

Draft Meeting Summary
AHECC: Apprenticeships and Higher Education Coordinating Committee

January 22, 2026 | 10:00 AM – 2:30 PM

Zoom

Attendees: *See Appendix A.*

William D. Ruckelshaus Facilitation Team: Chris Page, Director of Projects; Melissa Girbach, Associate Facilitator; Gaby Diamond, Project Specialist

Welcome & Introductions

Chris welcomed the members and reviewed the agenda. He also shared the concept of the “triangle of satisfaction” with the Committee, which is a conflict resolution model that details how members in any given collaboration need three things to feel that the process is successful. This involves a fair and transparent process, legitimate and technical content, and trusting relationships. Members introduced themselves with their name, affiliation and a response to an opening question about their first job.

Review Agenda and Meeting Summary

The Committee approved the December 11, 2025, meeting summary.

Updates and Announcements from Committee Members

The Facilitation Team is meeting one on one with AHECC members to get their insights on how the process is going and what they think the Committee could accomplish in its remaining five meetings. Chris thanked those who met with the Facilitation Team and encouraged others to schedule their one-on-one with Gaby.

Presentation on Cost Examples from other places (ID, OR, VA, and IL)

Ashley Wilhelm and Matt Waltz, with the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), shared the presentation “Funding Apprenticeship Programs” which can be found in AHECC Resource Library> Resources> [“Funding Apprenticeship Programs – CAEL.”](#)

The presentation covered different funding sources (federal programs, state and federal grants, tax incentives, etc.) for Idaho, Oregon, Virginia, and Illinois. Federal programs include Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act, State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula Grants, YouthBuild Grant, and the competitive Apprenticeship Building America Grant.

State funds are also vital in supporting apprenticeship programs. Idaho’s grants and development funds are employer driven and seen as an investment in economic development. Illinois has pre-apprenticeship programs and competitive state grants, as well as a tax incentive. Oregon also has pre-apprenticeship programs funds, along with a focus on high-demand jobs. Virginia has grants, pathways programs, and other tax initiatives/credits around the Tobacco Region.

Discussion prompt: What does employer & apprenticeship participation look like in terms of funding, development, support, and employment? Committee questions and discussion:

- **Q:** What is the strategy to keep these programs going (assuming state support programs are not continuous)?
 - **R:** It depends, for some states it could mean directing a specific tax towards program funding, like in Virginia. It could change based on priorities of the state and legislature, but programs need to show why they're important and work to maintain employer involvement.
- **Q:** What does employer and apprenticeship participation look like around funding, development, support and employment in other states?
 - **R:** Employer participation is critical for continuous success of an apprenticeship program.
- **Q:** How do we show the return on investment (ROI) of apprenticeship programs to bring more employers to the table? And how do we protect apprentices?
 - **R:** It can be difficult to bring employers to the table if there are rigid expectations or regulations. Generally, expectations are not put into writing, they are verbally agreed upon. The group needs to get creative and maybe focus on unions.
 - [This tool](#) focuses on multi-employer programs and shows the ROI, and it has probably improved since then, as costs to employers have not changed much. Education and enforcement are needed, along with advocating for collective bargaining rights.
 - [WAGES-apprenticeship-study-19Feb05_full.pdf](#)
- **Q:** Are there any specific funding mechanisms directed specifically to registered apprenticeship program intermediaries?
 - **R:** Yes, we have seen funding through the DOL at the federal level, but at the state level it varies and sometimes intermediary funding is available.
 - [US Department of Labor announces availability of \\$145M in funding to support performance-based Registered Apprenticeship expansion | U.S. Department of Labor](#)
 - The federal government put forward apprenticeship funding for businesses. The report should note that funding is starting to flow.
 - It should be noted in the final report that the federal dollars (not Pell) are mostly going to businesses, not wraparound support for apprentices.
 - Additionally, the programs or employers would need to spend the money up front and be reimbursed after, making it favorable to established apprenticeship programs and difficult to establish new programs.
 - Pell grants are also coming but have very specific guidelines around program length.
 - Pell/Workforce Pell is not a lot, and they are typically the last dollars coming in, so it is not helpful. There are also less than eight standard courses it could apply to. These dollars go to students, specifically short-term apprenticeships. The rules are still being developed, so the actual operation is unclear.
 - **Q:** Are any states using Pell for programs tied to degree programs? **R:** All resources are for the student and there are already eligible programs when pursuing the MOT degree.
 - The number of students eligible for Pell grants is very low, we need to recognize that not all funding is for all students.
 - Pell also cannot be applied to new programs.
- The Washington College Grant (WCG) uses median family income (MFI) from the prior tax year for determining aid, which is different than the Student Aid Index (SAI) that Pell uses.
- There is generally less discretionary money available when working in Seattle or King County.

