealth access support for patients of community health centers. They’ll spend up to 20% of their service in education programs, receive scholarships for continuing education, and transition to employment, following the standard WSC model.

AmeriCorps funds (specifically fixed amount grants like the one Washington Service Corps operates) strictly covers member living allowances. It covers roughly 80% of the overall living allowance, therefore, programs are required to have other funding resources to fill in the 20 percent gap. Additional funds are requested for the living allowance gap, IT devices, internet access, and staffing. WSC seeks to hire two FTEs to support and oversee program implementation, research needs, educate partners, recruit members, and provide technical assistance for ITSC sites and members.

This collective impact initiative aims to help all individuals that have been sidelined from the digital economy to be able to engage equitably in the IT-based workforce. With preparation, support, and encouragement, many will choose a more traditional training pathway through the community colleges or other providers. For others, especially working adults and young adults who may have had negative educational experiences, a non-traditional, paid, work-based experience might be a more attractive option. These are often low-wage workers who churn through entry-level employment. They likely had little exposure to the tech industry, tech-related or tech-enabled jobs, or the opportunity to explore how their interests and aptitudes might align to the wide variety of careers available.

A quote from a recent ITSC member underscores this situation. “Teaching people how to use a computer is so much more than ones and zeros. It’s my passion. My learners are not just numbers to be pushed through the system. These are human beings who have feelings, hopes, and dreams just like you and me. They are skilled and talented people. Digital literacy and resilience will help them showcase those skills, to get more out of life. I feel that digital literacy has the potential to bring communities, cities, and countries closer together as the world becomes more digital.” –ITSC member

The ITSC was developed specifically to meet the needs identified for the targeted populations unlikely to choose a full-time college path, and to respond to employers’ perspective that real-world IT work experience was essential to be hired and promoted within the tech industry. The ITSC is an innovative twist on the long-standing AmeriCorps model and utilizes Washington’s AmeriCorps infrastructure (Washington Service Corps) and funding as its base. AmeriCorps supports individuals to provide needed services in under-resourced communities, increasing volunteer engagement in these communities, and offering real world work experience through service-learning opportunities. The ITSC prioritizes recruiting low-income and minority and BIPOC as well as LGBTQIA+ individuals, provides them with digital literacy and entry-level IT job training, and places them with non-profits and other eligible organizations serving under-resourced communities. This model addresses the need for real-world IT experience among low-income individuals who lack access to such opportunities. It also provides digital navigation and digital learning to organizations and individuals who would not otherwise have access to these services.

The ITSC concept came about as we learned how important real-world IT experience is to technology-based employers. There are programs that prepare economically disadvantaged individuals for entry into the IT field, many with good job placement results for their participants. However, once on the job, graduates of these programs who have not had any other experiences using IT in real-world settings or to solve real-world problems are the least likely to be promoted to higher job levels. We learned from employers that they tend to promote staff who are exceedingly nimble with technology. As one employer told us, their tech-savvy employees “grew up with technology in the home, their parents used technology every day, and they could probably use a computer before they knew how to talk.”

During the pandemic, we heard from community health, community behavioral health, housing, and food distribution programs how difficult it had become to meet the needs of their isolated, digitally illiterate customers, even when they were able to provide them devices for internet access to services. They were seeking support to bring IT “helpers” into their communities to work directly with these customers to access and benefit from required services.

Within AmeriCorps parameters, the Washington Service Corps already places Corps members into under-resourced communities in a variety of capacities but up until 2022, did not train individuals in technology skills. The ITSC concept was designed with a dual purpose, to help low-income individuals who are not tech-literate to learn basic IT knowledge, skills and abilities and apply that learning while they support the people in their communities to use technology to meet daily needs.

The Workforce Board put an inquiry out through the national AmeriCorps network and found that some states did have programs to send volunteers with IT expertise to serve in community-based organizations, but none were recruiting low-income individuals and providing IT training to fill those IT support roles in under-resourced organizations or communities. We have met with representatives from the national Service Corps Office who hope Washington’s program will serve as a learning laboratory for scale-up nationally.

A component of the ITSC model, the digital navigator role, builds on the Digital Navigator program operated by the Washington Department of Commerce. The Washington Department of Commerce’s Broadband Office has played a pivotal role in administering state and federal funds dedicated to bridge the digital divide. Initially focused on broadband distribution, it now addresses the additional barriers posed by digital illiteracy. An Office of Equity and Digital Equity Forum was established in part to create programs and strategies for marginalized people to leverage the internet for work, education and daily life needs like healthcare, social services, and banking. Federal funds supported the successful Digital Navigator Program, with navigators stationed in libraries, community organizations, WorkSource Centers, and other locations statewide.

The achievements of both the ITSC pilot and the Digital Navigator program have encouraged collaborators to expand this model in this revised decision package, now including a new component: industry mentorship. Structured relationships with Industry mentors will provide coaching and support for career and education planning, help Corps members learn about careers and the culture of the tech industry, and make referrals for employment within the industry. Both programs play a critical role in the big picture of impacting Washington communities and providing digital skills.

It should be noted that technical support provided by Digital Navigators and ITSC members is different. Digital Navigators provide increased access to supporting services as Telehealth, Employment, Education and Training, and Social Determinants of Health while ITSC members become subject matter experts, teach workshops and proctor digital literacy tests. ITSC members also tend to represent the underserved populations we are trying to reach with this initiative.

The ITSC continues from a small 2022 pilot, with an anticipated scale-up over the next two years. The Year 1 program will undergo evaluation to inform potential program expansion. For this proposal, the enrollment level remains at 25 in subsequent years to assess ongoing staffing and support needs. While there may be future requests for scaling, collaboration with the National Service Office, Congressional delegates, and others is underway to explore potential future funding opportunities.

We've incorporated an evaluation process to assess effectiveness and scalability. For this proposal, we maintain a pilot enrollment of 25 participants in subsequent years after Year 1 and allocate ongoing staffing and support for new cohorts (25 each). Expansion requests may be submitted later, and we're collaborating with the National Service Office and congressional representatives. In 2022, Rep. Kilmer and Rep. Fitzpatrick, co-sponsored a bill to support this model nationally. Washington's investment could prompt policy reform within federal agencies with the authority to implement administrative and budget changes to scale this model.

Our partners recognize the significant scale of the digital divide among disadvantaged populations in Washington. We remain committed to leveraging existing resources and seek additional funding only for unmet needs.

4. Career and Education Readiness Resources

A. Reentry Support Program

Digital skills training and employment services are crucial for individuals nearing the end of their incarceration for several reasons. Exiting the justice system comes with numerous challenges, including finding housing, and employment, and often being ineligible for public health benefits. The Reentry Support Program not only bridges the digital divide but also expands the workforce pipeline. First, these services equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to reintegrate into society successfully, reducing the likelihood of recidivism. Secondly, employment opportunities provide financial stability and a sense of purpose, reducing the risk of further encounters with the justice system.

This reentry program aims to eliminate obstacles to economic success and reduce recidivism rates for individuals re-entering society after incarceration in Washington's corrections system. The focus of this program is preparing justice-involved individuals for high demand, livable wage IT or IT-adjacent jobs proliferating across our state, or for training and education that will lead to these jobs. The goal of this program is to not only make strides towards bridging the digital divide but also to expand the workforce pipeline and improve employment opportunities in high-demand jobs paying family-sustaining wages.

This component of the initiative is based on the highly successful program pioneered by the Equity in Education Coalition (EEC-WA). Their program helps broaden the talent pipeline by reaching an untapped labor pool, while helping to eliminate obstacles to economic success and reduced recidivism rates for individuals re-entering society after incarceration in Washington's corrections system.

The EEC-WA model is based on a framework where the justice involved participants are considered paid staff of EEC-WA while attending classes that enhance digital navigation, literacy, technology skills, and broadband infrastructure proficiency, along with fostering social and workplace interpersonal skills. They can continue in employment as full or part-time digital navigators, transition to other employment opportunities, and/or continue in IT-related occupational training. The current program uses a four-pronged approach that includes community broadband infrastructure tech/helpdesk tech roles, digital navigator roles, community broadband capstone builds, and the tech connect call center roles. EEC-WA also maintains a waiting list of hundreds of people seeking career assistance post-incarceration.

Using this model, participants in the reentry program will receive not only wages and wraparound supports but some will also receive career mentoring and early support in participating in work-based learning through micro-internships, as part of the AEITC component of the proposal, detailed above. In total we anticipate being able to serve 15-20 participants per cohort with up to 6 cohorts per year in years one through four.

A 2021 report released by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) shows alarmingly high jobless rates among formerly incarcerated individuals. The report shows that of more than 50,000 people released from federal prisons in 2010, a staggering 33 percent found no employment at all over four years post-release, and at any given time, no more than 40 percent of the cohort was employed. People who did find jobs struggled, too: Formerly incarcerated people in the sample had an average of 3.4 jobs throughout the four-year study period, suggesting that they were landing jobs that didn't offer security or upward mobility. A 2022 report by the non-profit, Prison Policy Institute found that this population earns only 53 percent of the wages of the average worker; with a lifetime earnings loss averaging \$500,000.

