

HIGH SCHOOL 21+

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 Watch a video <https://bit.ly/2QM7u96>

Credit for Life Knowledge

Adults who are at least 21 years old and need a high school diploma now have another way to get one — through High School 21+, a program that turns life experience into credits toward a high school diploma.

High School 21+ is offered by community and technical colleges, often in partnership with community-based organizations.



*Adelina Machuca Santiago,
HS 21+ graduate, Lower
Columbia College*

Customized Education Plans

Upon entering the High School 21+ program, each student works with an advisor to assess what the student has already learned through life, work, school or military experience. Together, they develop a plan to complete the rest of what the student needs to complete a diploma.

Students can demonstrate their knowledge — and receive high school credits — in several ways. These include a traditional placement test, high school and college transcripts, or a written portfolio. Students then complete any remaining credits by:

- Taking adult basic education courses that teach basic skills in reading, writing, math and English language within more rigorous, high school-level material.
- Substituting college classes for the remaining high school requirements.

Dual Credits Toward College and High School

If a student is enrolled in a college-level class and masters a subject area required for a high school diploma, the student's credits can be applied to both the program of study and the diploma. This dual-credit approach saves students time and money.

The Benefits

High School 21+:

- Recognizes life competency in addition to classroom time and tests.
- Opens the door to federal financial aid so students can earn college certificates and degrees.
- Helps students become eligible for federal job-training funds.
- Is accepted more readily by the military because it is an actual high school diploma rather than an equivalency.
- Is low-cost at \$25 per quarter. Many students qualify for waivers.
- Is available to students at correction sites.

Students who complete High School 21+ receive a Washington state high school diploma from their community or technical college. They also gain knowledge of their own powerful potential as they reach new heights in their lives and careers.

From Poverty to a Career: Meet Adelina Machuca Santiago

My name is Adelina Machuca Santiago. My path from poverty in Mexico to success in America has been very difficult but my motto is, “determination is my power.” I live that motto every day.

I grew up in Oaxaca Mexico with no electricity, running water, little food and no access to medical care. My desire for an education and better life was so strong that I walked five hours every day to attend high school.

When I moved to Longview, my goal was to find a school and learn English. That’s when I found my second home, Lower Columbia College (LCC). I worked nights while going to school days. I spent two quarters in English as a Second Language and then progressed to adult basic skills classes, where I graduated from the High School 21+ program in the spring of 2014. I immediately started college summer quarter. I was not successful my first quarter, but I did not give up.

At LCC, I found the academic and emotional support that helped me to succeed. I took advantage of all the resources on campus. I found extra support and instruction in the I-BEST program,¹ received an Opportunity Grant² and utilized LCC’s career, counseling and tutoring services. I worked hard and made the honors list many times and was awarded the 2015-2016 Outstanding Pre-College English Student of the Year.

In the summer of 2018, I graduated with an associate degree in Medical Office Administration and also received Community, Health and Wellness Advocate and Health Occupations Core for the Healthcare Worker certificates. Today I work full time as a child wellness advocate. I love my job and know that I can be an example for others while helping them to understand that no matter how difficult life can be there is always light at the end of the tunnel.



Adelina Machuca Santiago celebrates success at Lower Columbia College.

1. I-BEST stands for “Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training,” a program that uses a team-teaching approach to teach students basic skills and career skills at the same time.
2. Opportunity Grants help low-income students train for high-wage, high-demand careers. The grant covers 45 credits of tuition (a year’s worth) and up to \$1,000 a year for books and supplies.