

# Health Workforce Council

## 2025 Preliminary Recommendation Discussion

Sept 26, 2025



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# **Educational Debt Recommendations**



# Educational Debt Recommendations

**2024 Recommendation:** The Council recommends policymakers maintain current funding to support both behavioral health and other health professional loan repayment awards through the Washington Health Corps to address immediate retention challenges within a variety of healthcare settings.

- **Update:** Overall funding for Washington Health Corps programs significantly reduced in 2025-27 budget.



# Educational Debt Recommendations

**2024 Recommendation:** As part of supporting the investments made in loan repayment programs in Washington, the Council affirms its commitment to evaluation of the Washington Health Corps programs' outcomes. The Council recommends policymakers make dedicated funds available to the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) to complete the evaluation of the Washington Health Corps programs currently underway.

- **Update:** WSAC completed preliminary evaluation and presented findings at June Council meeting, no funds were appropriated to continue.



# Educational Debt Recommendations

**2024 Recommendation:** The Council recommends policymakers require eligible healthcare employers provide Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) educational materials and information about the Office of the Student Loan Advocate when hiring new employees, annually, and at the time of employee separation. The Office of the Student Loan Advocate should conduct outreach to eligible healthcare and behavioral health employers and assess if additional staff members are warranted to serve demand.

Complementary to its own PSLF recommendations, the Council affirms support for Recommendations 1 and 4a included in the “Public Service Loan Forgiveness Statewide Initiative Plan – Report to the Legislature” issued by the Office of Financial Management (OFM) and WSAC.

- **Update:** OFM and WSAC are not pursuing report recommendations in 2026 due to cost. They are working with DFI on student borrower protections outside legislation. Federal rulemaking regarding program is in process.



# WSAC Health Corps Evaluation Findings

- **Research Question #5:** Are we increasing recruitment?
  - **Finding:** Not as much as expected. While everyone is very grateful for this financial assistance, they did not choose to go into health because of this funding.
- **Research Question #6:** Are we increasing retention?
  - **Finding:** Unclear. We know that the financial assistance is extending people's time in the health field, but we need more quantitative evidence to understand how much longer people stay in the health field after completing their service obligation.

Full Presentation: Washington Health Corps (WHC) Evaluation June 2025

## ■ Communication changes

- Increase transparency about healthcare pathways
- Hold information sessions about WHC
- Attend faculty meetings
- Implement a community of practice for WHC recipients
- More information on debt-to-income ratios and licensure requirements

## ■ Technical changes

- Update WSAC website (include FAQ)
- Create dashboard to track service obligations
- Remove third party verifications on forms
- Extend WHC application timeline

## ■ Administration changes

- Administer lump sum payments or consider conditional scholarships
- Broaden/re-evaluate eligibility criteria and program requirements
- Align with NHSC on paperwork

## ■ Policy Changes

- Increase training opportunities for supervisors and providers
- Improve compensation packages
- Consider implementing integrated care models





# HR1 Changes to Student Borrowing

- **Elimination of Graduate PLUS Loan Program**
- **Graduate/professional annual and aggregate loan limits**
  - Caps the annual loan limits at \$20,500 for graduate students, \$50,000 for professional students
  - Caps the aggregate limit at \$100K for grad, \$200K for professional
    - What programs are graduate vs. professional not yet defined in rule
  - Required annual loan amount proration for part-time status
- **Fewer income-based repayment options**
- Plus, many more changes

Federal Student Aid Changes from the OBBBA

How New Federal Student Loan Limits Could Affect Borrowers | Urban Institute



# 2025 Educational Debt Recommendations

**Given the updates to our prior recommendations, new information from WSAC and the federal changes, how should our recommendations evolve?**

- Notes during meeting

# **Community Resources Recommendation**



# Community Resources Recommendation

**2024 Recommendation:** The Council affirms that access to high-quality, reliable childcare, affordable housing, and transportation are key community resources for the current and future healthcare workforce. Having access to these resources in their communities allows the state's healthcare workers to accept and maintain employment. Additionally, childcare, housing, and transportation are vital to future workforce efforts. Health professions students and educators are also highly impacted by when they cannot access these community resources. The Council recommends the Governor and Legislature continue to take action to address the need for dramatically increased access to affordable childcare, housing, and transportation services in Washington.