Access to training programs helps individuals develop new skills or refine existing ones, increasing their employability and confidence. Ultimately, these services not only benefit the individuals by facilitating their reentry into society but also contribute to safer communities by promoting rehabilitation and reducing crime rates, and to our state's economy by expanding our talent pipeline with a previously untapped labor pool.

Partners have identified that the demand for reentry programs far exceeds the current supply.

One-year funds in the amount of \$350,000 were received via a budget proviso in 2024 for this initiative component. ETA Media was the successful bidder on the formal RFP. Their model is based on providing soft skills and IT related training and/or prospect building opportunities for incarcerated individuals during the three to five (3-5) month period, prior to their release. The program is set up in five phases:

- Phase 1: Soft skills development in a remote real-world work setting, working on live projects.
- Phase 2: Problem-solving and critical thinking training.
- Phase 3: Course to prepare participants for the CompTIA A+ Core 1 Objectives exam.
- Phase 4: Course to prepare participants for the CompTIA A+ Core 2 Objectives exam.
- Phase 5: Resume and job interview preparation, transition into ComputerforAll.org career prep portal and services.

Reentry programs are crucial for justice-involved individuals as they provide the necessary support and training to reintegrate into society, reducing recidivism. In the context of IT careers, these programs help bridge the skills gap and offer pathways to stable, high-demand jobs, fostering economic independence and personal growth.

B. Devices for job seekers and career advancement

While federal, state, and philanthropic funds have been provided to educational institutions and social and health service providers to purchase laptops and other devices for their clientele, jobseekers have not been considered a priority for such funding. Low-income jobseekers often enroll in short-term training programs that don't qualify for equipment support. If a jobseeker is interested in employment opportunities that allow for or even require remote work, they may be overlooked if they do not have suitable computer equipment. Through this initiative, jobseekers or those currently employed but seeking career advancement, would have access to a fund pool to support the purchase of computer and other technology equipment needed to prepare for and succeed in training and employment.

This fund pool would provide immediate access to essential technological devices for jobseekers or workers seeking career advancement needing such devices for training and employment success (1,000 devices per year, with an average cost per jobseeker estimated at \$500). The funds would be distributed to the 12 local Workforce Development Councils in the state to then distribute locally where there are needs.

Some data from the recent [2023 Seattle Tech Access and Adoption Survey qualitative report](#) underscores the need for this fund pool. In the Access to Devices section of the report it outlines that certain groups such as BIPOC households, or those living at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) are two, three or even four times more likely to have fewer than one internet enabled device per member.

- 5 percent of all Seattle residents are sharing devices
- 10 percent of households with children are sharing devices
- 14 percent of households living with a disability are sharing
- 15 percent of Native households are sharing
- 19 percent of Black households are sharing
- 20 percent of households living in poverty (at or below 150% of Federal Poverty Level) are sharing
- 22 percent of households whose primary language is not English are sharing

This quote from a focus group participant amplifies the data. "Of course, there is a challenge, I cannot afford it. My kids even envy other kids with laptops and tablets. As of now we share one device for two."

Also of note, 3 percent of Seattle households (more than 10,000 households) are reliant on only a smartphone to do what they need to do on the internet. Among households with only a smartphone:

- 9 in 10 have an income of \$46,000 or less
- 1 in 4 speak a language other than English
- 1 in 5 have a household with a member impacted by a disability
- 68 are over the age of 55
- 63 percent are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)

C. Occupation and Education Mapping Tool

Access to comprehensive, current, and reliable information concerning the skills and competencies demanded in various industry sectors and

occupations is a pressing need for individuals, including students, jobseekers, and current workers, making career decisions. Employers could also greatly benefit from a mapping tool aligning their skill needs with available education and training programs.

This tool will provide crucial information to marginalized populations unfamiliar with jobs and education options. It will offer insights into IT and IT-related jobs, career paths, required skills, and preparation methods. It will also show where education and training programs are available to build required skills and competencies. The tool will show whether education options are short-term, long-term, for college credit or non-credit, and how one credential maps to other credentials to reach higher levels of learning, job responsibility, and earning potential. The tool will be valuable for all Washingtonians as technology reshapes work rapidly, providing clarity for all individuals seeking pathways to livable-wage employment in high demand occupations.

Ensuring the tool is up to date is paramount, especially enabling employers to input and update industry- and occupation-specific data on required skills, competencies, experiences, and mastery levels. This information is vital to both jobseekers and educators adapting their curricula to evolving workforce needs. It is important to employers seeking talent from available education and training programs. Currently, there's no tool offering timely information on occupational or skill changes across all sectors.

The Workforce Board will collaborate with industry associations, professional organizations, worker groups, higher education, and additional stakeholders, to establish recommendations for regular system updates. Existing systems and external expertise will be explored, with an early focus on the Centers of Excellence, Washington Career Bridge, and the Sentinel Network models which are covered in more detail below.

This component of the initiative was funded for one year in 2024 to complete a comprehensive design study. The IT Occupation and Education Mapping tool will possibly follow the approach of the Workforce Board's career and education planning portal, Career Bridge. Career Bridge provides reliable performance data on all levels and types of Washington education and training programs. This data includes enrollment, completion rates, and employment outcomes, ensuring users have objective and up-to-date information to make informed decisions. The Workforce Board does not accept school-reported performance, often found in media ads, instead matching student record information with employer-reported wage data. The IT Occupation and Education Mapping tool will provide similar objective, timely information to users.

Additionally, we'll harness the model of the Health Workforce Sentinel Network (Sentinel Network, <https://wa.sentinelnetwork.org/>), a proven communication channel for emerging health workforce issues. Co-operated by the University of Washington Center for Health Workforce Studies and the Health Workforce Council of the Workforce Board, the Sentinel Network tracks changes affecting the healthcare workforce. It engages industry "sentinels" from healthcare employers statewide to report on workforce-related changes via short, periodic surveys, facilitating collaboration between the healthcare sector, policymakers, workforce planners, and educators to address evolving demand for healthcare workers and identify new skills and roles required by employers. This model will be explored for expansion into other sectors.

In November 2021, the Benton Institute for Broadband & Society, Community Informatics Lab at Simmons University, and Black Brilliance Research Project (BBR) launched the six-city [Digital Equity Action Research \(DEAR\) Fellowship](#). The DEAR Fellowship helped young adults, ages 19–24, learn participatory action research skills to examine and address the root causes of digital inequities in their communities. Lidia Flores, a fellow with the Digital Equity Action Research Fellowship, shared a quote from a low wage worker, Adriana: "I want to be more present for my children, and I'd love to work from home, but my job is in-person and I'm not familiar with looking online to find a better job. Sometimes I feel like my family is missing out on an entire world online and we're falling behind."

The report states that if all communities across the country had the equipment, knowledge, and resources to safely navigate and participate in the digital world, people's quality of life, economic mobility, and participation in democracy would all drastically improve. Families like Adriana's would be better able to access local- and state-level essential services, connect with their local organizations, and even learn about and participate in specific support groups. Adriana's quote also substantiates that an occupation and education mapping tool focused on IT careers could be of great benefit to her and others like her, especially coupled with the digital literacy curriculum component of this proposal.

The mapping tool will also provide employers with a communication channel with educators about how their skill needs are changing, signaling to educators when curriculum modifications should be considered. Because information in the tool will be based on a common language of skills, competencies, and experiences or mastery levels, employers will also be able to see which education and training programs are currently preparing the talent they are seeking.

Lack of useful information on which to base important education and career planning decisions has been identified as a critical barrier for marginalized populations who are often otherwise unfamiliar with the job and education landscape. Access to reliable, actionable information on IT-related jobs and career paths, required skills, and preparation methods is a top initiative priority. Many individuals with limited resources opt for short-term, low-cost training like online or certificate programs to quickly secure employment. Yet, information is unavailable on how these short-term options connect or "stack to" higher-level education, advanced training, or career advancement opportunities.

We anticipate that once the tool is built, we can serve thousands of people per year. This is based on the 6,000 plus page views the current Career Bridge website attains.

5. Administration and Partner Coordination

The importance of a backbone organization to lead this collective impact initiative is paramount. Without a backbone organization the collective impact initiative does not function. They provide coordination, central communication, performance accountability, policy development and administer and oversee fiscal and contractual compliance among partners, the Workforce Board takes on that role.

A. Performance Dashboard

Workforce Board staff will work with partners to establish and maintain a performance accountability system and a public-facing dashboard. A 0.5 FTE Senior Researcher (WMS2) will work with partners to establish and maintain the performance accountability system and a public-facing dashboard. They will continuously chart out employment and earnings data for performance accountability for workforce and economic metrics for the dashboard.

