

OPEN DOORS SUMMER PILOT SITE PROFILE

SkillSource

Prepared for the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) by Education Northwest.

Overview

SkillSource is a nonprofit agency that is part of the Washington WorkSource system and fiscal agent for the local Workforce Development Board. SkillSource received 2024 summer pilot funding to support programming at its Wenatchee and Othello sites.¹ These programs are operated in partnership with the Wenatchee and Othello school districts.

Skillsource program overview, school year 2023–24

- GED and high school diploma
- Community-based organization
- Community type: Town, remote; town, distant; suburban, small
- **175** students enrolled in SY 2023–24
- Average age at enrollment: **17.2**
- Average credits at enrollment: **8.1**

Source: Evaluation team analysis of Appendix R and Open Doors end-of-year data.

Summer 2024 pilot program design and implementation

Prior to the pilot, both sites offered “summer school” options for students who wished to keep working toward their GED or high school diploma. SkillSource-Wenatchee also historically offered additional opportunities during the summer such as community-based internships and the Eco-Stewardship

¹ Note that while this profile reflects both locations, data were collected from summer pilot students and partners at the Othello site only.



program, a partnership with Washington State University Chelan County Extension where students learn about natural resource careers and earn minimum wage while working on outdoor field projects across the region. The two sites braided Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds and other funds to support summer programming. The SkillSource-Othello site, which has been in operation for about two years, did not offer unique summer programming prior to the pilot, although it did offer limited academic support for a small group of students.

OVERVIEW OF SUMMER PROGRAM PILOT

SkillSource envisioned the summer pilot as an opportunity to expand the number of students participating in summer programming, especially post-resident youth, and to deepen its engagement with the goal of increasing student retention, overall student well-being, and college and career skills (table 1). SkillSource-Wenatchee used pilot funds to conduct more intentional outreach to engage post-resident youth in summer job opportunities, while SkillSource-Othello used pilot funds to develop a new partnership and programming focused on postsecondary exploration.

Table 1. SkillSource Interagency summer 2024 pilot goals, activities, and intended outcomes

Goals	Summer program activities	Intended outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New/deeper programming • New/deeper partnerships • Expanded student participation in summer learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GED instruction and testing • High school instruction and testing • Career-connected learning • Unique or innovative program activities limited to the summer months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicators of academic progress earning • Pathway completion • Retention from spring to fall • Student well-being and stability • College or career skills

New or expanded community partnerships

SkillSource used summer pilot funds to grow partnerships at both sites (table 2). To support their goal of increasing post-resident youth access to summer employment opportunities, SkillSource-Wenatchee staff members deepened their relationship with the staff at Chelan County Juvenile Detention Center. SkillSource-Othello established a new partnership with the Lighthouse Community Center, a local community-based organization with experience offering learning opportunities for local youth, to design and offer postsecondary exploration activities.

Table 2. SkillSource summer 2024 pilot partners and activities

Partners	Key summer activities
Chelan County Juvenile Detention Center (Wenatchee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruitment and student support• Summer community-based learning, field trips, and work experiences
Eco-Stewardship/Washington State University (Wenatchee)	
Employers (Wenatchee)	
Lighthouse Community Center (Othello)*	

*Indicates a new partnership

Academic instruction and career-connected learning

SkillSource offered postsecondary planning and career-connected learning in addition to academic support students to complete a GED or high school diploma. SkillSource-Othello offered weekly workshops led by Lighthouse Community Center on postsecondary planning (e.g., college applications, resume development) and life skills (e.g., financial literacy, social and emotional skills.) SkillSource-Wenatchee continued to offer students job training and work experience in the community, as it does during the school year, through a wide range of community partners. As a workforce development organization, SkillSource braids funding (K–12, WIOA, Washington State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Pre-Employment Transition Services) to offer job-related training and services year round. For example, SkillSource staff members employed through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Pre-Employment Training Services offered additional job training support during the summer for Open Doors students with a 504 Accommodation Plan or individualized education program (IEP).

Intensive individual support for students and barrier reduction

SkillSource students are encouraged to come into the learning center and work on their online curriculum with the support of an on-site instructor. SkillSource-Wenatchee funded staff members to work one-on-one with post-resident youth and students eligible for special education. Smaller staff-student ratios over the summer allowed SkillSource-Othello staff members to spend more time with each student, conduct home visits, and communicate (e.g., via postcards) to maintain a connection with students over the summer.

