

# Basic Education for Adults (BEdA)

Participant Survey 2026

## Participant Survey: Basic Education for Adults (BEdA)

State statute directs the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) to survey workforce system participants to evaluate their experiences, outcomes and satisfaction with workforce programs within Washington. By capturing the lived experiences of program participants, the Workforce Board can support data-informed decision-making, improve accountability, and help ensure that Washington's workforce system is equitable, effective, and responsive to both workers and the economy.

Basic Education for Adults (BEdA) services include literacy and math instruction for adults whose skills are at or below the eighth-grade level, GED Test Preparation, high school completion for adults who want to earn a high school diploma, and ESL instruction. Students receive basic skills instruction at community and technical colleges (98%) and other community-based organizations (2%).

The survey was administered via mail, telephone, and online among a randomly selected sample of BEdA participants: For BEdA participants the response rate was a solid 17.9%. See the [methodology report](#) for full details.

## Recommendations

Survey responses highlight several ways colleges can better support BEdA participants.

**Strengthen employment support** A third of BEdA participants did not meet their career objectives. Over a quarter of participants had an unmet need for career counseling, information about job openings, assistance with resume writing, and job-search strategies. A quarter of participants looked for work but were unable to find work. Improving employment services for participants and expanding access to those already in place could make a difference.

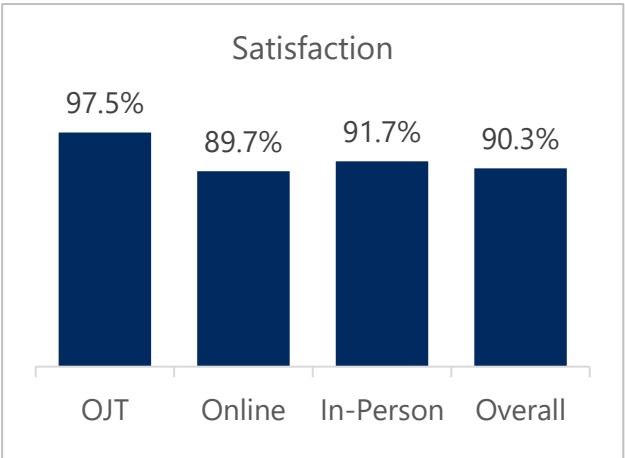
**Increase capacity and access** Participants reported unmet needs for financial assistance, transportation assistance, information about government assistance, and childcare assistance. These supports are critical for enabling participation and success, yet current data shows that a significant portion of those who need them do not receive adequate help. Increasing resources in these areas will help address unmet needs and foster overall stability and opportunity.

# Survey findings

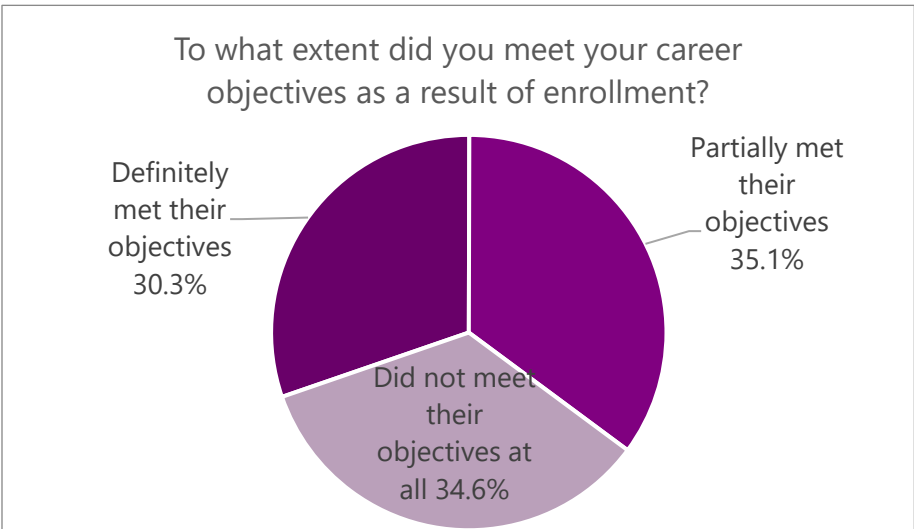
The top three reasons participants enrolled in a BEdA program were for personal enjoyment or improvement (87%), improve English skills (84%), or improve reading skills (83%).