Collaborators on this proposal have made a commitment to transparent performance accountability, through which collective goals and metrics will be established, and progress will be tracked continually. Whenever possible, data will be disaggregated by, at minimum, race, age, gender, and geography. We'll also aim to find data on ability and veteran status, and for those who are justice-involved or in the foster care system.

B. Industry Advisory Council

As mentioned above, many partners will also be engaged for this effort and the Workforce Board will issue contracts to subject matter experts needed to inform various project components, including assessments and evaluations. We anticipate bringing together a formal SME group to include industry, education and training experts. This group will act as a governing body for this work as the Industry Advisory Council. For example, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), will leverage expertise from several of the Centers of Excellence (COE). Most likely the COE for Information Computing Technology and the Center of Excellence for Cybersecurity will be engaged early on. COEs provide valuable services, research, and programs, serving colleges, industry, and K-12 systems. They serve as information hubs, offering best practices, research, and professional development in current and emerging fields. Their expertise connects with other COEs and industry partners as well. Their expertise connects with other COE and industry partners. Funding for this portion of the work is requested within the Consultant/SME fund pool line item in the budget.

This SME group will support the prototyping of career and educational pathways to inform the development of the occupation and education mapping tool and provide support to the development of the multi-tier digital literacy curriculum and credentials component.

C. Contracts and Interagency Agreements, Compliance and Oversight

Workforce Board staff will handle the negotiating and formalizing of agreements between various government agencies and external partners/vendors to ensure seamless collaboration and resource sharing. This involves drafting, reviewing, and finalizing contracts that clearly outline the scope of work, deliverables, timelines, and financial arrangements for the various initiative components. Compliance and oversight activities will focus on monitoring adherence to contractual obligations, ensuring that all parties meet their commitments and that the terms of the agreements are upheld. This may include regular audits, performance evaluations, and risk assessments to identify and mitigate any issues that could impact the initiative's objectives. Additionally, the team will ensure that all actions comply with relevant laws, regulations, and policies, thereby maintaining the integrity and accountability of the Workforce Digital Pathways Initiative.

Because of the interconnected nature of the collective impact group, we will be able to serve common customers across programs and agencies to ensure we are reaching individuals in need of these pathway support services. One example of this is with the connection to ESD with the ITSC program as well as WorkSource and Dislocated Worker Programs. Individuals that for the first time in their lives suddenly find themselves out of work and without the digital literacy skills needed to seek a new job that requires digital literacy skills will be able to benefit from these interconnected services. They can complete the digital literacy curriculum, earn a credential, use the occupational and educational mapping tool to explore their next step career possibilities, and receive support with their job search all in one place. Another example is with the community college system and the mentorship program. It can be difficult to land that first IT job after completing a degree at a local community college. With the addition of the AEITC mentorship program component, overlooked and underserved students will be able to better navigate and launch their careers.

Section IX

Why These Solutions and Why Now?

Programs and services should be directed to populations and communities that have not benefitted from Washington's technology-driven economy. Investment comes at a critical time as Washington moves to end economic and other inequities across the state. The pandemic exacerbated the already great digital divide in Washington—even though this divide was largely invisible. Aggregated economic data leading up to the pandemic told us that the state and its people were benefiting from the state's technology boom.

Washington has been among the top five GDP growth states since the Great Recession and has seen an average wage increase from 2011 to 2022 of 67.2 percent. Even in 2020, with the highest unemployment rates in history (since the current data series started in 1976), average annual income increased by 9 percent from the year before to \$79,800. Two years later, in 2022, the income was 9.4 percent higher at \$84,010. The IT industry drove much of this growth. This sector alone saw an annual rise in average income in 2020 of 15.4 percent, and another 6.9 percent bump in 2021.

But even as IT wages continue to rise, there are too few qualified Washingtonians to fill the growing number of jobs, and those that do are primarily male and white. As mentioned earlier, IT job growth is projected to accelerate further over the next eight years according to ESD's labor market economists; we must act now to make the digital workforce as diverse as our state's population.

The following is a framework detailing why it is important for Washington state to make substantial investments in its tech workforce now rather than later.

Economic Competitiveness Through Industry Growth and Job Creation:

Washington State is home to major technology companies like Microsoft and Amazon. Ensuring a well-equipped workforce can sustain and grow these industries, maintaining the state's competitive edge in the global market. The technology sector continues to be a major source of high-paying jobs. Investing now will create more opportunities and attract more businesses looking for a skilled workforce.

Bridging the Digital Divide Through Equitable Opportunities with Immediate Impacts:

Early investments can help bridge the digital divide, ensuring that underserved communities have access to digital tools and training. This promotes equity and inclusion, preventing further socio-economic disparities. Providing digital literacy training and resources now can have an immediate positive impact on individuals' job prospects and quality of life, rather than delaying benefits.

Adaptation to Technological Advancements, Keeping Pace with Innovation and Future is Near:

Technology is evolving rapidly. Immediate investment in digital literacy and other workforce programs ensures that the workforce can keep up with advancements and adapt to new technologies, preventing skills from becoming obsolete. Preparing the workforce for future technological changes will make it more resilient to potential disruptions and better positioned to take advantage of new opportunities. Digital literacy and access to technology can spur innovation and entrepreneurship, leading to the creation of startups and small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) that drive economic growth. Investing now helps build a robust innovation ecosystem, encouraging collaboration between academia, industry, and government. Ensuring Washington's workforce is digitally trained equips them to keep pace with advancements in AI, enhancing competitiveness and economic growth in the state.

Social and Community Benefits that Include Improving Quality of Life and Community Development:

Digital literacy can improve access to essential services, information, and social connectivity, enhancing the overall quality of life for residents. Empowering communities with digital skills can lead to more engaged and informed citizens, fostering stronger and more resilient communities.

Long-Term Cost Savings Via Preventative Investment:

Investing in digital literacy and workforce preparation now can prevent higher costs associated with addressing the digital divide later, such as through remedial education and unemployment benefits. Digital literacy can improve access to online healthcare services and other digital resources, potentially reducing the strain on public services.

By making substantial investments to narrow the digital divide now, Washington State can ensure a prosperous, inclusive, and resilient future for its residents and economy.

Click the link below for a summary document that describes each component. This link is provided throughout the DP for convenience.

<https://wtb.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Digital-Equity.pdf>

Assumptions and Calculations

Expansion, Reduction, Elimination or Alteration of a current program or service:

The Workforce Board received funding in the form of one-time funds via 2024 State Supplemental Operating Budget proviso. These funds end June 30, 2025. This proposal requests funding to continue the work on the components below, as well as other components that were not funded in budget.

Initiative Solution Funded	Amount
Washington State Digital Literacy Curriculum and Credential	\$425,000
Reentry Support Program	\$350,000
Occupation and Education Mapping Tool	\$150,000
Administration and Partner Coordination (B & C only)	\$150,000

Assumptions

WSU Global Campus will oversee the development and ongoing implementation of digital literacy training and the Workplace Digital Literacy Certificate (WDLC) components. They will utilize their IT infrastructure and use new funds to bring on faculty, staff, and stakeholders to assist in curriculum and credential development. Funds are allocated for subject matter experts not covered by other resources. Project management staff and technical support will be hired. No changes are expected for existing programs or services. The objective is for community-based organizations, WorkSource centers, community and technical colleges, and tribal organizations to deliver the developed curriculum once it's ready.

Work carried out by partners leading other components of this initiative are not anticipated to alter current programs or services.

As noted, four components of this initiative were funded via one time, one year funding provided by the legislature in 2024 via an operating budget proviso:

- The Washington State Digital Literacy Curriculum and Credential, \$425K
- The Reentry Support Program, \$350K
- The Occupation and Education Mapping Tool, \$150K
- Workforce Board Staff, \$150K

Year 1 focuses on core program development, including convening partners and curriculum planning. For instance, the "Washington State Digital Literacy Curriculum and Credential " component requires collaboration among industry, education, and distribution partners to outline competencies and curriculum. Funds are allocated for online learning system specifications. WSU Global Campus, leading this component, has an existing IT infrastructure. A Program Coordinator, Education Manager, and Instructional Designer are included in the Year 1 budget. In Year 2, various fees will be added as the program rolls out and will be ongoing costs in subsequent years. These fees are detailed in the component section below.

A similar approach applies to the "Occupation & Education Mapping" component led by the Workforce Board, involving ongoing stakeholder engagement and feasibility studies in years one and two. Year one deliverables include pathway mapping, with Year two focusing on buildout and proof of concept initiatives. The COE maintains a program inventory and search tool of every CTC IT program and its general career pathway, as well as a generic career pathway finder tool that can help guide people to an IT career. This tool will be explored as well for integration into the Occupation and Education mapping tool. Building the mapping tool will be dependent on future funding.

