The Cost Of Catching Up In Washington

By Laura Jimenez and Maggie Thompson

Remedial education is costly. Nationally, students in remediation spend **approximately $1.3 billion in yearly out-of-pocket costs** on remedial courses that build basic skills in reading and math but do not count toward a degree, dramatically contributing to their overall student debt load.¹ A better K-12 education would do much to address this issue.

**Why Washingtonians Should Be Concerned**

Taking remedial courses extends the time and costs of obtaining a degree or certificate while reducing the likelihood of completion. This has a significant social and financial impact on students.

- Students in Washington spend a combined **$13,247,000 out of pocket** on remedial courses.²
- **30 percent of incoming students** in Washington had to take one or more remedial courses.³

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Nationally, the cost of remediation adds up. According to a report by Complete College America, the average total cost of an additional year of college for a two-year associate's degree nationally is **$50,933 in cost of attendance and lost wages**.⁴ An extra year for a four-year bachelor's degree costs students an average of **$68,153 in cost of attendance and lost wages**.⁵ Nationally, fewer than 50 percent of students complete their remedial programs and even less graduate with a degree or certificate.⁶

Increasing access to a college education must mean more than just increasing enrollment rates. To ensure that students stay in college and complete a degree, we must ensure that students have the skills they need to succeed.

**End Notes**

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
5. Ibid.