## Satisfaction

BEdA respondents reported high levels of satisfaction across nearly every aspect of their program. A very high percentage of BEdA participants were satisfied with the program’s on-the-job training (98% somewhat or very satisfied). BEdA participants were also satisfied with the in-person instruction (92%) and the program overall (90%), and online instruction (90%).



## Career objectives



BEdA participants were asked, “To what extent did you meet your career objectives as a result of enrollment?” Thirty percent of respondents said that they definitely met their objectives, 35% partially met their objectives, and 35% percent did not meet their objectives at all.

Fifty percent of respondents said their participation in the program led them to consider job opportunities that they weren’t prepared for or wouldn’t have considered before.

## Services needed, received, and unmet needs<sup>1</sup>

|                                                | Services Needed      |                              |                                | Total Unmet Need <sup>1</sup> |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                                | Of entire population | Of those who needed services | Of those who received services | Of entire population          |
|                                                |                      | Received Services            | Needs Met                      |                               |
| Career or job counseling                       | 46.7%                | 41.2%                        | 86.0%                          | 27.9%                         |
| Assistance with resume writing                 | 44.7%                | 43.0%                        | 79.1%                          | 26.6%                         |
| Learning how to search for a job               | 45.7%                | 45.6%                        | 77.8%                          | 26.6%                         |
| Job interviewing techniques                    | 34.4%                | 51.0%                        | 73.8%                          | 23.9%                         |
| Information on job openings                    | 49.2%                | 48.8%                        | 80.5%                          | 27.6%                         |
| Appropriate work attire and work-related tools | 33.1%                | 46.6%                        | 69.0%                          | 21.0%                         |
| Childcare assistance                           | 24.6%                | 51.2%                        | 69.6%                          | 14.4%                         |
| Transportation assistance                      | 24.3%                | 67.5%                        | 77.4%                          | 9.9%                          |
| Housing assistance                             | 23.4%                | 36.8%                        | 78.6%                          | 14.7%                         |
| Financial assistance                           | 48.2%                | 60.9%                        | 72.6%                          | 25.1%                         |
| Information about government assistance        | 42.2%                | 60.8%                        | 79.6%                          | 19.8%                         |
| Disability services                            | 12.1%                | 26.3%                        | 75.0%                          | 8.0%                          |

### Services needed

The services that were needed most by BEdA participants were mostly related to careers:

- 49% needed information on job openings
- 47% needed career or job counseling
- 46% needed help learning how to search for a job
- 45% needed resume writing assistance

Nearly half, 48% of BEdA respondents also needed financial assistance.

### Services received

Among BEdA participants who needed services, the percentage who received them varied considerably. Participants were least likely to receive disability assistance (27%) and most likely to receive transportation assistance (68%).

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<sup>1</sup> To determine unmet need participants were asked if they needed a service, if they received that service, and if that service met their needs. Unmet need is calculated as those who needed the service and did not receive it. To determine unmet need participants were asked if they needed a service, if they received that service, and if that service met their needs.

## Services met participants' needs

Among BEdA participants who received services, more than 60% reported that those services met their needs. The highest level of reported need fulfillment was among participants who received career counseling, with 86% indicating that the service met their needs.

## Unmet needs

The top unmet needs<sup>2</sup> for BEdA participants were mostly related to employment:

- Career or job counseling - 28%
- Information on job openings - 28%
- Resume writing – 27%
- Learning how to search for a job – 27%
- Job interviewing techniques - 24%

Another area with a relatively high level of unmet need was financial assistance, with 25% of participants reporting that their needs in this area were not met.

## On-the-job training

A quarter of BEdA participants' programs included training on the job, such as internships, work-based learning, or clinical experiences.

## Skills

BEdA students most often received training in:

- Writing - 76% received training
  - 82% said the training improved their writing skills some or a lot.
- English as a second language – 72% received training
  - 88% said the training improved their English skills some or a lot.
- Reading - 71% received training
  - 90% said the training improved their reading some or a lot.

A smaller percentage of respondents received training in:

- The operation of machinery or equipment– 19% received training
  - 84% said the training improved their operation of equipment skills some or a lot.

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<sup>2</sup> To determine unmet need participants were asked if they needed a service, if they received that service, and if that service met their needs. Unmet need is calculated as those who needed the service and did not receive it added to those who did receive the service, and it did not meet their needs; and is represented as a portion of the entire population.

- Leadership or management skills - 22% received training
  - 80% said the training improved their leadership skills some or a lot.

## Improving skills

Sixty-seven percent of respondents would like to further improve their skills. The skills respondents most want to improve are communication (93%), leadership or management (87%), and critical thinking or problem-solving skills (86%).