The ITSC continues from a small 2022 pilot, with an anticipated scale-up over the next two years. For this proposal, the enrollment level remains at 25 in subsequent years to assess ongoing staffing and support needs. While there may be future requests for scaling, collaboration with the National Service Office, Congressional delegates, and others is underway to explore potential future funding opportunities.

The Reentry Support Program will serve six cohorts of participants in year one. In subsequent years, the plan is to continue building out the program with the same level of cohorts across the state into additional geographic locations.

The AEITC mentorship program will require staff time for development and startup costs which are frontloaded in year one with small cohort sizes of 15 per program, starting in year two costs shift to operational costs to grow the cohort sizes year over year.

Costs are expected to be relatively static plus inflation year over year in the coordination role and the administration of the two new fund pools. The "Devices for Jobseekers fund" is proposed at \$500,000 annually, calculated at roughly \$500 per person for 1,000 jobseekers. The "Rapid Response Skills Gap Programs Fund Pool" will address immediate job needs and resource gaps, such as those identified through the BEAD plan or occupational/educational mapping. In year one, we propose \$5 million, \$10 million in year two and \$2.5 for the subsequent two years. The first quarter of year one will focus on establishing fund parameters and distribution with program partners. We will also identify education and training partners that have the capacity and flexibility to develop and implement as-needed training across the state. Funds for new program development will be allocated in year one, quarters three and four, and potentially late in the second quarter.

Detailed Assumptions and Calculations:

Detailed Calculations Overview by Solution

Establish Washington State Digital Literacy Curriculum and Credentials

Lead Entity: WSU Global Campus

(Contacts: David Cillay, dcillay@wsu.edu and Kelly Newell, knewell@wsu.edu)

The bulk of the work in year one is the convening of a broad cross-section of stakeholders to advise on curriculum design including but not limited to those from business and industry, all levels of education and workforce development, from historically excluded and rural communities, and from possible learning distribution organizations, such as libraries, community and technical colleges, K-12 community schools, community and faith-based organizations, state and county correctional facilities, employer organizations, and tribal community partners.

Currently available digital literacy curricula will be reviewed as a baseline, and input from stakeholders will help inform a draft version of a common curriculum and Workplace Digital Literacy Credential. We hope to have a solid draft of the curriculum completed by the third quarter of year one to allow for some cohort testing in the last quarter. Realistically, the curriculum will be rolled out in year two, and will be evaluated based on the various types of learners that participate. A final curriculum and materials will be ready for distribution in year three, by the end of which we expect to have reached 40,000 participants.

The development of the Workplace Digital Literacy Credential (WDLC) will also begin in year one, using a similar stakeholdering approach to inform the development and evaluation of the curriculum and credentials. Employers will be the targeted assessors of the value of the credential. Optimally, employers will establish the WDLC as a criterion for hiring in entry-level and higher skilled occupations, once finalized.

Leveraging existing infrastructure, including certificates and micro-credentials, WSU will develop identified credentials for the badging system. While some external contracts support WSU's IT infrastructure, no major technology or software purchases are required. WSU is well-equipped to support partners through training and access to the necessary hardware and software infrastructure for digital literacy education programs, both online and on-site.

WSU requests funds to support personnel costs to coordinate and execute the phases described below, 1.0 FTE Program Coordinator; 1.0 FTE Education Manager; 0.5 FTE Instructional Designer. Additional funds are requested to support the engagement of stakeholders, including learners during the pilot or testing phase as well as travel expenses and intra-agency reimbursements to WSU Extension for participation and to scale up existing programs for access to rural and underserved communities, which includes upkeep and servicing of Drive-Fi locations. Personal Services Contracts funds are needed for SMEs who will develop curriculum for online and in-person trainings. Goods & Services covers meeting expenses, marketing in the Discovery phase, site and tech rentals, badging infrastructure, technology hosting and set up covers fees, such as fees that directly cover time and tech required to stand up new registration and LMS course space sites for each course, fees per course space and per registration site, as well as a fee for ongoing hosting each year for registration and course spaces. Goods & Services also encompasses per person LMS costs such as assuming free courses for all with no additional fiscal processing done by WSU. There is an opportunity to begin charging for trainings to cover the per-person fees in subsequent years. Collection of fees will incur additional per-person fees for fiscal processing, which is typically passed along to the consumer.

WSUGC has a phased approach in the development of the WDLC:

- Discovery Phase (Year One – FY25, In Progress)
- Design Phase (Year Two – FY26)
- Delivery Phase (Year 3 and Beyond – FY27 and Beyond)

Initial activities in the Discovery Phase will focus on creating the collection of current resources with evaluation to include: learning objectives, cultural appropriateness for targeted populations, accessibility, usefulness and portability of credentials, and cost information.

Based on the outcomes of the Discovery Phase, the Design Phase activities will focus on identifying and scaling existing programs for distance

delivery broadly across the state. Ideally a solid draft of the curriculum will be completed and time allowed for cohort testing. Without funding to support the three phases, and the fiscal impact they have on the agency, WSUGC may not be able to complete deliverables in all three phases. Movement into each subsequent phase will be done after consideration of the impact and availability of resources to support the efforts.

Discovery Phase (Year one, FY25, in progress) months 1-9):

WSU proposes to convene focus groups and feedback committees across the state that includes:

- Employers from leading industries in Washington; Tech, Advanced Manufacturing, Agriculture, Hospitality, and Healthcare.
- Higher Education Providers; Career and Technical Colleges, NW Indian College, Heritage University, state four-year institutions.
- WorkSource, Workforce Development Councils, Job Skills Program
- Secondary Education; OSPI, State Board of Education, Career Readiness
- Tribes; WSU has relationships with 6 tribes upon whose homelands the university was built
- Libraries; Public libraries serve their local communities in providing access to online resources, training programs, and more.

Currently available digital literacy curricula will be reviewed as a baseline, and input from stakeholders will help inform a draft version of common curriculum.

Design Phase (Year two, FY26):

WSU will work with experts in digital literacy from across stakeholder sectors to create online and face-to-face training and education programs which can be deployed across the state through web-based means as well as in person and cohort-based opportunities at workforce training locations, extension offices, physical campuses, and even industry training rooms across the state.

- Employers from leading industries in Washington; Tech, Advanced Manufacturing, Agriculture, Hospitality, and Healthcare.
- Higher Education Providers; Career and Technical Colleges, NW Indian College, Heritage University, state four-year institutions.
- WorkSource, Workforce Development Councils, Job Skills Program
- Secondary Education; OSPI, State Board of Education, Career Readiness
- Native American Tribes in Washington

Identify and scale existing programs for distance delivery broadly across the state. Ideally a solid draft of the curriculum will be completed and time allowed for cohort testing.

Delivery Phase (Year three, FY27 and beyond):

WSU will provide, in partnership with experts in digital literacy from across stakeholder sectors, online and face-to-face training and education programs which can be deployed across the state through web-based means as well as in person and cohort-based opportunities at workforce training locations, extension offices, physical campuses, and even industry training rooms across the state.

- Employers from leading industries in Washington; Tech, Advanced Manufacturing, Agriculture, Hospitality, and Healthcare.
 - Higher Education Providers; Career and Technical Colleges, NW Indian College, Heritage University, State four-year institutions.
 - Workforce Training Boards; WorkSource, Workforce Development Council, Job Skills Program
 - Secondary Education; OSPI, State Board of Education, Career Readiness
 - Native American Tribes in Washington
 - Libraries
-

Object of Expenditure	Estimated Expenditures by Object			
	Year 1/FY26	Year 2/FY27	Year 3/FY28	Year 4/FY29
Salaries & Wages	175,500	175,500	175,500	175,500
Employee Benefits	61,776	61,776	61,776	61,776
Personal Serv Contracts	54,000	37,800	37,800	37,800
Goods and Services	98,280	265,680	265,680	265,680
<i>Meeting Expenses</i>	<i>12,960</i>	<i>8,640</i>	<i>8,640</i>	<i>8,640</i>
<i>Marketing</i>	-	<i>32,400</i>	<i>32,400</i>	<i>32,400</i>
<i>Site & Technology Rentals</i>	<i>25,920</i>	<i>25,920</i>	<i>25,920</i>	<i>25,920</i>
<i>Badgin Infrastructure</i>	<i>5,400</i>	<i>32,400</i>	<i>32,400</i>	<i>32,400</i>
<i>Technology Hosting/Set Up</i>	<i>25,920</i>	<i>25,920</i>	<i>25,920</i>	<i>25,920</i>
<i>Per Person LMS Costs</i>	<i>28,080</i>	<i>140,400</i>	<i>140,400</i>	<i>140,400</i>
Travel	58,320	48,600	48,600	48,600
Intra-Agency Reimb.	37,800	37,800	37,800	37,800
Total Expenditures	485,676	627,156	627,156	627,156

Rapid Response Skills Gap Program

Lead Entity: Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board
 (Contact: Eleni Papadakis, Eleni.Papadakis@wtb.wa.gov)

Funds will address local skills gaps through partnerships between employers and workforce organizations, with curriculum shared statewide, and resources aligned with federal investments like the BEAD program to support under-resourced communities.

