



Washington Postsecondary Basic Needs Security

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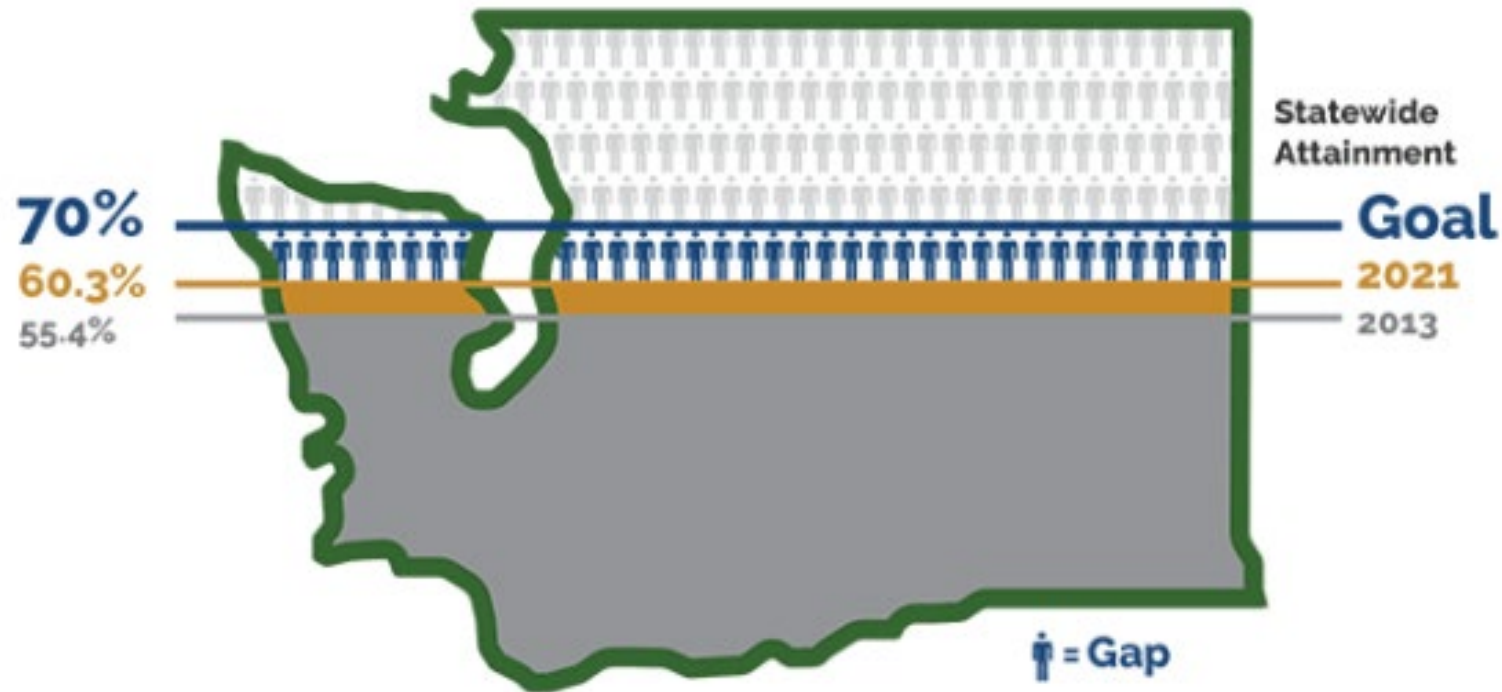
Amim@wsac.wa.gov

