



STATE OF WASHINGTON

GOVERNOR'S COMMITTEE ON DISABILITY ISSUES AND EMPLOYMENT

Employment Security Department ■ P.O. Box 9046 ■ MS: 6000 ■ Olympia, Washington ■ 98507-9046

Olympia (360) 902-9511 ■ Fax (360) 586-4600 ■ Spokane (509) 482-3854

Moses Lake, Washington Outreach Summary

Introduction

The Community Outreach Subcommittee of the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE) held two meetings in Moses Lake, Washington on May 4th and 5th, 2017.

We want to recognize Mayor Todd Voth and John Williams, City Manager, for their generosity in providing the City Council Chambers for our Leadership Breakfast. We also need to thank Sophia Guerrero, Executive Secretary, for her support and guidance throughout our planning process.

Lastly, we wish to recognize Silvie Valdez, Director for SL Start - Moses Lake, for being our local liaison and for his direction and leadership in guiding our advance team. Silvie was instrumental in making several introductions to managers and staff with local disability organizations.

The following report represents a summary of the issues discussed. Suggested actions and resources are provided. A list of meeting attendees who provided their contact information is included.

Outreach

To encourage community attendance and leadership participation, an advance team visited Moses Lake and met with local elected officials, disability advocates and staff with disability organizations. A large mailing inviting stakeholders to attend the Town Hall meeting was sent and we worked with local radio and print media to publish/air the meeting announcement.

Grant County Demographics

As of 2016 the population estimate for Grant County is 93,546. It is the fourth-largest county by area in Washington and is the 14th largest by population. The county seat is Ephrata and the largest city is Moses Lake.

Local Success Stories

- Collectively the Moses Lake community successfully searches, applies and obtains grant funding for a variety of disability related programs and services.
- The County Courthouse is undergoing an extensive renovation process updating their accessibility features for the route of travel, entrances, elevators and offices to be ADA compliant making it easier for people to get to and use the services they need.
- The City of Moses Lake is using funds from the Complete Streets Program and money budgeted by the City Council to address wheelchair ramps that are out of compliance. They plan to address 77 ramps this year. They are also installing 11 audible pedestrian signals because of their public outreach.
- SL Start - Moses Lake received additional grant funding to provide services available through the Individual and Family Services waiver. Currently they are in the staff training phase and more information will be available soon.
- Moses Lake School District operates The Summit Program which is an employment program for students with disabilities who are 18 to 21 years of age. Students are placed in a variety of jobs around the community.
- Big Bend Community College in partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Moses Lake School District is offering a summer program for students with disabilities. Students between the ages of 16 and 21 can attend a 4 to 5 week program focused on work and future careers at no cost. Students can also earn high school credits for attending.

Town Hall Meeting Summary

Meeting participants represented a diverse cross section of the community including people with disabilities, family members, service providers, and elected officials. We had 22 attendees at the Town Hall Forum and 25 attendees at the Leadership Breakfast. Although discussion topics were broad, there was an emphasis on school-to-work transition services, access to mental health services, and connecting people to existing programs and services.

During the course of our meetings participants were open to possibilities and excited about making new connections. Action items were identified and commitments were made to continue the discussion to improve programs and services for individuals with disabilities.

Whether addressing housing options, employment opportunities, mental health services or access to transportation, two common threads emerged: 1) services are available but there is insufficient funding to assist everyone who is in need, and 2) many people are unaware of the services currently available in the community.

Employment

Participant Comments

Dawn is an Employment Connections Coordinator; she assists people with mental illness to become employed. One of her primary concerns is the stigma and misconceptions people have about hiring individuals with mental illness. May is Mental Health Awareness Month and her agency is conducting additional outreach activities to talk about depression and suicide during the month.

Dora works in the job placement field and deals with employers who tell her straight out that they don't hire anyone with disabilities.

Dawn and Silvie explained the key to their successful job placements is to develop strong relationships with employers. Building trust and providing good follow-through service are essential to successful job development.

When employers say they don't hire people with mental illness, Dawn reaffirms that they really do. She asks if anyone on their staff has gotten a divorce, lost a child or a spouse, cares for a family member, or has problems with credit. People dealing with these type of situations may also be dealing with mental illness.