BEAD funding is expected to create thousands of new job opportunities across the country. To meet this demand, training programs must scale up significantly, which requires substantial financial investment. Ensuring that training programs are sustainable over the long term requires ongoing investment in program evaluation, continuous improvement, and adapting to changing industry needs. Building and maintaining partnerships with industry stakeholders, educational institutions, and government agencies to align training with job opportunities is crucial and requires dedicated resources. Expanding broadband to rural and underserved areas means that training programs must also reach these regions. This requires additional resources to set up programs in remote locations, including transportation and housing for trainees if necessary.

These new funds would be allocated when critical skills gaps are identified, often through regional partners, BEAD plan implementation, or the Workforce Board's mapping process working with hiring employers.

A staff-supported, public-private steering committee will be established to review gap analyses, issue requests for applications to fill gaps, and review submitted applications to inform the funding distribution process. The application process will be designed for rapid response. The funds will also be used to help scale up the availability of education and training programs when warranted through faculty professional development and by making non-proprietary curricular materials available for replication. As stated previously, we expect to spend \$5 million in the first year on projects that fill immediate IT and IT adjacent labor shortages in underserved regions of the state. The proposal requests that \$10 million be made available in year two and \$2.5 million in subsequent years.

For this exercise we are estimating what it would cost to train 1,000 fiber optic installers or similar positions via a variety of training approaches in a four-year scenario. These programs range from 2 weeks to 9 months and vary in cost. The cost estimates are in the mid-range average for both BEAD only training and multi-occupational training scenarios. The estimated cost per student used to develop the figures includes wrap-around services, as they can be critical to jobseekers and workers. Cost estimates were created using data from Washington Career Bridge and consultation with private career school and community college system staff.

Year 1/FY 26	Year 2/FY 27	Year 3/FY 28	Year 4/FY 29
\$5,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$2,500,000	\$2,500,000

Work-Based Training and Supports

Advance Equity in IT Careers Mentorship (AEITC)

Lead Entity: To be determined by formal competitive procurement process or approved statewide vendor contract.

Year one activities will focus on expansion of the CTC Baccalaureate model to support Associate degree programs, reentry programs, and the ITSC. Just as MinT and CodeDay used a culturally sensitive, research-based approach to develop the program for CTC Baccalaureate students, a similar approach will be used to develop the AEITC expansion model. The proposal would fund ongoing, participant-informed and employer-validated research and evaluation to ensure the program is as effective and will support improvements over time.

- Student voices and ethnographic research
- Business development with education stakeholders
- Development of partnerships with hiring managers and recruiters
- Ongoing curriculum updates
- Technical platform development
- State evaluation of program success

State funding will be used to build and prove the model with the vision to grow and sustain as a public-private partnership. The upfront investment to adapt this program for 2-year CTC degrees, reentry programs, and the IT Service Corps will similarly lead to an employer-supported model after demonstrating positive results. Cohort sizes will grow year over year.

Estimated Budget for all three program components as follows:

		Year 1/FY 26	Year 2/FY 27	Year 3/FY28	Year 4/FY29
AA Student Program	Participants	15	60	85	85
	Ethnographic study and research	\$ 40,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
	Technical program specialist - curriculum and CTC integration	\$ 40,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000
	Career mentoring (program manager - recruiting, training, support)	\$ 87,000	\$ 180,000	\$ 255,000	\$ 255,000
	Work based learning (program manager - recruiting, training, support)	\$ 24,000	\$ 84,000	\$ 119,000	\$ 119,000
	Business outreach marketing	\$ 30,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
	Coach - business professionalism	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000
	Online workshops	\$ 10,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000
	In-person events	\$ 6,000	\$ 18,000	\$ 25,500	\$ 25,500
	Technical platform development	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
	Content and curriculum development	\$ 125,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
	Project and program management support	\$ 30,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
	Travel	\$ 10,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
	TOTAL	\$ 416,000	\$ 489,000	\$ 606,500	\$ 606,500

IT Service Corps	Participants	15	25	25	25
	Ethnographic study and research	\$ 40,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
	Technical program specialist - curriculum and CTC integration	\$ 40,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000
	Career mentoring (program manager - recruiting, training, support)	\$ 87,000	\$ 75,000	\$ 75,000	\$ 75,000
	Work based learning (program manager - recruiting, training, support)	\$ 24,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000
	Business outreach marketing	\$ 30,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
	Coach - business professionalism	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000
	Online workshops	\$ 10,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000
	In-person events	\$ 6,000	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500
	Technical platform development	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
	Content and curriculum development	\$ 125,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
	Project and program management support	\$ 30,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
	Travel	\$ 10,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
	TOTAL	\$ 416,000	\$ 324,500	\$ 324,500	\$ 324,500
Reentry Program	Participants	15	30	30	30
	Ethnographic study and research	\$ 40,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
	Technical program specialist - curriculum and CTC integration	\$ 40,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000
	Career mentoring (program manager - recruiting, training, support)	\$ 87,000	\$ 90,000	\$ 90,000	\$ 90,000
	Work based learning (program manager - recruiting, training, support)	\$ 24,000	\$ 42,000	\$ 42,000	\$ 42,000
	Business outreach marketing	\$ 30,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
	Coach - business professionalism	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000
	Online workshops	\$ 10,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000
	In-person events	\$ 6,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000
	Technical platform development	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
	Content and curriculum development	\$ 125,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
	Project and program management support	\$ 30,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
	Travel	\$ 10,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
	TOTAL	\$ 416,000	\$ 348,000	\$ 348,000	\$ 348,000

	All three program totals	\$1,248,000	\$1,161,500	\$1,279,000	\$1,279,000

IT Service Corps

Lead Entity: Washington Service Corps/Employment Security Department
 (Contact: Ashley Palmer, apalmer@esd.wa.gov)

Washington Service Corps, part of ESD, is Washington’s largest AmeriCorps intermediary, with over 40 years of experience deploying members to address community needs in areas like economic opportunity, education, and health.

IT Service Corps (ITSC) members will continue bridging the digital divide by offering IT literacy education, help desk support for nonprofits, and telehealth assistance in low-income communities. They will be trained to provide IT literacy education to economically vulnerable individuals. They may also provide “help desk” support for non-profit organizations and telehealth access support for patients of community health centers. They’ll spend up to 20% of their service in education programs, receive scholarships for continuing education, and transition to employment, following the standard WSC model.

Additional funds are requested for the living allowance gap, IT devices, internet access, and staffing. WSC seeks to hire two FTEs to support and oversee program implementation, research needs, educate partners, recruit members, and provide technical assistance for ITSC sites and members.

	Year 1/FY 26	Year 2/FY 27	Year 3/FY 28	Year 4/FY 29
Staffing	\$ 113,004	\$ 113,004	\$ 191,004	\$ 191,004
Benefits	\$ 39,551	\$ 39,551	\$ 66,851	\$ 66,851
Goods and Services	\$ 30,300	\$ 30,300	\$ 45,280	\$ 45,280
Staff Travel / Training	\$ 5,010	\$ 5,010	\$ 8,518	\$ 8,518
Additional Misc. Cost	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 7,000	\$ 7,000
Member Living Allowance	\$ 1,020,000	\$ 1,020,000	\$ 1,020,000	\$ 1,020,000
Member Health Care	\$ 101,437	\$ 101,437	\$ 101,438	\$ 101,438
Member Training/ Equipment	\$ 74,200	\$ 74,200	\$ 80,260	\$ 80,260
Other Member Cost	\$ 12,794	\$ 12,794	\$ 13,228	\$ 13,228
Indirect Cost	\$ 31,551	\$ 31,552	\$ 53,328	\$ 53,329
Total Expenditures	\$ 1,434,243	\$ 1,434,243	\$ 1,586,907	\$ 1,586,907
Other Funding	\$ -365,250	\$ -365,250	\$ -365,250	\$ -365,250
Total Request	\$ 1,068,993	\$ 1,068,993	\$ 1,221,657	\$ 1,221,657

Reentry Support Program

Lead Entity: To be determined by formal competitive procurement process or approved statewide vendor contract.

A multi-pronged workforce development approach with career training options is taken with this effort.

Participants in the reentry program will receive not only wages and wrap around supports but career mentoring and early support in participating in work-based learning through micro-internships, as part of the AEITC component of the proposal, detailed above.

Each cohort, comprising 15-20 individuals primarily from underrepresented communities, including formerly incarcerated individuals, undergoes four months of continuous soft and technical skills training, with monthly skills assessments. A living allowance is provided for each participant, reflected in the budget below as \$80,000 per cohort.

Funds are also requested to pay staff to coordinate the program, provide training to staff and for equipment and technology needed to run the program.

