

Embracing New Technologies with Washington IT Academy

2024 Supplemental Operating Budget Decision Package

Recommendation Summary

The Microsoft IT Academy provides Washington's students with a unique opportunity to gain industry certification while enrolled in a public middle school or high school. Home to some of the leading technology companies in the world, Washington students have unique access to these high-paying jobs in their own communities if they are given access to the pathways and skills that lead to career opportunities in technology. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) requests increased funding for Microsoft IT Academy to expand the reach of services they provide, building a stronger bridge between Washington students and high-paying Washington jobs.

Fiscal Details (Funding, FTEs, Revenue, Objects)

Operating Expenditures	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
General Fund State - 01	\$0	\$3,004,000	\$3,004,000	\$3,004,000
Total Expenditures	\$0	\$3,004,000	\$3,004,000	\$3,004,000
Biennial Totals	\$3,004,000			\$6,008,000
Staffing	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
FTEs	0	0	0	0
Average Annual	0			0
Revenue	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
General Fund State - 01	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Biennial Totals	\$0			\$0
Object of Expenditure	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
Obj. C	\$0	\$3,004,000	\$3,004,000	\$3,004,000

Package Description

What is the problem, opportunity, or priority you are addressing with the request?

The Microsoft IT Academy provides Washington's students and their educators with a unique opportunity to gain industry certification while enrolled in a public middle school or high school. To date, the program has provided more than 625,000 industry recognized certification exams and credentials to students and educators in Washington.

These certifications present significant opportunities for the individuals obtaining them. There are roughly 19,000 computing jobs open in Washington state, with an average salary of \$112,623 in the computing profession. The IT Academy Program provides globally recognized technology education, skills, and certifications for educator professional development and content students need to succeed in today's workplace.

What is your proposed solution?

OSPI requests \$3 million per year, ongoing, to continue offering industry certifications and credentials to Washington's middle and high school students and teachers. Funding will allow Microsoft to continue offering the program in Washington's schools. In addition, funding will ensure that Washington's students continue to have access to these industry certifications while in school, while also providing our state workforce with a qualified pool of applicants for high paying jobs in the computing sector.

What are you purchasing and how does it solve the problem?

Funding will provide access to curriculum and certification exams for in-demand technology skills for all public middle and high schools statewide. Examples include:

- Industry certification exams for in-demand technology skills for use in all public middle and high schools statewide. These certifications include subjects such as artificial intelligence (AI), data science, cloud, cybersecurity, business productivity and coding in Python or JavaScript using the 'Coding in Minecraft' computer science program.
- Curriculum for all public middle and high schools in the state to support the delivery of the industry certification credentials.
- Comprehensive educator support including professional development, educator materials, support desk, and engagement at events.
- Ongoing monthly reporting to OSPI leadership including an annual State Impact Report.

What alternatives did you explore and why was this option chosen?

Without this program, students won't have access to the coding/software certifications/credentials offered by the IT Academy. Our state economy and technology sector will not benefit from the additional credentialed students and workers developed by the program.

Performance Measures

Performance outcomes:

If funded, this request will offer Washington's students increased access to computing and coding curriculum. Increased access will expose additional students to the computing profession while offering students new pathways in the computing and technology sector. Ensuring pathways that offer students careers within the technology sector will also benefit Washington's technology sector and economy, offering thousands of well-paying jobs with high growth potential.

Assumptions and Calculations

Expansion or alteration of a current program or service:

The Washington State Legislature has historically provided funding to support a statewide information technology academy program that provides curriculum and certification opportunities to all Washington state middle and high schools students at no cost to participants. The program received \$3 million in the 2023–25 biennial budget for fiscal year 2024 only. This proposal would continue that work past the 2023–24 fiscal year.

Detailed assumptions and calculations:

This request assumes the Legislature will provide supplemental funding of \$3,004,000 in fiscal year 2025 and beyond to continue the skills and information technology academy learning and certification program that provides the following benefits and supports to schools in Washington state.

Curriculum:

- Microsoft Digital Literacy curriculum
- Microsoft E-Learning curriculum
- E-reference materials
- Microsoft Official Academic Course (MOAC) series
- Microsoft Official Courseware (MOC)

Professional Development:

- Teaching with Technology Curriculum
- Microsoft Innovative Educator (MIE) program
- Teacher Starter Kits
- Microsoft Certified Trainer (MCT)

Certification:

- Certification test center site license for each school including:
 - Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) exam vouchers for teachers and students
 - Complimentary MOS, Microsoft Technology Associate (MTA) and Microsoft Certified Educator (MCE) exam vouchers for faculty and staff professional development
 - Discounted Microsoft Certified Professional Exams Partnership

Resources:

- ITA Membership Plaque
- Marketing materials to help promote the IT Academy and recruit students
- Use of Microsoft IT Academy logo
- Availability of Certificate of Completion certificates
- Teacher Training on ITA Tools and Benefits
- How-To Guides

Supports:

- Comprehensive educator support including professional development, educator materials, support desk, and engagement at events
- Ongoing monthly reporting to OSPI leadership including annual State Impact Report

Workforce assumptions:

None.

How our Proposal Impacts Equity in the State

At the forefront of every program, policy, and decision, OSPI actively focuses on ensuring all students have access to the instruction and support they need to succeed in our schools. This program offers programming and computing skills to all students, of all socioeconomic backgrounds. In a sector traditionally dominated by a domestic, male workforce, this program offers students of all backgrounds an entry point and professional certification. To date, the program has 42% female enrollment, significantly higher than the tech sector, where women comprise about 25% of the workforce. The program also has 29% Latino/Hispanic enrollment, significantly higher than the 6.3% Latino/Hispanic employment rate in the U.S. tech sector as reported by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Strategic and Performance Outcomes

Strategic framework:

This proposal aligns with the Governor's Results Washington Goal #1: World-Class Education. The proposal also aligns with Superintendent Reykdal's Strategic Goal #2: Rigorous Learner-Centered in Every Community, which specifies that students should have flexible, custom-tailored career pathways that meet their interests. Finally, this proposal aligns with Superintendent Reykdal's Strategic Goal #3: Providing a Diverse, Inclusive, and Highly Skilled Workforce.

Other Collateral Connections

Intergovernmental:

This proposal strengthens relationships between Washington's tech industry and students learning in our public schools.

Stakeholder response:

This request has the support of Microsoft, CCI Learning, Certiport, and Prodigy Learning, all of

which currently work to deliver this program to students. This request supports the technology sector by training students with relevant skills that can translate into full-time employment in the computing field.

Legal or administrative mandates:

None.

Changes from current law:

None.

State workforce impacts:

None.

State facilities impacts:

None.

Puget Sound recovery:

N/A