<https://wsac.wa.gov/student-supports>



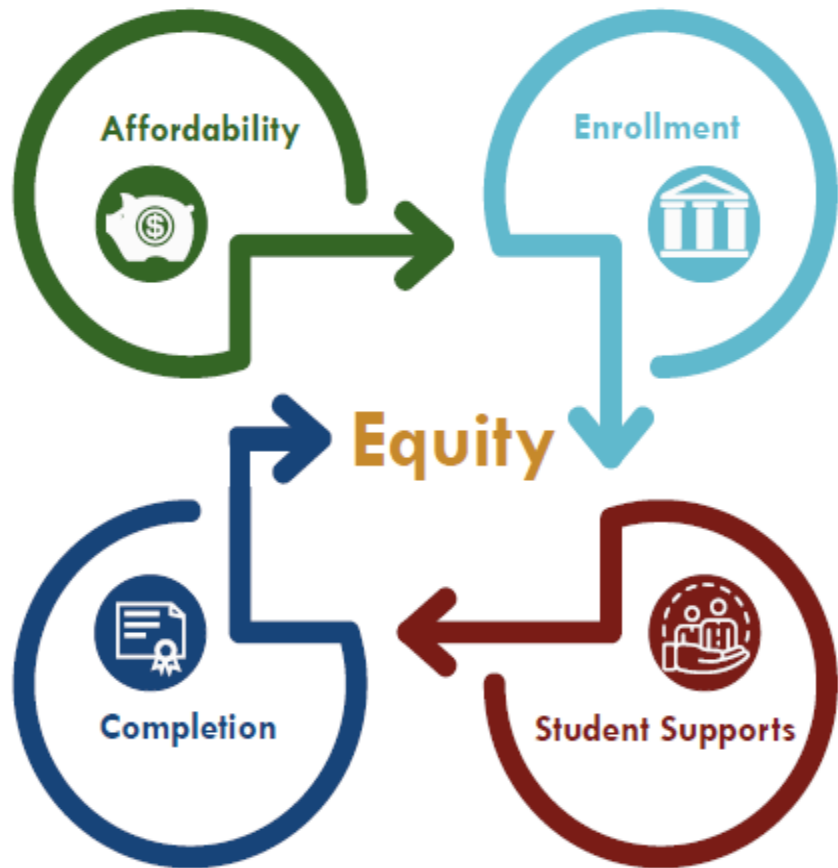
Washington's postsecondary attainment goal

At least **70 percent of Washington adults, ages 25–44**, within each racial and ethnic community and region, will have a postsecondary credential. Currently, an estimated 62 percent of Washington's adults have a credential beyond high school.





Why focus on students' basic needs?



WSAC Strategic Action Plan:

Access to basic needs should not be a barrier for Washington residents seeking a postsecondary degree.

- Basic needs encompass access to **affordable housing, sufficient food, quality childcare, mental healthcare**, and other needs
- Access could be provided through higher education institutions, existing federal or state public benefits, and/or local resources

Strategic Action Plan

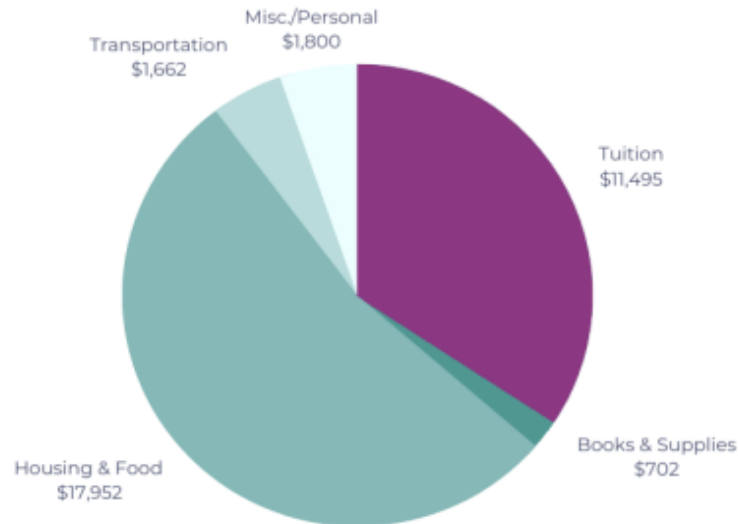


Why focus on students' basic needs?

The majority of attendance costs—housing, transportation, and food, among others—are not tuition

