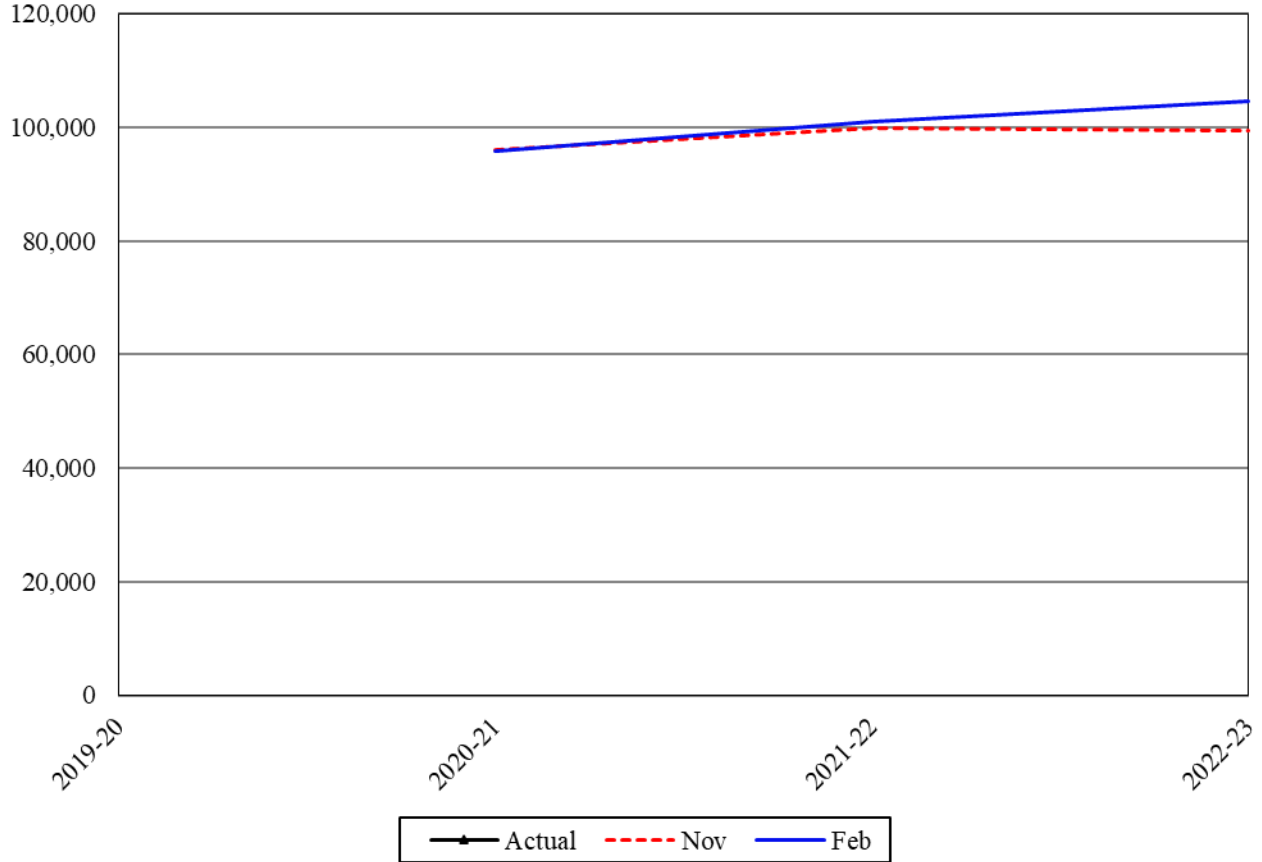


Washington College Grant Forecast



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 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-20 Forecast	Feb-21 Forecast	Nov to Feb Difference	Percent Difference
2020-21	96,113	95,876	-237	-0.2%
2021-22	99,823	100,935	1,112	1.1%
2022-23	99,385	104,577	5,192	5.2%

Compared to the November forecast, the February forecast for the WCG headcount is on par percent for 2020-21, and then 3.2 percent higher for the 2021-23 Biennium.

Tracking the Current Forecast

	Nov-20			Percent
	Forecast	Actual	Variance	Variance
2020-21	96,113	95,876	-237	-0.2%

Actuals for the 2020-21 academic year are tracking closely to the November forecast. WCG data updates only occur three 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 cycle.

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			
Forecast	2020-21	95,876	95,876	
	2021-22	100,935	5,059	5.3%
	2022-23	104,577	3,642	3.6%

The 2020-21 year is the first year the WCG is available to students as an entitlement. It is also an expansion year, when students with incomes between 70 and 100 percent of the median family income could receive a prorated grant. Historically, higher education financial aid demand is tightly correlated with high unemployment. However, COVID-19 has had a dampening effect on WCG during the 2020-21 academic year, particularly on students with limited incomes. This is due to uncertainty regarding health risks, the academic content delivery (in-person, online, or hybrid), and concern about living arrangements and additional family obligations. The WCG forecast assumes participation rates return to normal trends by Winter/Spring of 2021-22 and fully normal by 2022-23.

Apprenticeships

HB 2158 extended the WCG to a new category of registered apprenticeships, effective on July 1, 2020. The February forecast assumes a phase-in of the program over the next three years. The WCG headcounts associated with the program are 300 in 2020-21, 600 in 2021-22, and 1,000 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 will continue to impact the higher education environment and demand for financial aid. The length and shape of the economic downturn and recovery will also impact the WCG forecast. The lack of historical data for the expansion group also injects uncertainty.