SkillSource-Wenatchee used summer pilot funds to offer barrier reduction support for individual students, such as clothes for work, GED testing fees, and transportation to community-based organizations where they received additional basic needs support. SkillSource-Othello used the funds to provide lunch during the postsecondary exploration workshops.

Development of new program elements

SkillSource-Wenatchee information technology staff members collaborated with a student to develop a computer camp. Too few students signed up to pilot the curriculum over the summer, but they planned to implement it during the school year. SkillSource-Othello staff members used pilot funds to test new learning software, and instructors participated in professional development to strengthen their instructional skills.

Student participation in summer 2024 pilot

STUDENT OUTREACH

SkillSource-Othello staff members conducted intensive outreach to build ownership and motivation for students to participate during the summer. SkillSource-Wenatchee staff members increased their outreach to probation and juvenile justice centers to raise awareness of summer opportunities available through the program. They spoke with the head of the local county detention center, a teacher, and a “very involved” probation officer to familiarize them with the opportunities so they could take a “team approach” to engaging and supporting post-resident youth. This included supporting post-resident youth to participate in the six-week Eco-Stewardship paid work experience. Staff members said that these efforts helped to retain existing post-resident youth and attract new students to the program.

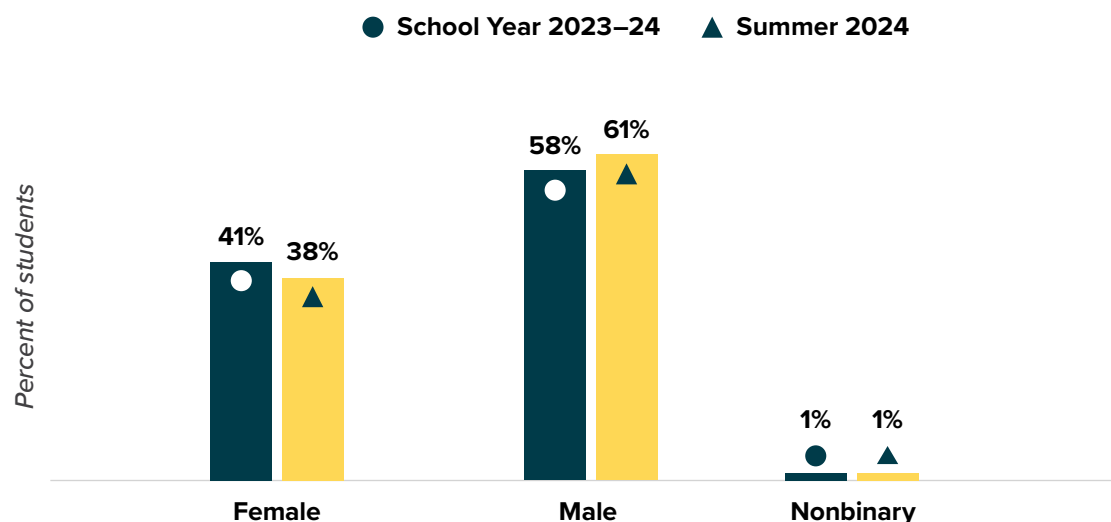
STUDENTS SERVED IN SUMMER 2024

Sixty-nine students participated in summer 2024. All students participated in both July and August. Twenty percent of summer participants were post-resident youth.

Compared to students enrolled in the 2023–24 school year program, students in the summer program first enrolled in Open Doors at about the same age (17.1 compared to 17.2) and with the same number of credits (8.1 credits).

The summer population was more likely to be male and identify as American Indian/Alaska Native or Asian compared to the school year population (figures 1 and 2). In addition, the summer population was more likely to have had an IEP in the high school years before summer 2024, been classified as an English learner, and been eligible for free or reduced-price lunch but less likely to have experienced homelessness (figure 3).