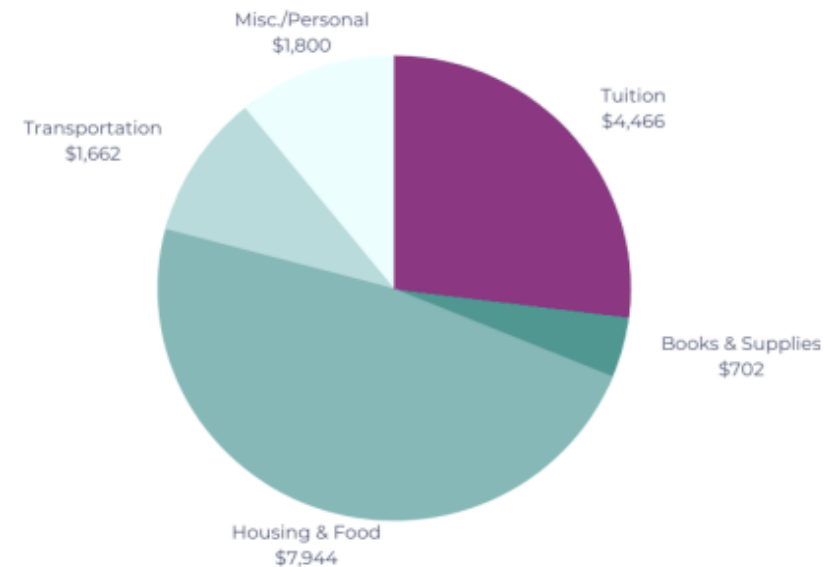
Cost breakdown: four-year research institute, living on campus

Tuition: 34% Non-Tuition: 66%



Cost breakdown: community or technical college, living with parents

Tuition: 27% Non-Tuition: 73%



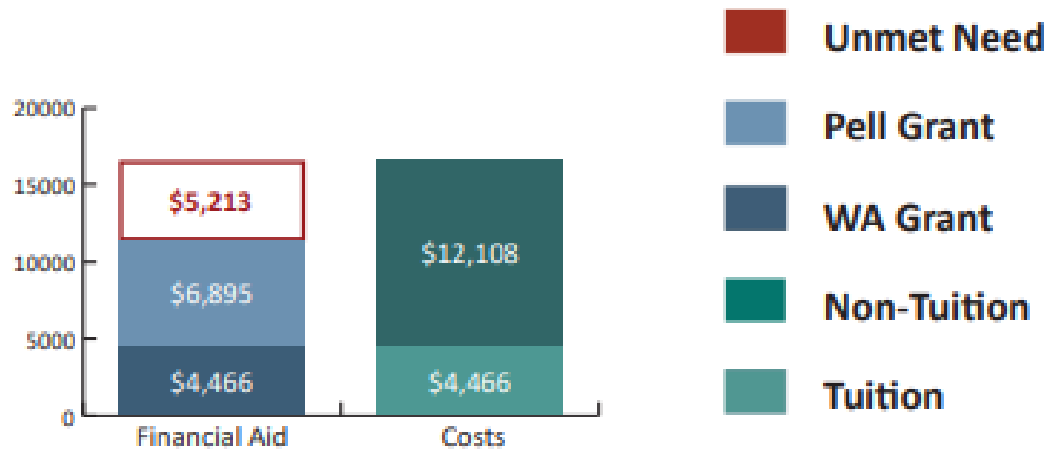


Basic needs and affordability

At community and technical colleges, there is a large gap of unmet need for students from low-income backgrounds

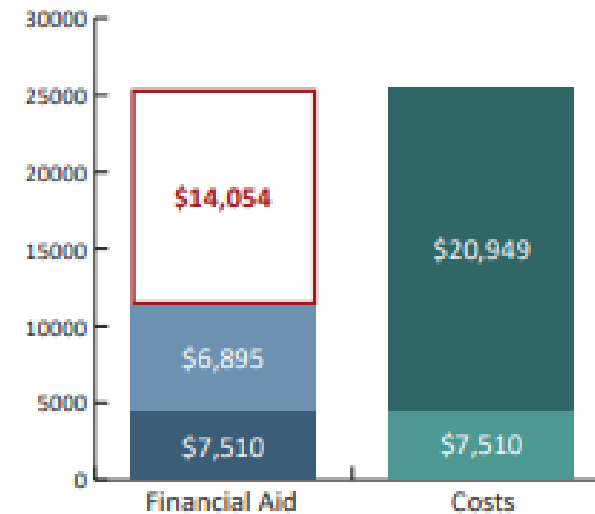
Community or technical college,
living with parents

Unmet need: \$5,213 (31%)



Community or technical college,
living independently

Unmet need: \$14,054 (55%)



