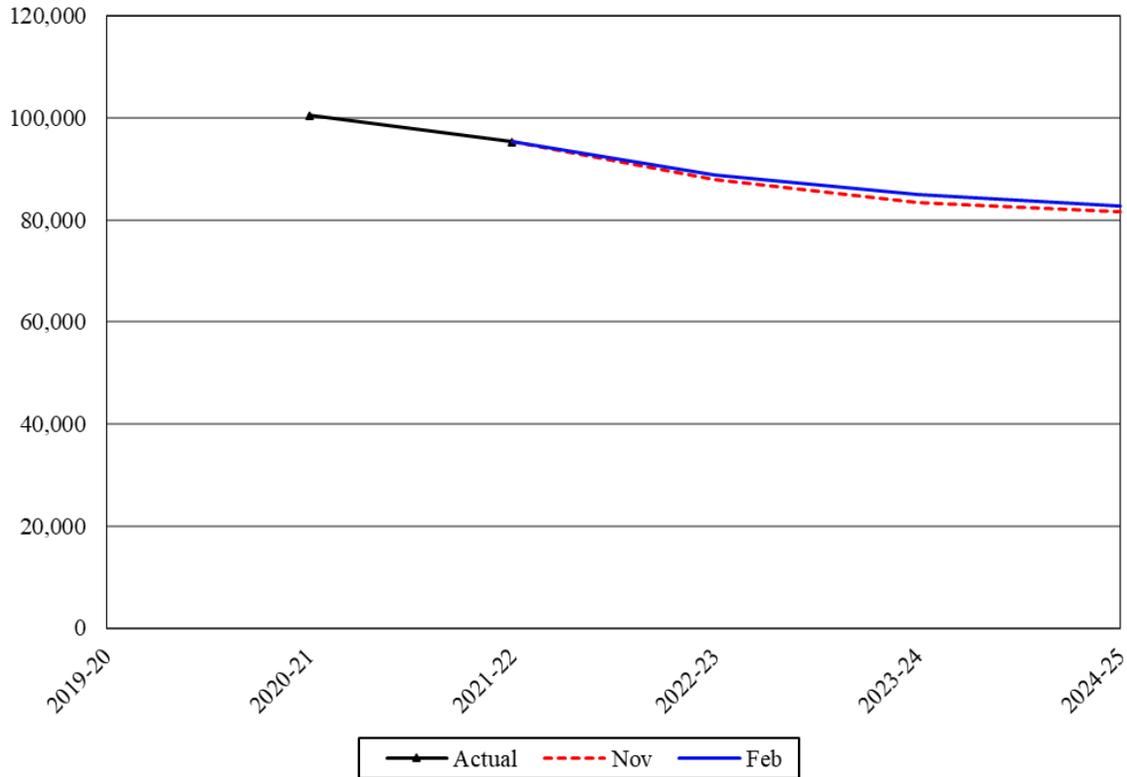


Washington College Grant Forecast



Starting in the 2020-21 academic year, the Washington College Grant (WCG) provides all eligible students with financial aid awards based on public tuition rates. WCG can be used at public and private participating institutions of higher education in Washington State. A grant will also be offered to certain registered apprentices. The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) administers the WCG. This is a new caseload under HB 2158, passed during the 2019 legislative session. Previously, the program was not an entitlement.

Headcount Forecast Comparisons (Academic Year Averages)

Academic Year	Nov-22 Forecast	Feb-23 Forecast	Nov to Feb Difference	Percent Difference
2022-23	87,875	88,769	894	1.0%
2023-24	83,311	84,942	1,631	2.0%
2024-25	81,673	82,632	959	1.2%

Compared to November, the February 2023 forecast is, on average, 894 cases or 1.0 percent higher for academic year 2022-23 and 1.6 percent higher for the 2023-25 Biennium.

Tracking the Current Forecast

	Nov-22			Percent
	Forecast	Actual	Variance	Variance
Fall 2022	66,851	67,768	917	1.4%

Actuals for Fall Term of the 2022-23 academic year are tracking 1.4 percent above the November forecast. WCG data updates occur four times per year. The February forecast compares enrollment for Fall Term compared to the November forecast. The forecast model relies on Fall Term to estimate the year’s overall enrollment as a portion of students defer enrollment until spring and/or summer term.

Academic Year Caseload Change (Headcount)

	Academic Year	Caseload	Change from Prior Year	Percent Change
Actual	2015-16			
	2016-17			
	2017-18			
	2018-19			
	2019-20			
	2020-21	100,427		
	2021-22	95,338	-5,089	-5.1%
Forecast	2022-23	88,769	-6,569	-6.9%
	2023-24	84,942	-3,827	-4.3%
	2024-25	82,632	-2,310	-2.7%

The WCG became an entitlement during the 2020-21 year when COVID-19 impacted demand for higher education. The 2021-22 year followed with a significantly improved labor market, which also lowered demand for higher education, and enrollment continued to decline another 5.1 percent. The 2022-23 year began with a tight job market as well as with high inflation, increasing the opportunity cost of attending college. As a result, WCG enrollment is forecasted to fall an additional a 6.9 percent in the 2022-23 year, followed by 4.3 percent decline in 2023-24, and another 2.7 percent in 2024-25.

Apprenticeships

The WCG forecast assumes increased enrollment for registered apprenticeships. The February 2023 forecast for WCG apprenticeships is set at 204 for 2022-23, then 304 for 2023-24, and 404 for 2024-25.

Risks to the Forecast

Risks to the WCG forecast are high, as it is a new forecast. Further shifts in the economy (labor market, inflation) could also impact the forecast. The demand for higher education financial aid is often cyclical with the labor market—enrollment often declines when demand for labor is strong.