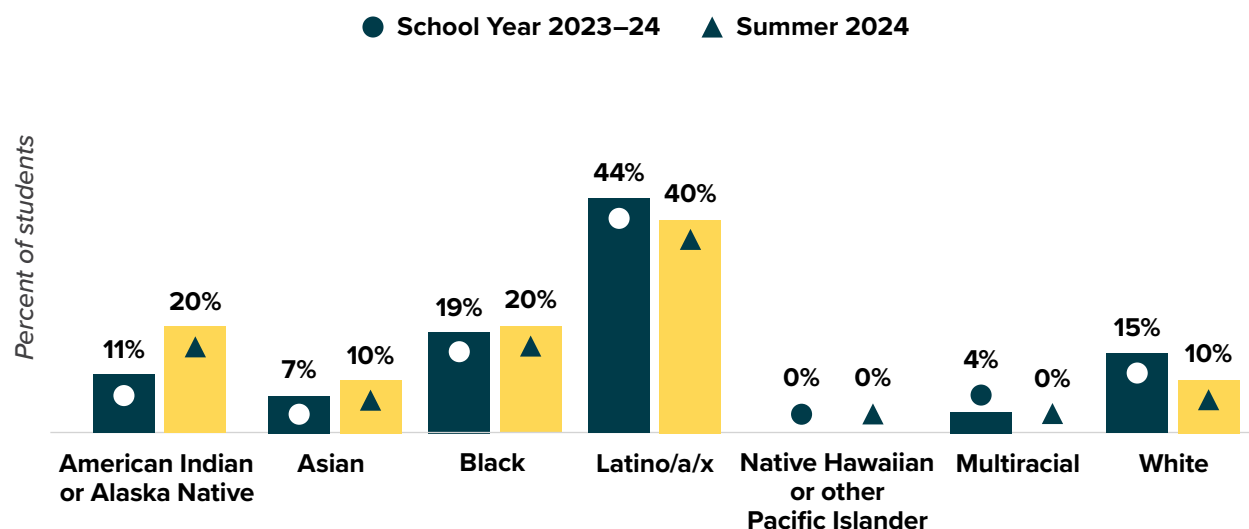
Figure 1. The summer 2024 student population had a slightly higher percentage of male students compared to the 2023–24 school year population



Note: N = 175 for school year and N = 69 for summer.

Source: Evaluation team analysis of Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) data.

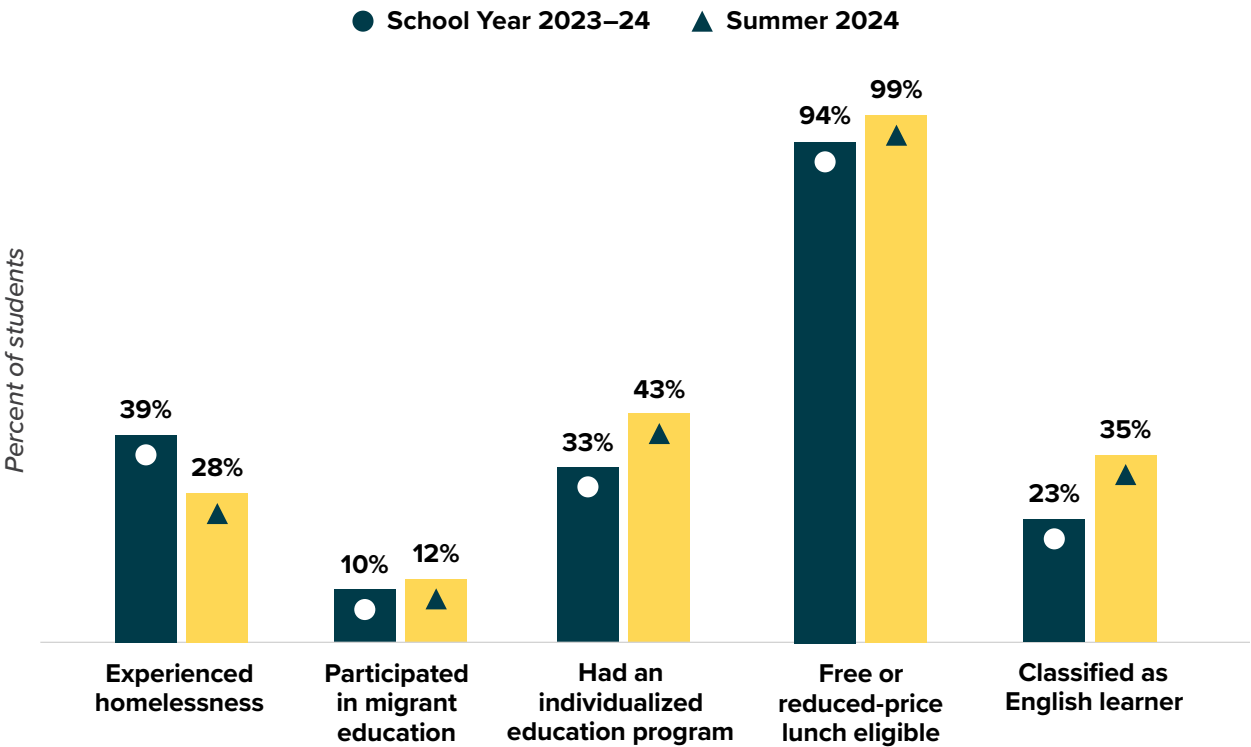
Figure 2. The summer 2024 student population had a higher percentage of students who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native or Asian compared to the 2023–24 school year population