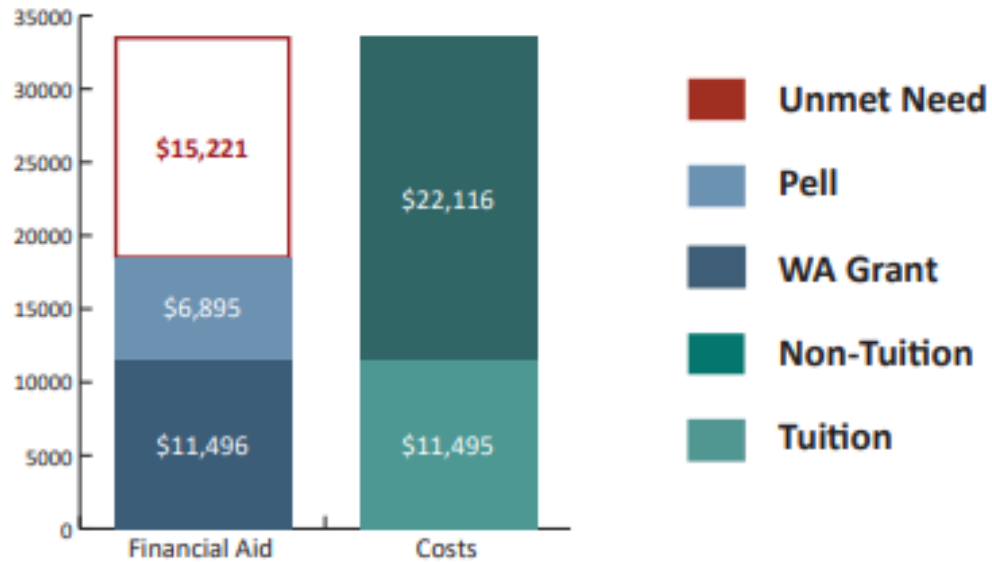


Basic needs and affordability

There is also a significant gap of unmet need for students from low-income backgrounds at four-year institutions

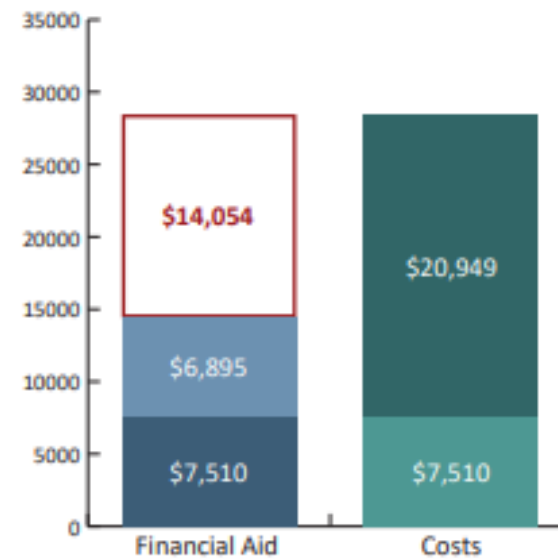
Four-year research institution,
living on campus

Unmet need: \$15,221 (45%)



Four-year regional institution,
living independently

Unmet need: \$14,054 (49%)

