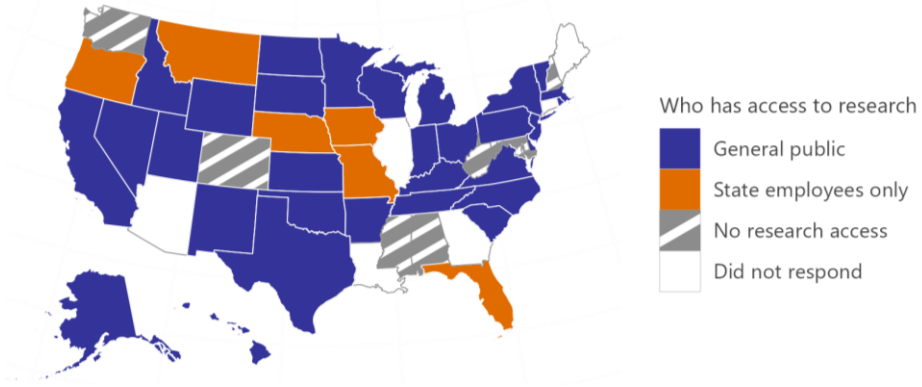
Options for Providing Washington State Employees with Access to Peer-Reviewed Research

The 2025 Washington State Legislature directed WSIPP to investigate potential funding, organizational structures, and policy mechanisms to provide Washington State employees with electronic access to peer-reviewed academic journals.

Background

Washington State employees in research roles share that having electronic access to peer-reviewed research is critical to their work. However, in Washington, employees do not consistently have access.

State-Provided Research Access in the United States



Findings

We surveyed all 49 other states, two territories, and the District of Columbia to investigate how other jurisdictions have established research access. Of the 43 respondents and Washington, 37 (84%) reported providing access to either state employees or the general public.

- All but one state (Minnesota) administers access through the state library.
- All states with research access reported subscribing to databases or other packages of journals, though only one-third reported contracting directly with individual journals; 87% of states provided inter-library loan services to users for material not in their collections.
- Most states fund research access through the state or library budget.
- Total system cost is highly variable across states due to differences in the number of potential users, actual usage, and the scope of materials subscribed to.

Limitations

In this report, we are not able to estimate the cost of providing electronic research access to all Washington State employees. Future research could focus on determining the research needs of state employees and estimating the cost to provide access.

Assignment Details

Assigned in 2025 Legislative Session
HB 1606, Sponsor: Rep Engell

Full report available on WSIPP's website

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