

Washington Technology Industry Association (WTIA)

Washington Technology Industry Association (WTIA) is a non-profit dedicated to fostering a robust, equity-centered technology sector that empowers thriving communities. This means keeping Washington state the best place to found and grow a technology company and have a regulatory environment that allows innovation to thrive. We evaluate policy with an eye towards upending systemic bias and re-engineering our policy landscape to be more inclusive. WTIA welcomes opportunities to partner with policymakers and our members to identify actionable solutions to pressing policy challenges.

Education And Workforce

By nurturing talent, fostering collaboration, promoting diversity, and facilitating continuous learning, we empower Washingtonians to drive innovation, adapt to change, enhance individual careers, and elevate the technology sector by ensuring its competitiveness and sustainability.

INVEST IN EDUCATION AND RESKILLING

Additional investment is necessary to increase opportunities for Washingtonians to access the family-wage tech jobs that are created in this state. The top priority is to ensure WEIA funds, paid for by industry, are used toward equitable high-tech degree and credential production. We support strategies proven to increase college attendance and attainment rates, such as dual-credit programs, career-connected learning, computer science in the community college system, and the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship. Additionally, we need to increase access to and support for registered apprenticeship in non-traditional sectors like tech.

ADVANCE IMMIGRATION REFORM

Advocate for meaningful reform to the U.S. immigration system, including the creation of new visa programs for immigrant entrepreneurs, improvements to programs that help the U.S. economy meet its need for highly skilled talent, and reforms to address the growing permanent resident backlog.

Economic Development

Through advocacy, research, education, innovation, and access to funding, we empower our members to thrive in a dynamic and rapidly evolving sector. By doing so, we contribute to the broader economic well-being of Washington state, our members, and the technology industry as a whole.

ENABLE EQUITABLE INNOVATION AND GROWTH ACROSS THE SECTOR

Inform the development of policies that foster innovation, advance equity and inclusion in the use of technology, promote a strong and healthy business climate, and strengthen consumer trust.

FOSTER A ROBUST STARTUP ECOSYSTEM

Work as a partner with policymakers to make the state more attractive to entrepreneurs and private investors. Some key considerations in this effort include assessing the new realities of geographic flexibility and supporting policies that encourage access to investment capital, support commercialization efforts, strengthen access to the startup sector for women, immigrants, and the BIPOC community, and encourage entrepreneurs to build and operate their companies in Washington state.

BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Continue to partner with and facilitate collaboration among industry and policymakers to identify opportunities to narrow the digital divide,

drive internet adoption, expand digital literacy and navigator programs, support development of public-private partnerships, and advance equal access for all Washingtonians to technology and its benefits.

Thriving Communities

We work to build communities with diverse opportunities to live, work and play. We are committed to maintaining a high quality of life for individuals and families in our state through community initiatives that make Washington the place to start, relocate, or grow a tech business.

INNOVATION IN HOUSING, CHILD CARE AND TRANSPORTATION

Support policies that are essential for employees and the communities in which they live and work. Doing so ensures accessibility, reduces stress, improves health, boosts productivity, enhances work-life balance, supports economic growth, attracts and retains talent, promotes environmental sustainability, and facilitates collaboration and networking.

Top Policy Priorities

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Support an AI Task Force proposal that has a clear scope, is equitably represented among industry, academia, CBO's, and government, and has clearly defined outcomes including the opportunity to provide recommendations for it to evolve into a standing commission or task force on emerging technologies.
- Support the Department of Commerce request for increased funding to the Innovation Cluster Accelerator Program (ICAP) which provides essential funding for the WTIA Advanced Technology Cluster

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Oppose efforts to create new tax burdens

on the tech sector, including on tax digital devices, and seek other opportunities to optimize federal funding supports for state digital equity programs

- Oppose Delivery Fee Tax, which is currently under study with Joint Transportation Commission

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE

- Protect uses of WEIA funds for equitable growth of high demand tech degrees.
- Support agency decision packages that expand computer science education, including expanding the Bachelor of Science in Computer Science at community and technical colleges, the University of Washington "startup" program for underrepresented students, expanding electrical and computer engineering programs at Western Washington University, and the Washington IT Academy through the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Support efforts to increase skilling and reskilling in emerging technologies like AI, quantum information sciences, and blockchain/distributed ledger technologies
- Support the Washington State University degree pathway for supply chain management

THRIVING COMMUNITIES

Transportation

Support efforts to increase AV deployment through policy such as SB 5594

Housing

Support policy that improves affordable and accessible housing such as lot splitting and transit oriented development