Note: N = 175 for school year and N = 69 for summer.

Source: Evaluation team analysis of CEDARS data.

Figure 3. The summer 2024 student population had a higher percentage of students who had an individualized education program or were classified as English learners compared to the 2023–24 school year population



Note: Data are from 2014–15 to 2023–24 and so span students’ upper elementary, middle school, and high school years. N = 175 for school year and N = 69 for summer.
Source: Evaluation team analysis of CEDARS data.

Outcomes

MOMENTUM TOWARD ACADEMIC GOALS

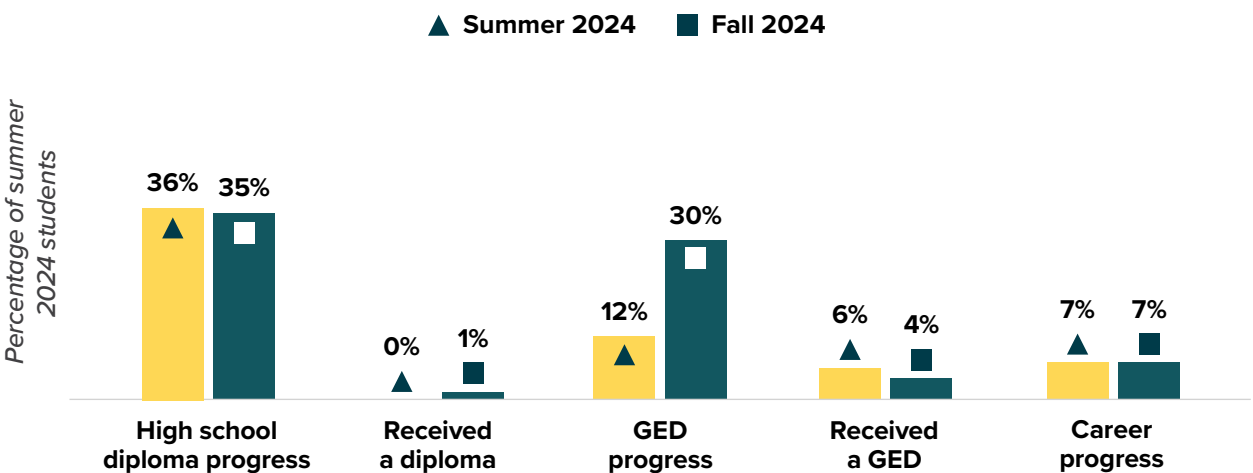
SkillSource staff members noted that the summer programming was a great opportunity for students who were making progress to stay the course and reach their pathway goal. SkillSource-Othello students said that positive support from the staff kept them engaged and on track toward their high school completion goals. Because of the increased outreach to detention center partners, one post-resident youth was able to enroll in and complete the SkillSource-Wenatchee program during the summer.

Student achievement of indicators of academic progress in summer and fall 2024 based on quantitative data

Fifty-one percent of summer 2024 students earned an indicator of academic progress (IAP) in summer 2024 and 59 percent earned an IAP in fall 2024.

Over one-third of students made progress toward their high school diploma in the summer (36%; figure 4), and that persisted through the fall. Students also worked toward their GED, with 12 percent making progress in the summer and about one-third making progress in the fall. Several summer students received their GED in the summer (6%) and in the fall (4%). Additionally, 7 percent of summer students earned IAPs related to career progress in both the summer and fall.