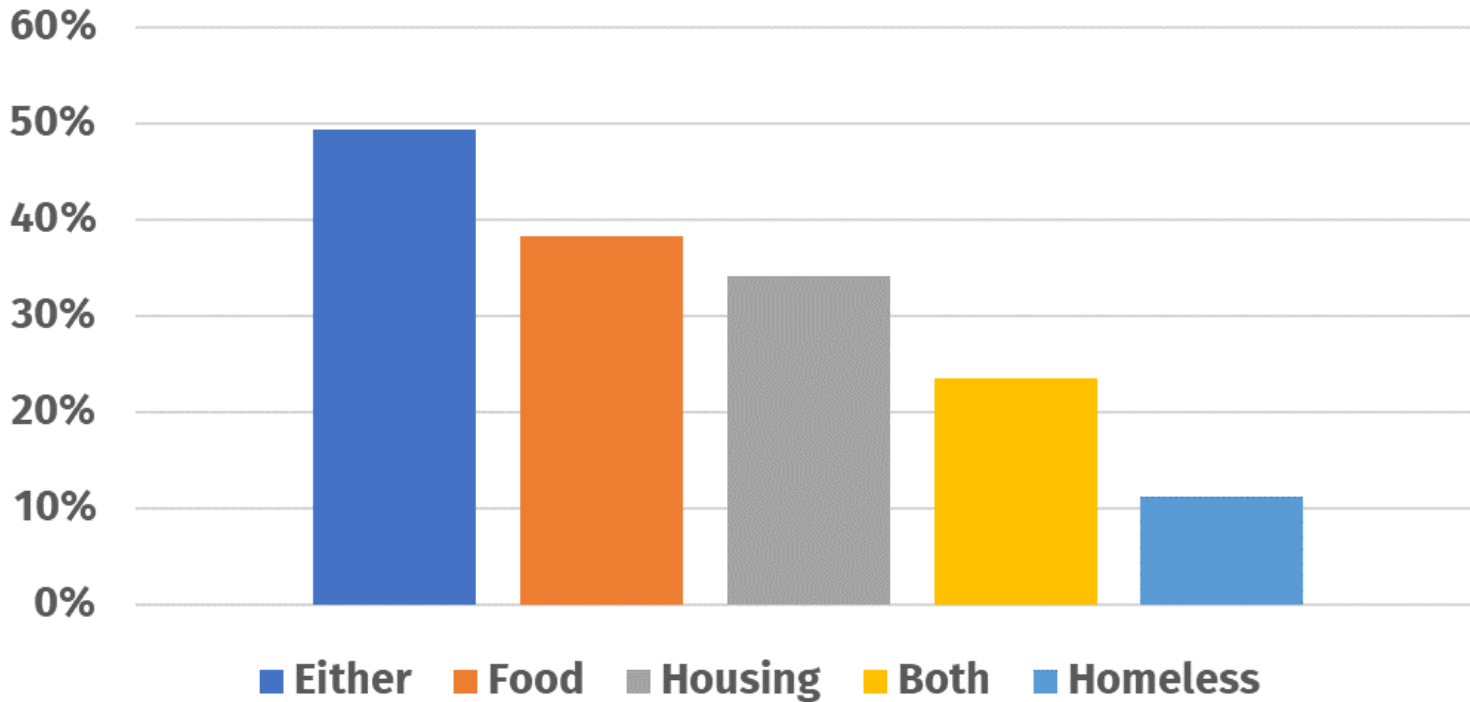


Cost numbers are for the 2022–23 academic year, as calculated by the Washington Financial Aid Association.



Insights on prevalence of basic needs insecurity in Washington

Overall insecurity rates amongst respondents:



49% of respondents experienced either food insecurity or housing insecurity

38% of respondents experienced food insecurity in the last 30 days

34% of respondents experienced housing insecurity in the last 12 months

24% of respondents experienced both food insecurity and housing insecurity

11% of respondents experienced homelessness in the last 12 months



Are students accessing resources?

Less than half of students experiencing insecurity accessed basic needs support resources in the prior 6 months.

**48.9% accessed
public resources**

**33.7% accessed
campus resources**

Source: Washington Student Achievement Council <https://wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2023/BasicNeedsReport.pdf>



How to address postsecondary basic needs insecurity?

Emergency strategies:

Why: Immediate aid to address unexpected needs so students can return to stability and persistence

Examples:

- Pantries/cupboards/ basket of granola bars
- Emergency funds
- Homeless shelter, motel vouchers

Vision: All postsecondary students have access to resources to address emergencies

Preventative / Proactive Strategies



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Vision: All postsecondary students have access to resources to address emergencies

Preventative/proactive strategies:

Why: Promote longer-term solutions for stability when foundational needs for Cost of Attendance are unstable

Examples:

- Access to benefits like SNAP, childcare subsidies, housing, healthcare
- Food plan increase
- Affordable housing accessible to students
- Funding to cover actual cost of attendance

Vision: All postsecondary students have access to funds and resources for basic needs stability through their credential attainment.