A participant added the Moses Lake WorkSource and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation have business specialists who train employers on how to write inclusive job postings that are ADA compliant. They also provide information on the **Work Opportunities Tax Credit** and the **Tax Incentives for Improving Accessibility**. (See more information below)

Another participant asked about working while on Social Security, what happens when you earn money?

Pablo explained if you are receiving services from DVR, our counselors can answer questions about wage reporting to the Social Security Administration and about work incentives. There is a lot of information available on the Social Security webpage at <https://www.ssa.gov>.

Employer Awards Opportunity

The Governor's Employer Awards Program is an annual event honoring public, non-profit, and private employers statewide for their exemplary work to recruit, hire, retain and advance workers with disabilities. Two individual awards are also presented; the Direct Support Professional and the Governor's Trophy *in Memory of Carolyn Blair Brown*. The Direct Support Professional award recognizes a job developer/coach who has shown extraordinary ingenuity and drive to create and sustain supported employment opportunities that create jobs. The Governor's Trophy is the highest honor given to an individual with a disability who has developed or influenced programs, services, legislation etc. resulting in positive outcomes dramatically enhancing the empowerment of individuals with disabilities. **Nominations will**

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be accepted until August 31st. For more information on the Awards Program, visit the website: <http://esd.wa.gov/gcde> or call Emily Heike at 360.902.9440 or email her at ehike@esd.wa.gov.

Employment - Best Practice

Business Leadership Advisory Committee (BLAC)
Clallam County Health & Human Services
Developmental Disabilities
Tim Bruce, Planner, tbruce@clallam.wa.us
111 E. 3rd Street, Port Angeles, WA 98362
Phone: 360-417-2407
<http://www.clallam.net/hhs/HumanServices/blac.html>

The Business Leadership Advisory Committee (BLAC) is a business to business network promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities in the community and workforce. The purpose of BLAC is to reach out to business leaders to have them assist in developing strategies, supports, and marketing approaches that are more business friendly. Members are also expected to act as marketers and mentors to other businesses. The goals for the BLAC are:

- Increase the business community's and the general public's awareness of how individuals with developmental disabilities can function in the community and workplace.
- Educate community businesses on how to increase profits by hiring individuals with developmental disabilities through Federal tax credits and job carving.
- Increase employment for individuals with developmental disabilities; especially in sectors that have not employed individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Build partnerships between business, community organizations, and schools interested in promoting the employment of students or new graduates with developmental disabilities.
- Develop a network of business champions of supported employment, which fosters other businesses to hire, retain, and improve employment opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Employment - Resources

2017 The Red Book (<https://www.ssa.gov/redbook/index.html>)

The Red Book serves as a general reference source about the employment-related provisions of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and the Supplemental Security Income programs for individuals with disabilities, family members and for educators, advocates, rehabilitation professionals and counselors who serve people with disabilities.

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Work Opportunities Tax Credit

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a federal tax credit incentive that Congress provides to private-sector businesses for hiring individuals from any of ten target groups who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment. Two of the target groups are:

- 1) **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Referred Individual**
A new hire is a member of this target group, if the individual with a disability has completed, or is completing, rehabilitative services provided by one of the following:
 - A state-certified agency,
 - An Employment Network under the Ticket to Work program,
 - The U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs.
- 2) **Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Recipient**
A new hire meets the criteria for this target group, if the individual is a recipient of SSI benefits for any month during the 60 days before date of hire. Please note that Supplemental Security Disability Income (SSDI) is not the same as SSI.

