Draft Meeting Summary
AHECC: Apprenticeships and Higher Education Coordinating Committee
April 9, 2026 | 10:00am-2:30pm
Zoom

Attendees: *See Appendix A*

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

Council on Adult Experiential Learning Staff: Ashely Wilhelm, Vice President of Initiatives

Welcome & Introductions
Chris Page welcomed members and asked them to introduce themselves with their name, role, and affiliation.

Approve Agenda and Meeting Summary
Melissa Girbach recapped the March meeting and asked if there were any edits. If any members have additional edits, please send them to the Facilitation Team. The following additional edits should be reviewed:
- Some language reads as if all apprenticeship programs work with colleges, and that is not always the case.
- Clarify that the delivery of RSI is a partnership between the apprenticeship program and the colleges.
- Language like "roadblocks" needs more context around it and could be potentially problematic depending on what entity is reviewing the recommendations.

Updates from Committee Members
- The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) recommends that apprentices submit applications for the Washington Grant for Apprentices (W-GA) by the May 15th priority deadline. As a reminder, the grant's award value was reduced by 50% for the next fiscal year.
- The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) is running a free student support program forum on June 1-3, 2026, at Hotel Morano in Tacoma. The first two days will be focused on internal college staff, and the third day will be open to apprenticeship programs.
    - They are planning sessions around apprenticeship AAS pathways, potential pathways to BAS degrees, and other apprenticeship support opportunities.
- The April Washington State Apprenticeship & Training Council meeting was moved to May 5th and 6th.
- Rachel McAloon and Lyle Irimata are presenting at a webinar on apprenticeship and higher education. They will highlight the SBCTC website, apprentices, and available grant programs.
- The last week of April is Registered Apprenticeship week at the national level. There are no virtual events, but some programs have grand openings that week.

- The Facilitation Team is connecting with some building trades representatives for feedback on recommendations and input for the committee.

Workgroup 2 Report on review of funding model for apprenticeship program costs (at CTCs)
Chris recapped the Workgroup meetings and Melissa drafted potential ideas for recommendations based on those discussions. There were no questions or additions from members.

DRAFT Potential Recommendations (in Bold Below): Begin Discussion
Chris shared screen with the "draft potential recommendations" document made from ideas of the Workgroup members. They reviewed each item, with members focusing on the questions:

- Is this accurate (did we capture your ideas successfully)?
- Does the idea have legs—is it worthy of continued discussion and potentially recommending?

Recommend WSAC, if capacity allows, continue the work to develop a "sustainable funding model" for RSI at the CTCs.
A member asked how the idea arose for WSAC to continue the work. L&I and SBCTC are willing to work together to finish the work through the current Legislative request. However, since circumstances (i.e., budget and staffing) have changed significantly since SB 5764 passed, members felt that continuing these discussions would not yield better results than what is happening.

Members agreed to remove this recommendation. Chris asked if anyone was opposed to dropping this recommendation and no members objected.

AHECC identified a clear need for two different types of state funding, and recommends the Legislature establish:

- **A stable, long-term, continuous allocation (no proviso funds) for admin costs on both the CTC and apprenticeship program sides, with flexibility to allow for symbiotic nature of enrollment levels as they rise and fall on each side (in an inverse correlation depending on economic conditions) AND**
- **A formula-based tiered funding stream tied to key performance indicators.**

A member requested the group define terms like "stable long-term continuous allocation for admin costs" to ensure everyone is on the same page.

Another member noted that CTCs have invested over nine million dollars each year in apprenticeship programs since 2023 and also "invests" in the sense of the 50% tuition waiver, which each year represents another nine million dollars. Members expressed appreciation about CTCs' investment into apprenticeship programs.

The group then transitioned to a discussion about how to get more apprentices to complete degrees. This brought up the need to have flexibility in the funding model to be responsive to the cyclical nature of economic conditions and to reflect the symbiotic nature of the partnership: when enrollment increases at CTCs, it tends to drop in apprenticeship programs and vice versa.

The group then discussed General Education (gen ed) courses; many apprentices need to take these additional courses following their program to complete the credits required to obtain a degree. This raised the question of how the funding model could be used to increase apprentice degree obtainment. Some examples and suggestions included:

- Lake Washington Institute of Technology does not currently partner with any apprenticeship programs but is starting to change their residency policy so any journey-level completer can take their Gen Ed courses. Innovations like this, coupled with bringing Gen Ed courses online, could provide apprentices with more options to earn their degrees.
- If apprentices are on unemployment benefits, they can be supported with worker retraining funding from SBCTC.
- If apprenticeship programs can list competencies and additional skills hour by hour, the translation to Gen Ed courses in RSI will be easier. A lot of colleges are open and willing to go through some contextual work to make it easier for apprentices to obtain degrees.

Members agreed to move this recommendation forward for future discussion and potentially forwarding on to the Legislature later this year.

Create a dedicated fund for CTCs and other higher ed institutions that want to work with apprenticeship programs AND consider establishing a smaller, core number of CTCs to support specific apprenticeships.

Participants noted that some of the current language could be interpreted as discouraging CTCs to participate in working with apprenticeship programs. It needs additional context and language around encouraging collaboration and more partnerships.