Staff and Administration		Year 1/FY 26	Year 2/FY 27	Year 3/FY 28	Year 4/FY 29
	Staffing	\$350,000	\$350,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
	Culturally Literate Digital Navigator Services Staffing	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
	Culturally Literate Workforce Development Services Staffing	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
	Culturally Literate Systems and Social Navigation Services Staffing	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
	Culturally Literate Financial Services and Literacy Staffing	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
	Cohort 1 Living Allowance	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$90,000	\$90,000
	Cohort 2 Living Allowance	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$90,000	\$90,000
	Cohort 3 Living Allowance	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$90,000	\$90,000
	Cohort 4 Living Allowance	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$90,000	\$90,000
	Cohort 5 Living Allowance	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$90,000	\$90,000
	Cohort 6 Living Allowance	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$90,000	\$90,000
	Equipment	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
	Subscriptions	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
	Data Connection and Monthly Cost	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
	Miscellaneous Program Costs	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
	TOTAL:	\$1,370,000	\$1,370,000	\$1,580,000	\$1,580,000

Devices for Jobseekers

Lead Entity: Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board
 (Contact: Eleni Papadakis, Eleni.Papadakis@wtb.wa.gov)

This fund will procure devices, such as laptops, for jobseekers to facilitate job training and employment access. This responds to the need of low-income jobseekers for devices to access online training in preparation for livable wage jobs, and to secure and be successful in those jobs. This will also provide opportunity for marginalized populations to access livable-wage remote or hybrid employment options, rather than low-wage, low-barrier jobs that are solely in-person customer-interactive. Distribution of devices will be managed by local workforce development councils (WDCs), with initiative staff overseeing program rules, guidelines, and effectiveness monitoring. The proposal seeks \$500,000 annually, calculated based on \$500 per person for 1,000 jobseekers. Costs may vary depending on need.

Year 1/FY 26	Year 2/FY 27	Year 3/FY 28	Year 4/FY 29
\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000

Occupational & Educational Mapping Tool

Lead Entity: Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

(Contact: Eleni Papadakis, Eleni.Papadakis@wtb.wa.gov)

Using one year startup funding in the amount of \$150,000, provided in 2024, the Workforce Board will lead a comprehensive design study for mapping the IT occupational and educational landscape. The cost to contract with an IT business analyst consultant to perform much of this work over the next four years is estimated at a cost of \$ 250,000 per year. Activities include feasibility studies and stakeholder engagement, development of a model for the tool, using common skill and competency taxonomy across industry and occupational sectors, specifications established for IT, governance, and administrative infrastructure to support an easily accessible, easily updatable web-based tool.

Many partners will also be engaged for this effort and the Workforce Board will issue contracts to subject matter experts needed to inform various project components, including assessments and evaluations. We anticipate bringing together an SME group to include industry, education and training experts. This group will act as a governing body for this work. For example, SBCTC, will leverage expertise from several of the Centers of Excellence. Most likely the COE for Information Computing Technology and the COE for Cybersecurity will be engaged early on. This SME group will support the prototyping of career and educational pathways to inform the development of the navigational tool and provide support to the development of the multi-tier digital literacy curriculum and credentials component. COEs provide valuable services, research, and programs, serving colleges, industry, and K-12 systems. They serve as information hubs, offering best practices, research, and professional development in current and emerging fields. Their expertise connects with other COEs and industry partners as well. Their expertise connects with other COEs and industry partners. Funding for this portion of the work is requested within the Consultant/SME fund pool line item.

Two in-house resources from the Workforce Board will also be explored and leveraged to inform development of the tool: Washington's Health Workforce Sentinel Network and the Career Bridge portal. Career Bridge is an interactive career and education planning tool that contains data on over 6,500 Washington education programs, offering program details, performance results, financial aid information, and a career quiz. The Sentinel Network is an ongoing channel of workforce-related information focused on emerging healthcare workforce needs. The Sentinel Network, via regular "sentinel" surveys, identifies emerging skills and roles required by employers. It could potentially expand to other industries, such as IT.

Staff will use a variety of mechanisms to obtain the industry information starting in year one using the startup funding provided in 2024. Then, in year two, begin testing components of the system with users. Throughout the developmental phases of the project the Workforce Board will collaborate with industry associations, professional organizations, worker groups, higher education, and more to establish recommendations for regular system updates. Existing systems and external expertise will be explored, with an early focus on the Centers of Excellence as mentioned above and the Sentinel Network model.

It is estimated that this collaboration work will cost \$550,000 per year to cover SME costs. As shown in the following budget table, the business analyst contract at \$250,000 per year will continue into years three and four as build out and a roll out occur. Additionally, a UI/UX testing contractor will be brought in for year two for a single year only at \$175,000. Quality assurance is budgeted at \$60,000 per year in years two/four. Building the tool will kick off in year three and continue into year four. This is estimated at \$1,000,000 per year for two years, though more detail around actual costs will be gleaned from the one time, one-year funded feasibility study, findings due in June 2025.

Workforce Board staff participation convening and advancing this particular piece of the project, as described in the Initiative Coordination section to follow is broken down as follows: The Project Director (WMS2) at 0.30 of their time, Policy Associate (MA5) at 0.30 of their time, the AA4 at 0.20 of their time and FA4 at 0.20 of their time.

In years three and four 0.10 of the existing Communications Manager's time will be needed to lead efforts to publicize and increase awareness of the new tool, and its requirements for users during this phase of the project.

By the end of year 4, assuming funds are made available, the educational and occupational mapping tool will become digitized and will be accessible by employers, education and training providers, students, and jobseekers using a common taxonomy of skills and competencies. Structured relationships will have been negotiated with industry and business associations to periodically review and update the skill and competency information for occupations within their sectors. The tool will be accessible, mobile-friendly, and easily navigable by students, workers, and jobseekers. A process will also have been established to determine where there are gaps in the education and training pipeline, which will inform the distribution of funds from the flexible fund pool. We anticipate the tool will cost \$1,000,000 per year for build out in years 3 and 4.

	Year 1/FY 26	Year 2/FY 27	Year 3/FY 28	Year 4/FY 29
SME fund pool	\$550,000	\$550,000	\$550,000	\$550,000
IT Bus Analyst	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
QA		\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000
UI/UX		\$175,000		
Tool build out			\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000

Initiative Coordination, Progress Tracking & Reporting, Policy Development, Administration of New Fund Pools and Design Study for an Occupational and Education Mapping Tool

Lead Entity: Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

(Contact: Eleni Papadakis, eleni.papadakis@wtb.wa.gov)

We've adopted Stanford University's Collective Impact model to drive large-scale, high-impact systemic change that capitalizes on existing resources. This model necessitates a dedicated "backbone organization" to coordinate participating entities, maintain alignment with common goals, foster transparent communication and performance accountability, and ensure activities are mutually reinforcing. The backbone organization also gathers and reports progress data to partners and the public and provides data analysis to collaborators for joint management and decision-making regarding continuous improvement and mid-course corrections.

The Workforce Board serves as the backbone organization, having utilized existing staff to develop this proposal over the last several years.

Implementation requires a newly hired full-time Project Director (WMS2) and newly hired full-time Policy Associate (MA5) for partner coordination and community outreach as well as RFP processes and contract management for all initiative components.

A part-time (0.5) newly hired Fiscal Analyst 4 will be required. Fiscal administration will be managed by the Workforce Board for the entire project. The Workforce Board will also participate in the RFP process and issue interagency agreements and contracts to non-state entities leading efforts to implement components of this initiative as well as to subject matter experts and technical service providers needed to inform various project components, including assessments and evaluations. This position will support the policy associate with the RFP process, contract development and the subsequent routing process.

A 0.5 FTE administrative support will be provided by a newly hired AA4. This position will be needed for tasks such as partner and stakeholder outreach for scheduling, taking notes during meetings, and tracking timelines and deadlines.

A new 0.5 FTE Senior Researcher (WMS2) will work with partners to establish and maintain the performance accountability system and a public-facing dashboard. They will continuously chart out employment and earnings data for performance accountability for workforce and economic metrics for the dashboard.

Staff travel is for nine months in the first year, year two includes a full 12 months of travel and this will be the busiest time for that activity. Travel needs should decrease in years three and four.

	Year 1/FY 26	Year 2/FY 27	Year 3/FY 28	Year 4/FY 29
Salaries	256,000	341,000	350,000	350,000
Benefits	53,000	70,000	72,000	72,000
Goods and Services	97,000	129,000	133,000	133,000
Staff Travel	18,000	24,000	8,000	8,000
Other One-time Staff Cost (Capital)	45,000	0	0	0
Indirect Cost	26,000	35,000	35,000	35,000
Total WTB Staff Cost	495,000	599,000	598,000	598,000

Workforce Assumptions:

See detailed assumptions section for the workforce details of each component.

Historical Funding:

Historic Funding Table – One-time funds via 2024 State Supplemental Operating Budget proviso.