The objective of this program is to enable the targeted employees to gradually move from economic dependency into self-sufficiency as they earn a steady income and become contributing taxpayers, while the participating employers are able to reduce their federal income tax liability. There is no limit on the number of individuals an employer can hire to qualify to claim the tax credit, and there are a few simple steps to follow to apply for WOTC. Click on the following information for more details:

- [WOTC Program Brochure](#)
- [Video: An Introduction to WOTC](#)
- [WOTC Tutorial: A Step-by-Step Guide for Employers](#)
- [Employer's Guide to the WOTC](#)

If you have questions or want additional information contact the Washington State WOTC Coordinator Clancy Mullins. His contact information is:

Washington State Employment Security Department
WOTC Administrative Unit
P.O. Box 9046, Olympia, WA 98507-9046
Phone: 360-902-9691 / 800-339-3981 (Toll Free)
Fax: 360-902-9662
Email: CMullins@esd.wa.gov

Tax Incentives for Improving Accessibility

Two tax incentives are available to businesses to help cover the cost of making access improvements. The first is a tax credit that can be used for architectural adaptations,

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equipment acquisitions, and services such as sign language interpreters. The second is a tax deduction that can be used for architectural or transportation adaptations. Click on this link <https://www.ada.gov/archive/taxpack.pdf> for a fact sheet with additional information.

Health Care

Participant Comments

Hailey expressed concerns about the changes in health care legislation being proposed for Medicaid. She would like more information about what is being cut and how it affects people in Washington State.

Health Care - Resource

Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler regularly issues information on the impact on Washington State of proposed health care bills to repeal the Affordable Care Act. If you have an insurance question or want to subscribe to email and text alerts from the Insurance Commissioner click the link <https://www.insurance.wa.gov/ask-mike>. To talk with staff please call the consumer hotline number 1.800.562.6900.

Mental Health Services

Participant Comments

Dawn commented that most of the mental health services available in Moses Lake are outpatient services. The majority of people receiving services through her agency are also receiving Medicaid. If a person becomes ineligible for Medicaid unfortunately they are no longer able to receive counseling services. There is one exception; individuals receiving employment related services who lose Medicaid because of their earnings, can continue their participation. This provision is covered under the Best Grant funding.

A parent shared that the mental health system does not always work. On numerous occasions, her daughter has been taken to the hospital emergency for evaluation and most often is sent home without services. She has also ended up in jail because she was deemed not bad enough to be hospitalized.

Jennifer expressed concerns about the people who are not eligible for mental health services; they have nowhere to get help. As a parent of a child who needs mental health services, she drives to Spokane to see a psychiatrist. It would be so much better to have a psychiatrist on staff in Moses Lake.

Grant Mental Health uses two registered nurse practitioners who can prescribe and have expertise in a broad range of behavioral health treatments for children, adolescents and adults. Consulting psychiatric services are available but there are no psychiatrists on staff. Typically outpatient services are provided. City View Residential provides a very limited inpatient

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treatment program and limited respite care. They are aware these programs do not meet the local demand.

Dawn explained that law enforcement and mental health service providers work together to find the best solution for each situation. Law enforcement notifies the crisis team when someone needs to be evaluated. The crisis team is a county designated team of mental health professionals who are certified as able to determine if a person needs to be hospitalized for mental health issues. The evaluation process can be frustrating and lengthy. Some situations require extended evaluations because the individual is using substances and the evaluation cannot be completed until the substance is eliminated from their system. The other frustration is finding an available “bed” or opening for inpatient services which can also extend their time in emergency.

Mental Health - Best Practice

Comprehensive Healthcare
402 5th Avenue
PO Box 959, Yakima, WA 98907
Phone: 509.0575.4084

Bridges is a 16-bed medical facility designed for evaluation and treatment staffed with expert medical and therapeutic personnel. Clients served typically exhibit acute psychiatric symptoms upon admission. People in Central Washington have quick access to psychiatric services in their community. Stays can range from a few days up to a couple of weeks. Clients leave the facility after extensive discharge planning which provides the client with an outpatient continuing care plan for follow-up services.

Mental Health - Resources

Grant Mental Health (A Division of Grant Integrated Services)
840 Plum Street
Moses Lake, WA 98823
Phone: 509.765.9239
24-hour Crisis Line - 509.765.1717 or 1.877.467.4303

City View Residential Assisted Living Facility offers respite care and in-patient services for a small group of individuals with chronic mental illness. The facility is located at 836 W. Plum Street, Moses Lake, WA 98837. Their phone number is 509.764.2690.

Crisis Services are provided to everyone who calls regardless of their circumstances. The 24-hour crisis line is 509.765.1717 or 1.877.467.4303.

