



Higher Education

2020 Session Position

Employers in East King County and across the state have struggled to fill available jobs with Washington state residents. Education is the key to closing this gap, including college degrees, career certificates, and apprenticeships to attain employment in high demand/high wage fields in our state. Last session the Legislature made a historic investment in higher education. It is essential to have continued state support for students seeking a pathway to success and the public institutions of higher education that facilitate their learning.

The East King Chambers of Commerce Legislative Coalition asks the Legislature to do the following on our behalf:

Policies

- Develop a “dashboard” for higher education to show a return on investment and demonstrate the economic impact of new graduates prepared to enter the workforce.
- Protect dollars allocated to the Workforce Education Investment Account by keeping them separated and not eligible to be diverted to other programs.
- Continue to support the State Need Grant Program and the Washington Opportunity Scholarship Fund.
- Increase college credit opportunities and skills training in high schools: Provide support, which may include professional development for teachers, to significantly increase ‘college in the high school’ and/or Running Start opportunities and create a pilot program to offer running start programs in local high schools in off peak time high school hours.

Funding - Invest in higher education facilities and high demand programs:

- Continue to fund cost of living compensation increases to the Community and Technical College (CTC) system for all employees to bring them to the national market’s median.
- Continue to support pathways through the higher education system, including funding of Guided Pathways.
- Continue to increase funding to strengthen and grow high demand programs in order to meet critical skills gaps.
- Fund the remaining CTC capital request, including eastside projects at Cascadia College (#15) and Renton Technical College (#17).