WA state legislative advances for student supports

Passport to Careers <i>(Former foster and unaccompanied homeless youth)</i>	
Community & Technical Colleges only	Limited time
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emergency Assistance Grants• Childcare subsidy access• Mental/behavioral healthcare grants (four CTCs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Bridge Grants” and increased eligibility for full Washington College Grant



New statewide postsecondary basic needs legislation

Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness grant program

- Services to students who are experiencing homelessness or have aged out of foster care
- Pilot → permanent for public

Postsecondary Basic Needs Act

- Basic needs navigators
- Strategic planning
- Assessment of basic needs security
- Food security pilot



Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness grant program

6,700 students served:

- **Persistence during term:**
 - Universities: 93%
 - CTCs: 87%
- **Retained or graduated in next term:**
 - Universities: 90%
 - CTCs: 77%

How were these students supported?

- **Case management** and connection to resources
- **Housing:** emergency, short-term, homelessness prevention, start-up costs to enter rentals
- **Food assistance**
- **Laundry, hygiene, storage, etc.**

Source: Calculations by WSAC and SBCTC grant administrators, 2023



Postsecondary Basic Needs Act (2023)

Infrastructure to support:

- **Basic need navigators** are guiding students to access resources in all publics
- **Institutional strategic plans**
- **Fall 2024** Basic Needs Survey

Proactive Pilot: food security

- **Innovative pilot strategies:** meal plans, prepaid cards, etc.
- Campuses with diverse assets and challenges
- Evaluation



Food Security Pilot – preliminary data

Western WA University Preliminary Data:

Percentage of participants reporting food insecurity:

- At start: **77%**
- At end: **7%**
- **~ 90% decrease in food insecurity rate**

Reporting adequate food access to be successful in school:

- At start: 37%
- At end: 100%

Student Perspectives

“I struggled financially this year and don’t have much outside help so having access to healthy and good food was a lifesaver. It took a lot of stress off of me and made me more secure in my food access and was able to still focus on other life things such as school. I hope this program can continue to be offered as time goes on.”

“I don’t think I would have made it this year without this program...I am so grateful to take part.”



What's on the horizon?

Knowledge development

Food security pilot

2024 WA basic needs survey

Parenting students

Policy and practice

Outreach innovations

Affordable housing partnerships

Reducing barriers to benefits for students

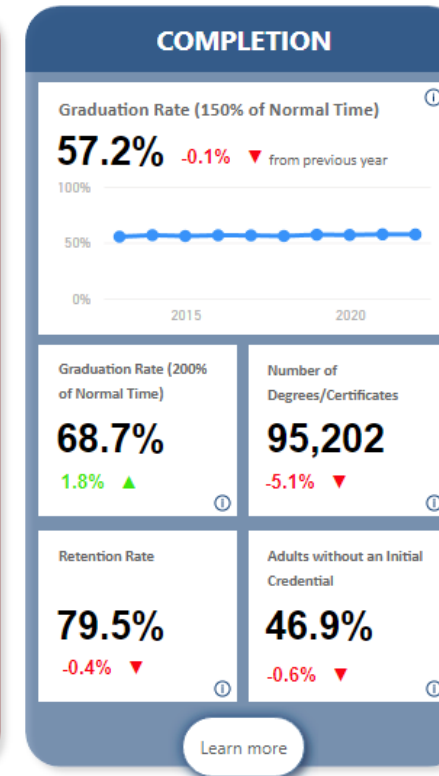
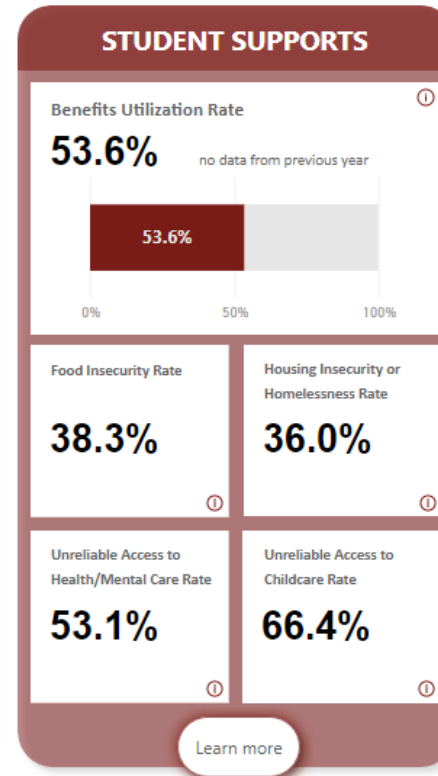
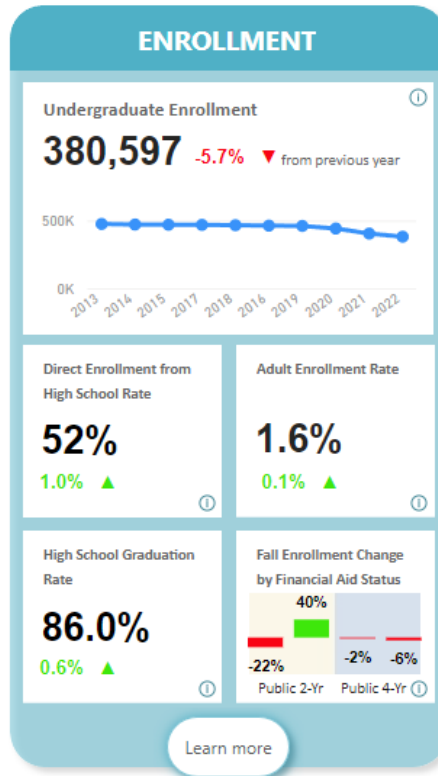
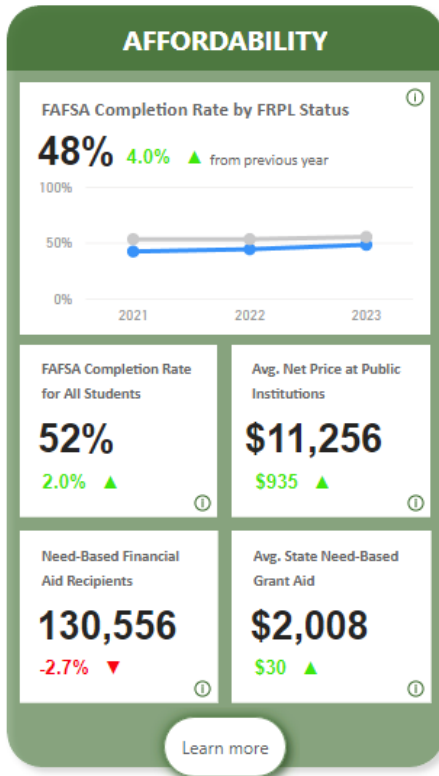