Transportation Needs

Participant Comments

A participant commented that access to transportation is always a concern. We need more funding, increased hours of operation and expanded routes. Without a representative from Grant County Transit it is difficult to talk about what they are doing to address these issues.

A parent expressed concerns about her daughter's caregiver who is unable to use public transit after her shift at work and rides her bike at 10:00 pm two and one-half miles on a dark country road to the daughter's house. It would be much safer if some sort of transportation would be available for people who work later hours.

Melinda shared Grant County Transit operates a Vanpool Program which is for groups of five to twelve riders who can coordinate their transportation needs for work or school in Grant County. A vanpool can open up opportunities for students going to college and people whose worksites are not on the bus route or their work hours/days occur when the bus doesn't run. Brandy Heston is listed on the Grant County Transit webpage as the contact person. Her phone number is 509.765.0898 and her email address is brandy@gta-ride.com.

Transportation - Best Practice

Pay Your Pal
Snohomish County Transportation Coalition (SNOTRAC)
SNOTRAC Program Coordinator
8225 44th Ave. W, Ste. O
Mukilteo, WA 98275
Phone: 425.265.2226
www.snotrac.org

Pay Your Pal is a rural transportation program that helps individuals with disabilities find friends, neighbors, or others that can provide transportation with SNOTRAC reimbursing the driver for the cost of the ride. Riders must live in rural Snohomish County and not live near a bus stop.

Once the rider is determined eligible for services, the rider decides when and where they want to go, finds their own driver, and organizes and schedules their rides. Rides are not restricted to certain hours or days of the week. Each rider is responsible for ensuring driver(s) and vehicles are safe and have appropriate insurance. Because of the limited amount of funding, funds are allocated on a first come, first served basis. Riders' use, needs and eligibility are reassessed on an annual basis.

School-to-Work Transition

Participant Comments

Lavonne, a parent of a high school student who uses a wheelchair and has an Individual Education Plan, is unsure about programs and services after high school. Her son wants to continue his education and attend Big Bend Community College to become an accountant. She is uncertain of where to start her search for support services.

Pablo Villarreal with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) shared that Kathleen Grignon is the transitional counselor assigned to Moses Lake High School. Her phone number is 509.766.5571. The other counselor in the Moses Lake office is Fred Trujillo and his phone number is 509.766.4470.

LoraLyn Allen, the Disability Services Coordinator with Big Bend Community College stated she has an excellent relationship with DVR and the Moses Lake High School. In the last couple of months LoraLyn has made several presentations at the high school. She has personally met with high school students who are in the process of transitioning. LoraLyn explained that Big Bend Community College provides assistive technology and notetakers to eligible students with disabilities. The College does not provide transportation or personal care assistance. Those services may be covered by DVR. If you decide not to apply for DVR services, the College would still provide accommodations to ensure equal access to programs and services.

Ryan Oltman with Moses Lake High School introduced himself to Lavonne and encouraged her to make an appointment with him or to give him a call to discuss the transitioning process. His number is 509.766.2666 ex 41193. Ryan also announced that the high school recently started a summer employment program for students who are 18 to 21 years of age. These students are placed in summer jobs in the local community. He is working hard to reach out to parents to ensure more people aware of the program.

School-to-Work Transition - Resource

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Kathleen Grignon, Transition Counselor
309 E. 5th Ave. Ste. C
Moses Lake, WA 98837
grignK@dshs.wa.gov
Phone: 509.766.5571

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) offers pre-employment transition services to high school students starting around age 16 if they have a school-based IEP (Individual Education Plan) or 504 plans. Pre-employment transition services focus areas include:

1. Job exploration
2. Work-based learning experiences

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3. Exploring opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive or post-secondary educational programs
4. Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living

DVR also helps students and youth with disabilities prepare for and obtain competitive integrated employment. These services may include vocational counseling and guidance, independent living and self-advocacy instruction, benefits planning related to employment, assistive technology, post-secondary education or training, job placement and other services leading to competitive employment. For a brochure on DVR's transition services click on this link [School Transition Brochure \(pdf\)](#).