Figure 4. Over one-third of the students who participated in summer 2024 made progress toward a high school diploma in summer and fall 2024, and about one-third made progress toward a GED in fall 2024



Note: N = 69. IAPs were categorized into high school diploma progress, high school diploma completion, GED progress, GED completion, college academic progress, college credential completion, career progress, and career credential completion. IAP categories are not shown if no students achieved IAPs in that category in either summer or fall 2024. For the categories displayed in this figure, the IAPs that were achieved were:

High school diploma progress: a. Earns at minimum a 0.25 high school credit. e. Passes one or more tests or

benchmarks that would satisfy the state board of education's graduation requirements as provided in chapter 180-51 WAC.

GED progress: f. Passes one or more high school equivalency certificate measures (each measure may only be claimed once per enrolled student), or other state assessment. g. Makes a significant gain in a core academic subject based on the assessment tool's determination of significant gain (may be claimed multiple times in a year per enrolled student).

Career progress: j. Successfully completes job search and job retention course work with documentation of competency attainment; k. Successfully completes a paid or unpaid cooperative work-based learning experience of at least 45 hours. This experience must meet the requirements of WAC 392-410-315(2).

Source: Evaluation team analysis of pilot site reporting on summer 2024 and fall 2024 outcomes.

INCREASED WELL-BEING, EFFICACY, AND FUTURE ORIENTATION

Students at SkillSource-Othello said that the program promoted their overall sense of well-being, efficacy, and future orientation. It also provided them with support for basic needs such as child care. Participation in the summer program helped students develop skills and knowledge related to postsecondary education and career options. Postsecondary exploration activities such as field trips to local colleges expanded students' vision of what they can accomplish in their future and helped them start making concrete plans toward those goals.



[The summer program] gave me opportunities I didn't think I'd have after dropping out of high school."

SkillSource student

"If the summer program wasn't on this year, I probably would've never wanted to go to [college]. I would've probably never seen college as an actual good opportunity."

SkillSource student

Success factors and challenges

POSITIVE PROGRAM CLIMATE AND RELATIONSHIPS SUSTAINED STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Participants commonly described positive staff relationships and an inclusive program climate as key success factors that supported youth engagement and progress. The flexible structure, personalized support, and small-group environment offered by SkillSource also contributed to student engagement.

EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS SUPPORTED COLLABORATION

The SkillSource-Othello site used pilot funds to develop a more formal partnership with a local nonprofit by contracting with them to facilitate activities with students. The summer partnership deepened an existing relationship between the two organizations that was developed through participation in community collaboration meetings and training opportunities.



We had some kind of a rapport before [summer], some kind of communication and partnership already going into it ... So I think that was really effective.”

SkillSource partner

Staff members at SkillSource-Wenatchee described existing relationships with the justice system that facilitated their efforts to engage and support post-resident youth to participate during summer.



[SkillSource staff members] are always trying, through the school year, to work with probation officers. And we really see it as a team effort, right? If we're not all talking ... the students know that ... so it's really important that our message be that we are a team working together to help them.”

SkillSource staff member

In terms of challenges, both sites experienced a lack of student interest in some offerings, sometimes due to competition with summer employment. SkillSource-Othello experienced challenges with a lack of transportation for students and the district staff not being available to enroll new students during the summer, including post-resident youth.

About this project

Washington state appropriated funds for the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to conduct a summer program pilot with up to 12 [Open Doors Youth Reengagement Programs](#). The funding period spanned the 2023–2025 biennium as outlined in House Bill #5187, Sec. 522. SkillSource participated in the summer 2023 and summer 2024 pilot. OSPI contracted with [Education Northwest](#) to evaluate the Open Doors Summer Pilot. Education Northwest prepared this profile as part of the evaluation.

METHODS

Education Northwest developed this summer pilot program profile from artifact review and interviews/focus groups in summer 2024 with six SkillSource-Othello students, five SkillSource staff members, and two community partners. We also analyzed quantitative program and student data from OSPI to produce the student demographics and outcomes figures. Thank you to the SkillSource program team, partners, and students for taking the time to share your stories and perspectives about the summer pilot.

Recommended citation

Petrokubi, J., Cigarroa Kennedy, C., & Hodara, M. (2025). *Open Doors Summer Pilot site profile: SkillSource*. Education Northwest.

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