Tracking Outcomes

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN DASHBOARD

[Technical Notes](#)[FAQs](#)[Contact Us](#)**HOME****AFFORDABILITY****ENROLLMENT****STUDENT SUPPORTS****COMPLETION**

The WSAC Strategic Action Plan (SAP) Dashboard includes selected indicators that track Washington State's progress toward its postsecondary [attainment goal](#) with a focus on equity. The dashboard includes indicators in the SAP's four cluster areas: Affordability, Enrollment, Student Supports, and Completion.





Resources

- **WSAC Student Supports webpage**
<https://wsac.wa.gov/student-supports>
- **WSAC Strategic Action Plan Dashboard**
<https://wsac.wa.gov/sap-dashboard>
- **The Myth of ‘Full-Ride’ Financial Aid:**
<https://wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/COA%20Gap%20Myth%20of%20Full%20Ride%20Financial%20Aid%20%2803.20.23%29.pdf>
- **Basic Needs Survey Findings Report:**
<https://wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2023.BasicNeedsReport.pdf>
- **United Way Bridge to Finish Outcomes Study:**
https://wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2023_FullReport_BridgetoFinishOutcomeStudy.pdf
- **Washington Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness Grant Program Report**
<https://wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Supporting-Students-Experiencing-Homelessness-2023-Summary.pdf>

Postsecondary Basic Needs Act (2023)

<https://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2023-24/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1559-S2.SL.pdf?q=20240912055841>

Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness (2023)

<https://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2023-24/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/Senate/5702-S.SL.pdf?q=20240912055731>

Postsecondary Access to benefits and Student Emergency Assistance Grants 1893 (2019)

<https://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2019-20/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1893-S2.SL.pdf?q=20240912060013>

Passport Program (Former Foster Care and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth) [Chapter 28B.117 RCW: PASSPORT TO CAREERS PROGRAM \(wa.gov\)](#)

Washington College Grant [Washington College Grant | WSAC](#) and [Chapter 250-21 WAC:](#)



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