School-to-Work Transition: Leadership Training - Opportunity

Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) is an annual program offered by GCDE each summer for high school students with disabilities. Students come from all over the state for a week-long program on a college campus. Participants learn about advocating for themselves and how to become a leader in the disability community. YLF gives young adults an opportunity to experience many firsts: first time they have been away from their family, first time they have lived in a dorm and experienced college life, and it is often the first opportunity to meet other young people with similar disabilities. This year's program will be held at Western Washington University in Bellingham. The dates for the event are July 23 through July 28. There is no cost to attend. GCDE pays for travel, lodging and meal expenses and provides all needed accommodations. For more information visit our webpage at [Governor's Committee on Disability Issues & Employment](#) or contact Debbie Himes at 360.902.9362 or email her at dhimes@esd.wa.gov.

School-to-Work Transition: Benefit Planning - Resource

Plan to Work
866.497.9443
<http://plantowork.org>

Plan to Work is a Washington State benefits planning project. It consists of a statewide call center and a network of specially trained Community Work Incentive Coordinators who provide one-on-one Benefits Analysis and Benefits Planning. If you receive Social Security disability benefits and live in Washington State, Plan to Work can help you:

- Understand how working will affect your cash and/or medical benefits as well as other state-specific benefits;
- Understand how to apply for **Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE)** which is a work incentive that allows certain SSI recipients who are under age 22 and regularly attending school to exclude a specified amount of gross earned income per month up to a maximum annual exclusion;
- Receive support in navigating programs and services of agencies and organizations at the Federal, State, and local levels;

- Develop an individualized Work Incentive plan which allows you to make informed decisions as you work towards your goal of self-sufficiency.

Respite Services and Personal Care

Participant Comments

A participant stated that all respite/care providers need to complete 75 hours of state required training prior to providing services. The training is not available in Moses Lake nor is it available online making it difficult to access. Another challenge is the respite/care providers are poorly compensated which leads to a high turnover rate. Most people can earn more money working for the fast food industry. Moses Lake is not unique in that it needs more providers. The state needs to figure out a way to make the training available on-line and they need to increase wages to reduce turnover.

Respite Services and Personal Care: Individual Provider Training - Resource

To find more information about the required state training and where to access, click on the link <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/home-and-community-services/individual-providers>.

Grant Funding - Opportunity

Accessible Community Act - (Chapter 215, Laws of 2012), offers counties an opportunity to promote greater awareness and accessibility. The Act aims to encourage counties to establish an Accessible Community Advisory Committee (ACAC) and provides several options for counties to implement an ACAC.

If a county establishes an ACAC, it is eligible for:

- Reimbursement for member travel, per diem, sign language interpreters, real-time captioning service and other meeting accommodations.
- A grant program to fund small, local projects to improve awareness, acceptance, inclusion and access for people with disabilities.
- Technical assistance and training.

To be eligible for the grant program or for reimbursement for expenses related to Accessible Community Act activities, a county must send a letter of assurance to the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment, establishing the county has an active cross-disability Accessible Community Advisory Committee (ACAC).

The funding for the ACAC program is generated from fines individuals pay for illegally parking in disabled parking stalls. A hundred dollars of each fine goes to the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment for the ACAC program. Once a county establishes an ACAC, funds are available to pay for any expenses involved in hosting their ACAC meetings. For example, sign language interpreters, mileage reimbursement, bus and

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taxi fares, per diem, room rentals, sound systems and language interpreters can be billed to GCDE. These covered expenses are provided in addition to any grant request made by the county.

For more information on the Accessible Communities Act, contact Toby Olson at 360.902.9489 or email at tolson2@esd.wa.gov.

Marlene White with the Office of the Secretary of State added that every county is required to have a voter disability advisory committee through the county elections division. An ACAC can be formed by expanding the role of the existing voter disability advisory committee. The person to talk to is your County Auditor, Laurie Thomas, her phone number is 509.422.7240.

