



WAVE Scholarship Update

New online tool to ease application process

The Workforce Board continues to refine and test a new, modernized application portal for the Washington Award for Vocational Excellence (WAVE). This new portal is expected to significantly reduce the amount of time needed to apply for the scholarship. It's also more user-friendly for educators who verify that students are enrolled in career and technical education courses.

WAVE honors Washington's outstanding career and technical education students. Each of the state's 49 legislative districts can have up to three winners per year—for as many as 147 total annual scholarship awardees. Graduating high school seniors who completed or are in the process of completing a second year in a single CTE pathway are eligible. Community and technical college students who have completed or are in the process of completing a year of professional-technical training are also eligible.

Many thanks to WA-ACTE staff and other volunteers for their continued support and partnership, particularly those who have helped agency staff test and refine the application portal in recent weeks.

To learn more about the WAVE Scholarship please visit our [website](#).

2025 WAVE Funding

Gov. Jay Inslee's proposed budget includes an additional \$500,000 for the WAVE scholarship. If approved by the Legislature, this would boost the 2025 WAVE scholarship award to as much as \$5,571 per year, or \$11,142 for two years. Similar levels of additional funding were approved in 2024 on a one-time basis.

Without this additional funding, students would receive smaller award amounts of up to \$3,870 per year, or \$7,740 for two years. Both scenarios assume the maximum of 147 scholarship winners statewide.

The additional funding request is necessary to better support students in a time of rising college costs and inflation. WAVE has been underfunded since the scholarship was relaunched by the Legislature in 2022.

A broader policy bill to further update the program did not advance.

National Career Clusters Framework

Implementation and best practices

[Advance CTE](#) announced a new modernized career clusters framework at their fall meeting in Phoenix in October. The new framework is centered on the student and the idea that all learners should have access to meaningful career technical education (CTE) that prepares them for an evolving, interconnected workforce. Effective CTE requires systems that adapt to industry needs and local community demands.

Since 2002, the National Career Clusters Framework, overseen by Advance CTE, has guided CTE program design in the U.S. In fall 2024, after two years of feedback, Advance CTE launched an updated Framework featuring 14 Clusters, 72 Sub-Clusters, and five purpose-aligned Groupings. Three Cross-Cutting Clusters and 12 Career-Ready Practices provide essential, transferable skills across all careers and CTE pathways.

The vision for the new framework is that it is responsive to both learners and industry while providing flexibility for the future and for the needs of each state and community. For more information visit the [Career Clusters Framework website](#).

As Washington begins considerations around implementation, Workforce Board and interagency partner staff will be participating in two communities of practice hosted by Advance CTE in the coming months. The first is the data focused cluster community of practice, with the other focused on early adopters and best practices.

Workforce Board Job Quality Survey

In November, the Workforce Board launched a new [Job Quality Survey](#) to gather input from job seekers and workers across all industries. Employers are encouraged to share the survey with their workforce. The survey was developed as part of the state's cross-agency workforce development plan implementation efforts, specifically the Job Quality strategic priority. This survey focuses on identifying what matters most to Washingtonians in their jobs – pay, work-life balance, career growth, job security and other factors.

This information will support the development of a statewide job quality framework, designed to guide workforce development professionals, state agencies, policymakers, and employers in creating more quality jobs across the state.

By collecting data directly from workers, the Workforce Board aims to identify key areas for improvement, such as wages, benefits, and career advancement opportunities. Results will be shared with employers and other partners.

This collaborative effort aims to build a more resilient and inclusive labor market that benefits both workers and employers.

Responses are confidential, and the survey is open through **Feb. 14, 2025**. Contact [Paulette Beadling](#) with questions.

CTE Presentation Planned for upcoming Workforce Board meeting March 20

Workforce Board staff and interagency partners, OSPI and SBCTC are working to put together a panel focused on work-based learning at the upcoming March 20 Workforce Board meeting.

We know that Career and Technical Education (CTE) work-based learning in high school is vital because it bridges the gap between education and the workforce, equipping students with real-world skills, practical experience, and industry knowledge. For students, it enhances career readiness, builds confidence, and often leads to certifications or pathways for higher education and employment. For employers, it provides access to a pipeline of skilled, motivated future employees who are trained to meet industry needs, reducing onboarding time and fostering a stronger, more prepared workforce. This collaboration strengthens communities by aligning education with economic development.

The presentation's intention is to highlight the importance of this topic to the board and generate discussion for potential action.

The meeting will be virtual, register [here](#).