The group discussed the idea of a “regional hub,” but a member noted that this type of model fails to address the population density on the west side of the state. In addition, SBCTC would not be able to mandate what colleges would act as the regional hubs. Members suggested to change language to “specialize in” rather than “smaller core number.” Members also commented that creating regional hubs do not create cost savings, this would be the same allocation just to fewer entities.

Members agreed to the changes and to advancing this potential recommendation.

Establish pay-for-performance incentives (that would increase funding based on key performance indicators).

Members felt the term “pay for performance” would make more sense if it said “incentivize programs” to create more opportunities for programs who crosswalk their RSI with the colleges to make sure it meets Gen Ed requirements are met and results in apprentices receiving degrees.

Pay for performance is often tied to many other programs. The pay for performance could include emphasis on transferable credits, bridge programs, or other ways for apprentices to make substantive progress towards degrees.

Members agreed to eliminate this specific recommendation but include the following recommendations:

Incentivize programs or mechanisms for apprentices to obtain credits and degrees.
Suggestions:

- *Emphasize apprenticeship programs and CTCs that help apprentices obtain stackable, transferable/portable credentials, and*
- *Implement bridge programs to degrees*.
- *Increase funding for stackable, industry-recognized credentials*.
- *Establish incentives for employers to make OJT more meaningful*
- *Consider using a framework like Workforce Pell to amend the WG-A to help apprentices*.
- *Leverage the existing robust reporting requirements to increase the number of credits an apprentice receives*.

Increase the FTE amount allocated per apprentice in high-demand career programs.
Members noted that given the current budget environment in the state, a recommendation to fund a separate pot for both CTCs and apprenticeship programs may not be realistic.

In case separate funding streams become available, the funding relationship and flow of dollars should be dependent on the type of relationship (On campus with college instructor, Off campus with college instructor, On campus with apprenticeship instructor, or Off campus with apprenticeship instructor).

Some members feel this idea could work in the current model. Increasing the FTE amount could be done without implementing a new funding model. Members suggested combining this idea with the return on investment (ROI) discussions, and to remove specificities from the recommendation to avoid excluding non-traditional apprenticeship programs.

Members agreed to move this recommendation forward with changes along with the following sub-bullets:

- This could take the form of a checklist with a formula for resource allocation.
- Continue to allow flexibility for institutions around remuneration (for FTE).

Create bridge programs or mechanisms to support the expansion of healthcare (or other sector) apprenticeship programs to additional CTCs/institutions.
While members understand the unique elements of healthcare apprenticeship programs, they do not want to exclude other non-traditional programs like education and IT. The language should be more generic and include occupations as examples. There is still

mixed feeling around the 50% tuition waiver, some feel the WAC could be reinterpreted, and others feel it cannot be changed for only one or two programs; it should either be removed completely or not changed at all.

A member suggested a higher FTE allocation for non-traditional industries, but that might not work with the current CTC funding model. If there was a state fund or dedicated funding stream for RSI delivery, this fund could be shared to uplift other programs around the state. Curriculum is expensive, especially when multiple accreditation partners are involved; this fund would help to bridge the administrative costs.

Members agreed to move this recommendation forward with their edits.

Establish tax incentives for private sector actors to use apprentice labor or invest in apprenticeship programs for high-demand sectors.
Members liked this idea but wanted to change language from “private sector” to “employers” to encompass all employers in the state. They also agreed to remove the language around “high-demand sectors” so the funding would potentially be available for other programs.

Many other states have some form of employer incentives ranging from a check per apprentice to a tax break or tax credit for employing apprentices. Members also noted the state has done ROI studies previously, and it doesn’t make sense to recommend another one. The Workforce Training Board (WTB) has a good ROI study the Committee should review for more information.

Members agreed to move this recommendation forward with their changes and the following sub-bullets:

- Expand existing incentives (that currently apply to public works projects) for using apprentice labor.
- Consider establishing tax incentives for employers who work with apprentices.

Potential Recommendations the group did not have time to discuss:

- *Leverage and braid potential funding from Workforce Pell*
- *RSI funding model ideas*
- *Offset costs that lead to high apprenticeship attrition rates*
- *Create a scholarship*
- *Implement long-term funding for “Core Plus” curriculum*

Recap Discussion, Action items, and Next Steps
The Facilitation Team will clean up the document and get the recommendations back to the Workgroup to review and refine before bringing them back to the Committee. Chris thanked the group for a robust discussion and reminded those who had edits to the March meeting summary to email them to the Facilitation Team.

Adjourn

Appendix A: Attendees X=attended (all virtual)

Committee member	Attend	Alternate member	Attend
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		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)	X	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		Lyle Irimata, Assistant Director, Needs Based Programs, Contracts and Reporting	X
Kairie Pierce, Sector Lead, Innovation Workforce, Department of Commerce	X		
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			
Halene Sigmund, President, Construction Industry Training Council of Washington			
April Sims, Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO		Shana Peschek, Machinists Institute	X
		Ryan Davis, Machinists Institute	
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		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			
Cori Morris, Professional Development Navigator, Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs			
Laura Kingston, Executive Dean, Georgetown- South Seattle College			