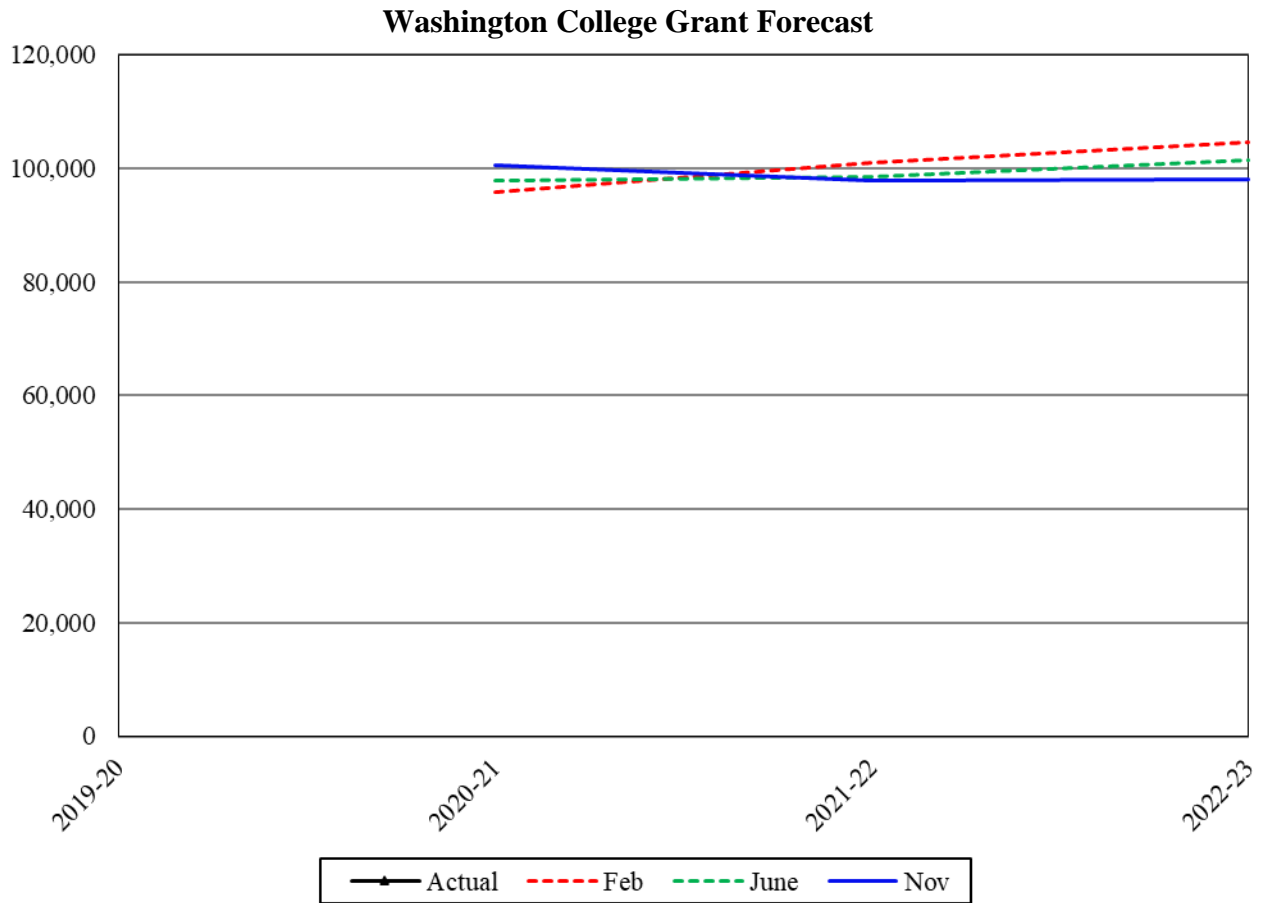


Washington College Grant

Caseload Forecast Council
November 9, 2021



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	Feb-21 Forecast	Jun-21 Forecast	Nov-21 Forecast	Feb to Nov Difference	Percent Difference	Jun to Nov Difference	Percent Difference
2021-22	100,935	98,488	97,796	-3,139	-3.1%	-692	-0.7%
2022-23	104,577	101,402	98,078	-6,499	-6.2%	-3,324	-3.3%

The November 2021 forecast is, on average, 4,819 cases or 4.7 percent lower than the February forecast, and 2,008 cases or 2.0 percent lower than the June forecast for the 2021-23 Biennium.

Tracking the Current Forecast

	Jun-21			Percent
	Forecast	Actual	Variance	Variance
2020-21	97,731	100,427	2,696	2.8%

Actuals for the 2020-21 academic year are tracking 2.8 percent higher than the June forecast. WCG data updates occur four times per year. February and June forecasts lag adjust data to account for students delaying enrollment until spring and/or summer term. Final year data is available with the November forecast. This is the first year of data for WGC as an entitlement.

Academic Year Caseload Change (Headcount)

	Academic		Change from	Percent
	Year	Caseload	Prior Year	Change
Actual	2013-14			
	2014-15			
	2015-16			
	2016-17			
	2017-18			
	2018-19			
	2019-20			
	2020-21	100,427	100,427	
Forecast	2021-22	97,796	-2,631	-2.6%
	2022-23	98,078	282	0.3%

The WCG was first offered as an entitlement during the 2020-21 year. It was also an expansion year, when students with incomes between 70 and 100 percent of the median family income received a prorated grant. Historically, higher education financial aid demand is tightly correlated with high unemployment. However, various COVID-19 effects had a dampening effect on WCG during the 2020-21 year. The WCG forecast assumes lower participation rates for the 2021-22 year based on reduced FAFSA filings by students from low-income families. The reduced participation in the 2020-21 and 2021-22 years will flatten enrollment in the 2022-23 year. Fewer continuing students prevent net caseload growth even as first-time low-income student enrollment rates improve.

Apprenticeships

The WCG forecast assumes continued a phase-in of grants for registered apprenticeships. The WCG headcounts associated with the program are 375 in 2021-22, and 750 in 2022-23. These headcounts are included in the total WCG forecast.

Risks to the Forecast

Risks to the WCG forecast are high. Uncertainty due to COVID-19 adds risk to the forecast. Shifts in the labor market could also impact the forecast. The demand for higher education financial aid is often cyclical with the labor market—enrollment often declines during when there is a strong demand for labor. The lack of historical data as an entitlement program also injects uncertainty.