No funds are appropriated for future years.

Initiative Solution Funded	Amount
Washington State Digital Literacy Curriculum and Credential	\$425,000
Reentry Support Program	\$350,000
Occupation and Education Mapping Tool	\$150,000
Administration and Partner Coordination (B & C only)	\$150,000

Strategic and Performance Outcomes

Strategic Framework:

This proposal relates to the Governor's Results Washington goal areas and statewide priorities in several ways. By striving to provide all Washingtonians with the opportunity to not only become digitally literate but to consider a career in IT, we are linking to Goal 1, World-Class Education. By aligning our collective impact work with Goal 2, Prosperous Economy, we are supporting efforts to foster an innovative economy where businesses, workers and communities thrive.

This proposal also supports the Workforce Board's strategic plan, Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP) in various capacities. The guiding principles of the 2024-2028 statewide workforce plan includes closing economic disparities for marginalized populations, which is at the core of this proposal. Another guiding principle is focusing on comprehensive support for individuals with barriers to employment. This proposal connects with that principle as we plan to frame our efforts around connecting individuals that are historically left behind to not only digital literacy where that is needed, but also by connecting those individuals with the resources and tools they need to potentially secure a career in a high-demand, high-wage industry.

Being the backbone organization behind the collective impact initiative for the work this proposal outlines also links to our agency's vision and mission:

Vision: Every Washington community is thriving, inclusive, and economically resilient.

Mission: Champion strategies and align organizations and stakeholders statewide to enable the future of work, which ensures a successful business climate and livable wage jobs for all.

The Workforce Board and its partners will be able to track the progress of this collective impact initiative over time and calculate its impact on employers, jobseekers, and incumbent workers. Data for the tracking dashboard will be populated through a combination of agency reports, administrative data sets, and periodic employer and participant surveys. Two important dashboard metrics that will be populated will be the numbers of people who achieve the Workplace Digital Literacy Certification, and the number of those individuals who go on to either further education or employment at a family-sustaining wage. The data will be disaggregated by demographic population and regions.

Performance Outcomes:

Outlined below are the expected outcomes of this long-term, multi-pronged strategy to increase digital and technological literacy across the state, and to create an accessible, easily navigable, system of education and work-based pathways to high-wage, high-demand, IT-based careers.

1. Increased Digital Literacy: A significant reduction in digital illiteracy rates among marginalized populations.
2. Diverse IT Workforce: A more diverse and inclusive IT workforce, with increased representation from marginalized communities.
3. Equitable Career Pathways: Clear and equitable pathways to IT careers, reducing disparities in access and opportunity.
4. Economic Impact: A stronger, more competitive workforce that drives economic growth and reduces income disparities.
5. Collaboration Model: A successful model for public-private collaboration to address workforce disparities that can be replicated across regions.

Year 1: The first year activities are largely developmental, towards building the foundational elements of a sustainable system. However, pilot activities will generate some enrollment numbers. By the end of Year 1, we expect the following outcomes:

1. Washington State Digital Literacy Curriculum and Credential (Multi-Tiered Digital Literacy Program)

- Recommendations will be made from input received from multiple industry, education, and community stakeholders, piloting with learner cohorts (approximately 1,000 learners), and overall evaluation.
- Development of curriculum continues based on feedback from business, labor, and education and training organizations in the one

time, one-year funded work completed in 2025.

2. **Rapid Response Skills Gap Programs (flexible fund pool)** - Criteria and rules established for distribution of funds; at least six new or expanded existing rapid response programs funded.

3. **Work-Based Training and Supports**

Advance Equity in IT Careers (AEITC) - Establish the Advance Equity in IT Careers Mentorship program with a first-year cohort of 15 students in the AA Student Program, 15 IT Service Corps members, and 15 participants of the reentry program.

IT Service Corps - Continuation of program, now out of its pilot phase, serving in low-income communities, with member participation at 25 members per cohort.

4. **Career and Education Readiness Resources**

Reentry Support Program - will serve cohorts of 15-20 individuals each, all from under-represented communities with a leading target of formerly incarcerated individuals.

Devices for Job Seekers and Career Advancement - 1,000 jobseekers will have received digital devices enabling them to access training to prepare for work and/or to access and retain a job opportunity at a livable wage.

Occupation and Education Mapping Tool

Development of model (2-year project) using common skill and competency taxonomy across industry and occupational sectors; one or more occupations mapped as prototypes; specifications established for IT, governance, and administrative infrastructure to support an easily accessible, easily updatable web-based tool.

5. **Administration and Partner Coordination**

The performance dashboard will be in its build phase. The Industry Advisory Council will be established in the second quarter. The contracts and interagency agreements will be established in quarter two, compliance and oversight will be ongoing.

The first year is a largely a developmental year, building on the project investment from the 2024 Legislative Session. Subsequent year performance targets will be set based upon stakeholder input and build year one actions up. Estimates per component for future years are:

Implementation of the Digital Literacy Curriculum Program design will be completed in year two and deployed in year three. Learning distribution partners will be enlisted to support cohorts of learners across a range of communities, including, but not limited to, tribal, rural, court or corrections-involved, immigrant and refugee, unemployed or under-employed jobseekers/workers, BIPOC, and under-resourced communities. The Basic Education for Adults Division of SBCTC which has a tremendous reach into these communities, and also offers natural next steps along learning pathways, will be actively engaged in this effort along with WSU Global. There will be a period of intensive evaluation of the curriculum, materials, and online access before wide-scale marketing ensues. The Workplace Digital Literacy Certification program should be up and running by end of year two or early in year three and will use a similarly intensive evaluation strategy to ensure access and effectiveness for the targeted communities, and suitability for hiring employers. By the end of the first three years, we are conservatively estimating that 6,000 individuals will have completed at least one tier of the Digital Literacy program, and that we will have reached another 10,000 individuals in year four. Of those first 16,000, we expect to have at least 10,000 achieve an employer-endorsed Workplace Digital Literacy Credential.

Rapid Response Skills Gap Program funds will be used to fill critical skills gaps at the local level, in partnership between employers and local workforce development and education organizations. As new programs are created, curriculum will be made available to support similar skills gaps in other regions of the state. Existing programs may also be scaled. When warranted, industry and curriculum experts will be supported to provide faculty professional development on the subject matter. Resources are meant to be responsive to the major investments of federal funds, such as the BEAD program of the IJA, as well as to the mapping process, supporting specific employment gaps identified. There will be emphasis on meeting the requirements of the Justice40 initiative in seeking to benefit those from overburdened communities, or members of the BIPOC, LGBTQIA+ or tribal communities.

In years two through four we expect to see continued growth and increased participation within the IT Service Corps, Advance Equity in IT Careers mentorship program, and the Reentry Support Program. Job seekers and those seeking career advancement will continue to benefit from the devices fund pool at the same level as in year one (1,000 devices per year, average cost per jobseeker is estimated at \$500).

By the end of year three, assuming funds are made available, the educational and occupational mapping tool will be digitized and will be accessible by employers, education and training providers, students, and jobseekers using a common taxonomy of skills and competencies. Structured relationships will have been negotiated with industry and business associations to periodically review and update the skill and competency information for occupations within their sectors. The tool will be accessible, mobile-friendly, and easily navigable by students, workers, and jobseekers. A process will also have been established to determine where there are gaps in the education and training pipeline, which will inform the distribution of funds from the Rapid Response Skills Gap Program.

Click the link below for a summary document that describes each component. This link is provided throughout the DP for convenience.

<https://wfb.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Digital-Equity.pdf>

Equity Impacts

Community Outreach and Engagement:

This proposal aims to close economic disparity gaps by building accessible “on-ramps” and navigable education and training pathways, including earn and learn pathways to in-demand, well-paying, IT-based careers. This proposal was most recently updated, after enthusiastic support at the Board’s 2024 strategic planning retreat (50 stakeholder attendees). The proposal was originally developed over several years, with input from numerous organizations and communities across the state. Conversations about these issues began through the Board’s investigation into economic disparities after the Great Recession, and during the Workforce Board’s rural community forums during the fall of 2019. Exploration continued and expanded over the course of the pandemic and beyond as the need for digital literacy became even more apparent, not just for livable wage employment but also to meet daily living needs. See the Digital Equity Ecosystem and “Why Now?” sections above for deeper information and data on the findings that has kept this coalition together and moving forward.

The reality of the early impact of the pandemic on rural, BIPOC, and economically disadvantaged communities inspired the Board and its partners to explore the digital divide more deeply, to understand the lived experiences of those most affected, and to design programs and services that would fill the explicit gaps and eliminate hurdles that keep people from engaging meaningfully in the digital environment. This proposal is designed by those stakeholders and community voices engaged since that time, coupled with research on the issues and best or promising practices. We are confident that we can reach marginalized people of our state because of the points of access into disadvantaged communities that already exist within our collective impact initiative, such as local WDCs, WorkSource Centers, public libraries, Digital Navigator grant recipients: like the Equity in Education Coalition, Community Health Network of Washington, and Nisqually Indian Tribe, and many more.

