

Skill Enhancement Training

Schools and Training Programs Resource

Note: This job aid is intended for use by vocational rehabilitation counselors (VRCs) when exploring training options.

What's available now?

Many of the schools and training programs that offer skill enhancement may already be approved L&I providers. Visit our [Vendor Services Lookup tool, put in](#) your location, and select Retraining Services:

State All	City All	County All
Service RETRAINING SERVICES		
Provider ^	Address	Specialty/Type

How to locate training?

Schools use different names for entry-level skill enhancement training on their website or catalog. Contact the school and ask for more information.

Look for words like:

- Transitional Studies
- Career Prep
- College Prep
- College Decisions, or
- Adult Basic Education (ABE)

Colleges and Universities

Public schools offer a range of courses. These classes may be online, hybrid, or in-person, with schedules varying by school.

The Washington [State Board of Community and Technical Colleges](#) (SBCTC) compiles a list of active programs and services available in:

Adult Basic Education (ABE)	Improves reading, writing and math skills.
Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST)	Team teaching approach with one teacher providing job training or an academic class, while another will teach basic skills in reading, writing, math, English language, or employability.

English as a Second Language (ESL)/English Language Acquisition (ELA)	For adults to improve their reading, writing, speaking, math, listening or employability skills in English.
High School+	Community and technical college classes to obtain a high school diploma.
GED®	Classes to help prepare for all four of the official GED® tests.

A list of participating schools and contacts is available at [Providers of Basic Education for Adults \(SBCTC\)](#).

All the colleges in SBCTC are authorized to issue high school diplomas.

Private, Technical, and Vocational Schools

This category may include for-profit and not-for-profit businesses or organizations, tutoring services, and specialized certificate programs.

An agency or board oversees some but not all vocational schools and programs. For example, the Washington State Department of Licensing has oversight for professional licenses to include commercial driving, cosmetology, and commercial realtor training programs.

Nonprofits or training offered through charitable entities have varied license requirements, unless accredited or supervised by a board, association, or government agency.

What to look for when exploring skill enhancement

What does the student receive at the end of a course or program?

Look for courses that have easy-to-recognize documentation, resulting or moving towards a grade, proficiency level, diploma, license, or certificate. Some programs like Adult Basic Education or English Language Acquisition may not offer certificate credentials, but will still measure progress and help build skills for the future.

How is progress tracked?

Skill enhancement courses will track progress, but it may look different from traditional college transcripts or reporting. For example, many language-learning programs are pass/fail and graded using periodic testing instead of a numerical score. They also may not reflect grade point average (GPA) grades on a transcript.

Instructor qualifications

Public and private schools often have different qualifications for their instructors depending on the course or subject matter. Some programs require their instructors to hold licenses or

certifications to meet state and federal standards. Other services, like tutoring, do not have a licensing body or standardized credentials.

To identify instructor qualifications, check the program's website or catalog. If unsure, request the instructor's qualifications from the training provider.

When looking for options, be aware some courses do not use instructors at all and opt instead for independent student work in self-paced modules. These may be generated or monitored by artificial intelligence (AI). It is common practice for online language learning applications to use this model.

Up-front and complete course cost

Programs cannot charge L&I students more than any other student, and the worker cannot be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses. Total program cost transparency is essential and, for public schools, [legally required](#).

Some programs or schools must submit a current catalog to their licensing or credentialing body, like [WA Department of Licensing](#) or the [Workforce Training and Education Board](#). If a provider's website does not list prices or details, ask the school to provide a copy. If unable to obtain a copy, you may reach out to their licensing or credentialing body.

Language Acquisition Programs: ESL, ELA, and more

Many approved training providers offer a variety of English learning options online, in person, or in groups. The structure may be different between schools. Courses may be organized with students at the same level or varying levels of English learning together in the same class.

Language-only schools are not licensed or overseen by a separate agency or group, but language programs can be accredited by the [Commission on English Language Program Accreditation \(CEA\)](#).

Schools may also provide language acquisition training as part of other programs. For example, some I-BEST courses offer two instructors, one providing job or academic training, and the other teaching basic skills such as English language. Another example are courses which incorporate English levels 1-3 with digital skills, so students can build language and computer confidence simultaneously.

The [Washington State Coalition for Language Access \(wascla.org\) Our Resources tab](#) has a resource for language access services offered through the state libraries.

Computer Confidence

Many ABE, ELA, and HS+ courses will incorporate digital literacy into their curriculum, without listing it as the primary topic of a class. Digital literacy as defined by SBCTC is "the skills associated with using technology to enable users to find, evaluate, organize, create, and communicate information." Most schools have their own computer, writing, and support labs with free tutoring available to help students with digital literacy, confidence, and skills.

Free Resources

State agencies like WA Secretary of State offer access to [free and low cost internet](#), technical support, and digital literacy resources: [Digital Inclusion Resource Collection - Washington State Library - WA Secretary of State](#)

The state library program also has a hub of online learning and digital skills resources: [Cisco Networking Academy - Digital Skills Resources for Washingtonians - LibGuides at Washington State Library](#)

Other public library programs include:

- [Technology Skills | The Seattle Public Library \(spl.org\)](#)
- [Online Resource A-Z | Timberland Regional Library \(trl.org\)](#)

Many programs from approved providers are available to workers at no cost, like [Worksource WA](#).