ACACs are active in Cowlitz, Jefferson, Pierce, Spokane and Wahkiakum counties. Spokane is working on making the community more welcoming to individuals with disabilities through community surveys and educational forums. Jefferson is updating their disability resource materials and purchased an accessible beach wheelchair to improve beach access at the Fort Worden State Park in Port Townsend. Wahkiakum is working on a capital project to make their community center accessible. Cowlitz will be installing several electronic door openers and Pierce has just submitted several proposals that are being reviewed for approval.

Leadership Breakfast Exercise

The following morning 22 elected officials and services providers attended a Leadership Breakfast to brainstorm solutions for the top 4 issues discussed at the Town Hall Meeting. Participants were led through a modified “Gallery Walk” exercise which is a technique that gets everyone into a mode of active engagement. It provides an opportunity to share ideas, review comments from other participants and prioritize issues.

Four groups were formed with each group focusing on one issue. The highlights are provided below:

1. How might we help parents/students increase their knowledge regarding transition services?

The most popular idea was to develop a resource book or to hire a staff person who is an expert on all things related to transition. This person would reach out to parents to talk about the process and options available for transitioning services. Information about transition services would be shared in a quarterly newsletter highlighting important timelines, resource information and sharing success stories.

2. What possible solutions can you think of that might help an individual with unique transportation needs?

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The most popular suggestion was to explore how to develop an Uber like transportation service to help fill transportation gaps. The group plans to contact existing taxi providers, the Community Transportation Committee and the Moses Lake Community Health Center (MLCHC). Talking with Jennifer Newhouse (MLCHC) and Rosenda Henley, a mobility coordinator with People for People would be an important first step. The group also plans to conduct a review of the Coeur d'Alene Disability Transportation model as a best practice. They want to start a dialogue with the Moses Lake School District about how one goes about purchasing surplus accessible vans or how to rent an accessible van during off hours for an Uber like program. Karen offered to gather the information and share it with Rosenda. Karen meets quarterly with a transportation group and will share the idea to get feedback and to see if they would be willing work on the project as well.

3. How could we enhance our outreach efforts to those in need in our community?

This group developed strategies to increase the resource information exchange and identified the key stakeholders. The group is interested in creating an Accessible Communities Advisory Committee (ACAC). They would like this Committee to develop a strategic plan involving key service providers to establish a resource information exchange network. The exchange network needs to be multi-faceted incorporating websites, print media, webinars and a personal advocate/navigator and have multiple points of entry. Stakeholders could include: City and County personnel; County Health Department; Chamber of Commerce; Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; WorkSource; Moses Lake School District and many others. The stakeholders would distribute the printed materials and include links to resources information on their websites. They plan to meet with the County Commissioners and talk about establishing an ACAC. They would like to use the ACAC funding to hire a staff person responsible for gathering and sharing the information about local programs and keeping the information exchange network's website current.

4. What would be the first step in improving acceptance of persons with disabilities?

Teresa Adkinson and Ryan Oltman reported out for this group. The group believes the Moses Lake Community as a whole accepts persons with disabilities. The concerns expressed at the Town Hall meeting really focused more on building employer acceptance to increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

The group focused their discussion on how to get the business community more involved. They discussed getting the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses interested in participating in a job fair for workers with disabilities. Employers who are hiring workers with disabilities could be recognized for their accomplishments along with sharing their success stories. They want to develop educational opportunities for employers about the advantages of hiring workers with disabilities and about how to supervise employees with disabilities. Outreach activities need to be expanded to ensure employers understand the business benefits for utilizing job

coaching services and the support services the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation or SL Start provides. Joy McLendon (a staff member with the school district) manages The Summit Program for students with disabilities (18-21) who have completed their educational program. She would be an excellent Community Coordinator for school-to-work transition. She is already working with local employers and building bridges between students and the business community.

GCDE Membership Recruitment – Opportunity

Membership Applicant Information/Application Process

GCDE is now recruiting to fill vacancies for 2018. The Committee is made up of 27 members appointed by the Governor to serve a term ranging from one to three years.

Applications are accepted throughout the year; those received by August 31, 2017, will be considered for the 2018 appointments.

If you have questions, please contact Debbie Himes, Program Coordinator, at 360-902-9362 or email dhimes@esd.wa.gov.