Two specific examples of novel program components that were developed based on research and community input in this proposal are the Devices for Jobseekers/Career Advancement and the IT Service Corps as described in the proposal narrative.

Collaborators on this proposal have made a commitment to transparent performance accountability, through which collective goals and metrics will be established and progress will be tracked continually. Whenever possible, data will be demographically disaggregated by, at minimum, race, age, gender, and geography. We’ll also aim to find data on ability and veteran status, and for those who are justice-involved or in the foster care system. This proposal is built as a collective impact initiative with numerous partners from across the state. These partners, representing many of the communities we aim to impact, have been important to the development of the proposal, but will also be critical to the initiative’s implementation success.

In the first three years of this proposal, in partnership with community-based organizations, libraries, local workforce boards, community and technical colleges, school districts, tribal organizations, and others, we expect to teach 6,000 digitally marginalized individuals the digital literacy skills needed to enhance daily life, to engage in education and training to prepare for career opportunities, and to enter livable wage employment. In subsequent years, collaborative partners will help us reach up to 5,000 new individuals annually, while continuing to serve enrolled participants as they continue into higher tiers of digital literacy learning, including attaining the employer-endorsed Workplace Digital Literacy Credential. It should also be noted that WSU Global Access Center staff are on hand to ensure that the digital credentialing is accessible to all targeted audiences. Ultimately, we will track how participants progress in the economy through administrative employment and earnings data.

Disproportional Impact Considerations:

To the best of our ability and knowledge, there are no communities that are excluded or disproportionately impacted by this proposal. This proposal creates the on-ramps and bridges to services and high-demand, livable-wage IT-based employment that has eluded so many of our marginalized Washingtonians for far too long.

Target Communities and Populations:

We will be directing services to populations and communities that have not benefitted from Washington's technology-driven economy. This investment comes at a critical time as Washington moves to end economic and other inequities across the state. The pandemic exacerbated the already great digital divide in Washington. Aggregated economic data leading up to the pandemic told us that the state and its people were benefiting from the state's technology boom. Washington has been among the top five GDP growth states since the Great Recession and has seen an average wage increase from 2011 to 2022 of 67.2 percent. Even in 2020, with the highest unemployment rates in history (since the current data series started in 1976), average annual income increased by 9 percent from the year before to \$79,800. Two years later, in 2022, the income was 9.4 percent higher at \$84,010. The IT industry drove much of this growth. This sector alone saw an annual rise in average income in 2020 of 15.4 percent, and another 6.9 percent bump in 2021. But even as IT wages continue to rise, there are too few qualified Washingtonians to fill the growing number of jobs, and those that do are primarily male and white. As mentioned earlier, IT job growth is projected to accelerate further over the next eight years according to ESD's labor market economists; this collaborative proposal aims to make the IT workforce as diverse as our state's population.

The populations of focus for this initiative are based on both of the below population frameworks:

U.S. Departments of Labor and Education Populations of Focus:

Individuals from BIPOC Communities, Immigrants and refugees, Displaced Homemakers, Low Income Individuals, Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Hawaiians, Individuals with Disabilities, Older Individuals, Justice-involved Individuals, Homeless Individuals, Youth in, or formerly in, Foster Care, English Language Learners, Migrant/Seasonal Farmworkers, Individuals within Two Years of Exhausted TANF Eligibility, Single Parents/Pregnant Individuals, Long Term Unemployed, LGBTQIA+ Individuals, Veterans.

US Census Digital Equity Act Covered Populations:

Persons who are 60 years of age or older, Incarcerated individuals, Veterans, Persons with disabilities, Members of a racial or ethnic minority group, Rural residents, Individuals with a language barrier, including those who are English learners or have low literacy levels, and Individuals living in households with incomes not exceeding 150 percent of the poverty level.

Clear efforts will be made to track entry into and completion of these programs by those who previously experienced barriers to employment. Through intentional focus on providing access and supports to those individuals, we will be able to expand the diversity of workers into careers that require digital literacy.

The Workforce Board will serve as the hub for data collection and performance accountability and transparency. We'll use the University of Washington's Self-Sufficiency Calculator to determine what "livable wage level" means for each participant and track whether our efforts are moving participants towards their career and economic goals. A data dashboard will show the collective's impact over time disaggregated by region, community, race, gender, age, and other demographic characteristics. Because the state's Employment Security Department will now be able to collect actual job titles for employed individuals via quarterly Employer Unemployment Insurance reports, we will be able to track progressive employment impact over time for many individuals (though not for self-employed). We will also work with community partners to create measures of improved impact on daily living, such as the number of unbanked individuals who open bank accounts or numbers of homebound individuals who utilize telehealth services.

In a collective impact initiative, all partners commit to the success of all targeted participants, regardless of which door they enter through. Collective impact partners will periodically review data to determine if we are making the intended level of impact and truly improving economic equity for marginalized populations. The group will work together to understand what is working and what is not and to make mid-course adjustments in a "plan-do-check-act-check again" structure.

Because of the interconnected nature of the collective impact group, we will be able to serve common customers across programs and agencies to ensure we are reaching individuals in need of these pathway support services. One example of this is with the connection to ESD with the IT Service Corps program as well as WorkSource and Dislocated Worker Programs. Individuals that for the first time in their lives suddenly find themselves out of work and without the digital literacy skills needed to seek a new job that requires digital literacy skills will be able to benefit from these interconnected services. They can complete the digital literacy curriculum, earn a credential, use the occupational and educational mapping tool to explore their next step career possibilities, and receive support with their job search all in one place. Another example is with the community college system and Mentors in Tech. It can be difficult to land that first IT job after completing a degree. With the addition of the Advance Equity in IT Careers mentorship program, overlooked and underserved students will be able to better navigate and launch their careers.

The Washington State Broadband Office released their draft Digital Equity Plan recently. In the plan they acknowledge that there are many highly engaged communities, leaders, and partner organizations who have invested in offering digital inclusion activities and advancing digital equity

policies to help their communities access, afford, and adopt internet services and IT.

The primary goals of the Digital Equity Plan are stated as; eliminate barriers to access and affordability, empower residents with the digital skills they need to thrive, and to ensure sustainability of digital equity programs. The new ongoing funds that are being requested in this proposal amplify these goals, leveraging existing resources and mobilizing a multitude of public, private, state, and local partners in a multi-stakeholder collective impact initiative.

Community Inputs and Incorporation:

Washington state's digital equity ecosystem is a dynamic, evolving system of individuals, communities, government entities, businesses, organizations, and their larger environments, focused on ensuring all residents have access to affordable, reliable internet and the skills necessary to thrive in a digital world. This ecosystem encompasses a range of initiatives, from government-led programs and policies to community-based organizations and public/private sector collaborations. The participants in these collaborations represent well over 100 different entities across the state. These entities include state agencies, community-based organizations, statewide associations, the private sector, K-12 education, tribes, higher education, and local workforce development councils. This initiative has been brought forward and broadly discussed among collaborative participants.

Other Collateral Connections

HEAL Act Agencies Supplemental Questions

Not applicable.

Puget Sound Recovery:

Not applicable.

State Workforce Impacts:

Not applicable.

Intergovernmental:

See above descriptions. We anticipate support from intergovernmental stakeholders impacted by this proposal as they have been involved in the collective impact initiative work.

Stakeholder Impacts:

See above descriptions. We anticipate support from non-governmental stakeholders impacted by this proposal as they have been involved in the collective impact initiative work.

State Facilities Impacts:

Not applicable.

Changes from Current Law:

Not applicable.

Legal or Administrative Mandates:

Not applicable.

Governor's Salmon Strategy:

Not applicable.

Reference Documents

- [ITaddendumBudget2025-27 WDPI V2 FINAL 9.6.xlsx](#)
- [WaTech202527ITAddendumSurvey_Submission_1262484343.pdf](#)

IT Addendum

Does this Decision Package include funding for any IT-related costs, including hardware, software, (including cloud-based services), contracts or IT staff?

Yes

Objects of Expenditure

Objects of Expenditure <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2026	2027	2025-27	2028	2029	2027-29
Obj. A	\$256	\$341	\$597	\$350	\$350	\$700
Obj. B	\$53	\$70	\$123	\$72	\$72	\$144
Obj. C	\$8,918	\$13,892	\$22,810	\$7,894	\$7,719	\$15,613
Obj. E	\$97	\$129	\$226	\$133	\$133	\$266
Obj. G	\$18	\$24	\$42	\$8	\$8	\$16
Obj. J	\$45	\$0	\$45	\$0	\$0	\$0
Obj. N	\$1,555	\$1,697	\$3,252	\$1,849	\$1,849	\$3,698
Obj. T	\$26	\$35	\$61	\$35	\$35	\$70

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