The Council also encourages healthcare employers to consider innovative approaches to help support their workers' needs for these community resources.



# Community Resources Recommendation

## 2025 Update

- **Ben Stubbs, UW Center for Health Workforce Studies**



# Community Resources Recommendation

**Given the update from Ben about impact to employers and workers, does the Council wish to continue to make this recommendation? Should it evolve for 2025?**

- Notes during meeting

# **Rural Youth Pathways Recommendations**



# Rural Youth Pathways Recommendations

**Council Goal:** Enable rural students and workers to access and succeed in health professional training programs and career advancement opportunities without having to leave their communities.





# Rural Youth Pathways Recommendations

- **Findings from our K-12 rural learning this year, strengths**
  - Walkable programs (employer and school are close) work best to solve transportation challenges for externships
  - Career fairs can be an efficient way to bring employers to students
  - Career and technical education (CTE) can increase bonds between the district and community
  - Educational Service Districts (ESD), Accountable Communities of Health (ACH), Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) can play key connector roles

Rural K-12 CTE – Initial Findings, June 25, 2025



# Rural Youth Pathways Recommendations

## ■ **Strengths, continued**

- Statewide support/outreach personnel can help catalyze program development
- CTE Directors with enough FTE to seek funding can create virtuous cycles
- Career/Technical Student Organizations (e.g. HOSA, SkillsUSA) are attractive and motivational for rural students



# Rural Youth Pathways Recommendations

- **Findings from our K-12 rural learning this year, challenges**
  - Very small cohorts of students interested in a pathway can make in-person programming unviable
  - Distance to opportunities
  - Building/maintaining relationships between schools and employers can take a lot of time and work
  - Healthcare credential pathways are costly and complicated to create
  - Scheduling challenges with popular courses competing, scheduling challenges across districts that collaborate



# Rural Youth Pathways Recommendations

## ■ **Challenges, continued**

- Start-up costs for healthcare programs can be high, cost per student can be greater than urban/suburban districts
- Educator turnover can destabilize good programs
- Limited funding for CTE director roles
- Youth (under 18) volunteer and employment opportunities can be limited by employers for a variety of reasons (e.g. insurance, concerns about maturity and HIPAA compliance, LNI minor employment rules)



# Rural Youth Pathways Recommendations

- **Potential areas to explore between now and November 20**
  - Support for CTE director positions in rural districts
    - Addresses relationships with employers, writing grants, increased capacity to create programs
  - ESD 112 Rural CTE Cooperative expansion [\(June 2025 presentation\)](#)
    - Addresses small numbers challenge through hybrid model, braided funding to support sustainability
  - ESDs, ACHs, AHECs, support employer/school partnerships
    - Addresses relationships with employers, increases capacity for programming



# Rural Youth Pathways Recommendations

- **Potential areas to explore between now and November 20**
  - Flexible funding for rural program start-up costs
    - Addresses resource need, unlikely with state dollars in 2026, could be directed towards private philanthropy
  - Advise grantors to support full “cost” of program implementation in rural schools
    - Addresses resource challenge
  - Maintain funding for statewide technical assistance roles
    - Addresses support to help catalyze program development



# Rural Youth Pathways Recommendation

**What other avenues for action do you see?**

**Should we seek to be comprehensive or targeted given the fiscal environment?**

- Notes during meeting



# Rural Youth Pathways Recommendations

## ■ **Next steps**

- Drop-in meeting times for continued discussion on rural recommendations in October, announced times next week
- Finalization of recommendations at November meeting
- Draft report disseminated to Council members early December
- Final report submitted to policymakers by December 31