- This is all connected to tuition and the costs apprentices incur in educational training. The 50% tuition waiver could be an avenue to discuss in thinking about a more sustainable funding model.

Updates and Announcements

- Washington Grant for Apprentices (WG-A): The backlog of applications has been cleared up, and most applications are now reviewed within two business days. The pilot program with the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) was very successful and we anticipate more eligibility.
- Washington College Grant (WCG): SBCTC is wrapping up the pilot program of six colleges and has awarded funding to 113 apprentices. By April 2026, all remaining colleges should be able to do this work. This has helped take some of the workload off WSAC.
- Passport to Careers Program: Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) requested legislation to restore funding for the passport program, which assists homeless or unaccompanied youth.
- Decision Packages for SBCTC this legislative session: The first request would help get more clarity around nursing programs and the impacts they face when starting up. The second is from last year, looking at opportunities to have non-credit, short-term programs eligible for the WCG.
- Other impacts: Multiple entities are impacted by cuts to federal programs like the Basic Food Employment Training program, Workforce Pell Grant, and Perkins grants along with general state funding reductions.

Discussion: Types of Contractual Relationships as Apprenticeship/ Full Group Discuss Types of Contracts and Funding for Each Component

Generally, members agreed to focus on the future and not on who pays what or how much, thinking about and laying out all the costs involved. One member observed that they do not think of it as a “funding model” but more of a circumstance of how programs and colleges relate to each other. Chris shared his screen with the document “Cost Categories & Considerations” and took notes on members’ discussion around each cost category. The document can be found in the AHECC Resource Library> Committee Materials>” Cost Categories + Considerations” [Cost Categories + Considerations.docx](#)

Summary of discussion:

The four main models of contractual relationships (on a CTC campus with a CTC instructor, on a CTC campus with an apprenticeship instructor, off site with a CTC instructor, and off site with an apprenticeship instructor) exist because they all meet the needs of the specific program and college they serve. Over 80% of apprenticeship programs fall under the construction, building trades, and manufacturing sectors. The goal is to support additional apprenticeship programs.

By showing the different relationships, a menu of options can be offered for employers, sponsors, and the legislature for how to establish new programs and help support programs over time. Programs have been run similarly to a layaway program, with each partner putting in what they can, but no entity can fully fund a program. All entities are in a financial deficit, but the elements/cost categories are all the same across sectors. The Committee will need to highlight the nuance across all cost categories. Ranges of costs could be helpful but will only reflect how the funding has been pieced together, not what is needed to fully support programs and apprentices.

Members concluded that the categories could be split into direct and indirect costs. Whether a program has ten or 650 apprentices, they still pay a fixed cost for a building (or other infrastructure). The legislature needs to understand that running an apprenticeship is expensive, program dependent, and variable (tied to enrollment).

Program contracts affect costs for both the college and apprenticeship program/sponsor. The cost of instructors can vary based on the contract, geographic location, taxes/benefits, unions, and more. Instructor salary can be a large barrier to starting or expanding new programs, especially in healthcare programs where preceptors are required. Recruitment also drives instructor costs.