## Prior employment

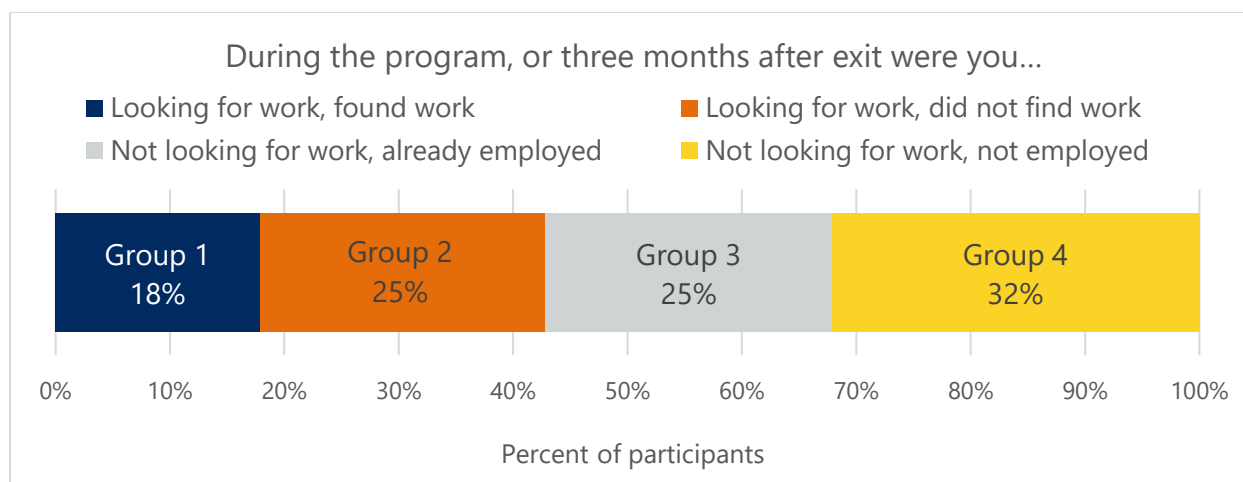
Nearly a quarter (23%) of BEdA respondents were working in the three months prior to enrolling in their BEdA program. Of those who were employed in the three months prior to enrolling in their BEdA program, 23% reported that the training program was very related to that job, 26% said it was somewhat related, 13% said it was a little related, and 39% said it was not related.

Of those who did any work in the three months prior to enrolling in a program:

- 82% of participants said it was their primary source of income
- 32% had employer-provided healthcare
- 26% were members of a union
- 24% said it was with a temporary employment agency
- 24% were self employed

## Employment post-training

BEdA respondents were asked a series of questions to determine their post-training employment. These questions allowed participants to be grouped into four categories based on their job search activities during the program or within three months after exiting.



Participants fell into four employment groups based on whether they looked for work during their program or within three months after exiting.

- **18% looked for and found work (Group 1)**
  - 59% were somewhat or very satisfied with the job
    - 66% were somewhat or very satisfied with their salary
    - 83% were somewhat or very satisfied with their job responsibilities.
    - 59% were somewhat or very satisfied with advancement opportunities.
  - 40% said their training or work experience was essential to getting hired
  - 20% said their job was extremely related to their program.
- **25% looked for work, but did not find work (Group 2)**
  - 55% said they could not work hours available.
  - 54% said they were missing skills for available jobs.
- **25% were already employed and not looking for work. (Group 3)**
- **32% were not looking for work and not employed. (Group 4)**
  - 58% were in school or in a training program.
  - 54% were caring for children
  - 53% were missing necessary skills

## Conclusion

BEdA participants reported high levels of satisfaction with their programs. However, satisfaction with the program did not necessarily translate into meeting career objectives. This finding should be considered in context, as career advancement or employment is not necessarily the goal of every BEdA participant. Only 30% of participants reported definitely meeting their career objectives, while 35% partially met them and another 35% did not meet them at all. The high levels of unmet needs related to finding jobs, including career counseling, information on job openings, resume writing, job search skills, and interviewing, suggest that many participants continue to face barriers to achieving employment success.

There is a need for greater opportunities to develop workplace skills. Many BEdA participants wanted to further improve their skills, with critical thinking among the most commonly identified areas. However, only 44% reported receiving training in critical thinking. Increasing access to critical thinking could help address this gap and better support participants' personal and professional goals.