Training equipment and software are factors as well. Depending on the program, equipment costs can be extremely expensive and need to be maintained or updated often. Software costs also include, depending on the program, at least a yearly online service is typical for most (curriculum, training, reporting hours, etc.). Training costs also vary widely by program type or industry sector. This can include anything from PPE, consumable materials, and laptops or other technology. Tutoring services can also be an expensive training cost.

Some indirect costs include things like administrative costs, including accountants, lawyers, maintenance and/or security. This also includes third party certifications, curriculum accreditation, outreach, transportation costs, and insurance.

It is important to remember that as soon as tax incentives or other short-term funding sources go away, the programs tend to end. Driving up enrollment does not always lead to efficiencies or scale. There is a need to keep apprentices connected to wraparound services, especially when work slows down or an apprentice leaves the program early. The ROI for apprenticeship programs is positive; when a dollar is spent, it generates more than a dollar back. The Committee would like to detail the ROI to the legislature to encourage additional funding.

Wrap up and next steps

Chris briefly noted that the work of Workgroup 1 (on Tasks 1-3), will be reviewed and finalized in the Final Report. The Facilitation team will bring the final product to the Committee before it is submitted to the legislature. Chris and Melissa appreciated everyone for contributing to a robust discussion.

Adjourn

Appendix A: Attendees X=attendance (all virtual)

Committee member	Attendance	Alternate member	Attendance
Andrea Anderson, Sr. Director of Program Development and Education, Apprenti			
Heather Hudson, Deputy Policy Advisor – Childcare, Education, and Workforce, Governor’s Office (ex-officio)?		Dawn Gearhart	

Maryann Brathwaite, Executive Director, NW Career Colleges Federation			
Marie Bruin, Workforce Education Director, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges	X	Genevieve Howard, Workforce Policy Associate	X
Joyce Hammer, Deputy Executive Director of Education, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges			
Karen Dove, Executive Director, Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Employment for Women			
Julie Garver, Director of Policy and Academic Affairs, Council of Presidents			
Rachel McAloon, Apprenticeship Program Manager, Department of Labor and Industries, Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council (WSATC)		Jordan Shepherd, Apprenticeship Policy Advisor; Brittany Craighead, Compliance Specialist	
Kimberly Hetrick, Director, Career Connect Washington		Therese Williams, Associate Director	
Laura Hopkins, Executive Director, SEIU Healthcare 1199NW Multi-Employer Training Fund			
Brian Jeffries, Policy Director, Washington Roundtable Partnership for Learning			
Inez Olive, Director, Adult Pathways, Washington Student Achievement Council	X	Lyle Irimata, Assistant Director, Needs Based Programs, Contracts and Reporting	X
Kairie Pierce, Sector Lead, Innovation Workforce, Department of Commerce			
Heather Kurtenbach, Executive Secretary, Washington State Building and Construction Trades Council		Erin Frasier, Assistant Executive Secretary, Washington State Building Trades	
Christina Riley, Independent Consultant & Co-Chair of Tribal Subcommittee of State Apprenticeship Council	X		

Halene Sigmund, President, Construction Industry Training Council of Washington			
April Sims, Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO		Shana Peschek, Machinists Institute	
		Ryan Davis, Machinists Institute	X
Donald Smith, Policy Manager, Long- Term Care Workforce	X	Eleni Papadakis, Director, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board	
		Maddy Thompson, Executive Director	
Sheila Steiner, Senior Director, Policy and Engagement, Independent Colleges of Washington		Terri Standish-Kuon, President and Chief Executive Officer	
Lynn Strickland, Executive Director, AJAC			
Becky Wallace, Assistant Superintendent, Secondary Education and Pathways for Preparation, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction	X	Krista Fox, Director of Career and Technical Education	
Emily Wittman, Government Affairs Director for Education, Workforce and Healthcare, Association of Washington Business			
Additional Members (workgroup)			
Heather Winfrey, Curriculum Coordinator, Seattle Area Pipe Trades	X		
Cori Morris, Professional Development Navigator, Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs	X		
Laura Kingston, Executive Dean, Georgetown- South Seattle College	X		