

PROGRAM YEAR 2023

Washington state WIOA annual performance narrative report

DECEMBER 2024



Submitted by:

Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board
Washington State Employment Security Department
Washington's Local Workforce Development Boards

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I: WIOA in Washington state

Last year, 84,025 Washington residents received help getting a job through our state's 40 comprehensive WorkSource offices and affiliate sites. Most needed help connecting to unemployment insurance benefits and determining their next career steps. Others needed basic, individualized or training services to overcome barriers to meaningful employment. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is a primary funding source for Washington's workforce benefits and services. WIOA Title I-B has funded activities in Washington since July 1, 2015. This report reviews the impact of those funds in Washington in program year (PY) 2023, July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024.

In PY 2023, Washington received \$67,696,193 in WIOA Title I-B funds from the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) for employment and training services designed to help employers, dislocated workers, disadvantaged adults, and low-income youth. This was an approximate 11.8% reduction in funding from PY 2022. Washington received \$15,464,004 in Wagner-Peyser Act funds to provide job search assistance, career counseling, labor market information, and "universal" services to anyone legally entitled to work in the U.S. Under Gov. Jay Inslee's guidance, the WorkSource system continues its support for the original 14 populations identified by WIOA as facing employment barriers and has extended its focus to include Black, Asian, Native Hawaiian, COFA nations, Pacific Islander communities, Latinos, LGBTQ communities, expectant individuals, veterans and military spouses for targeted outreach in Washington.

Overview of Washington's system

Washington's workforce development system is a coordinated and collaborative network of services, programs, and investments dedicated to improving the skills of state workers to meet the demands of businesses, industries, the public sector, nonprofits, and other organizations. The system is pivotal in helping a diverse range of job candidates, particularly low-income and opportunity youth, adults, and displaced workers, overcome barriers to successful employment.

WorkSource is Washington's one-stop delivery platform. The American Job Center is one facet of the system, encompassing comprehensive, affiliate, specialized, and connection sites. Funded primarily by WIOA Title I-B and the Wagner-Peyser Act, WorkSource is a primary gateway for employers seeking skilled talent and offers basic and individualized career services to people aiming to secure employment, transition jobs, re-enter the workforce, or learn new skills. Through WorkSource, thousands benefit from job listings, employability workshops, job search assistance, and specialized training for high-demand occupations and sectors.

At WorkSource sites throughout the state, individuals can find job openings, receive other job search assistance, and attend workshops that can improve employability. Qualified individuals can find assistance with specific training in high-demand occupations. Employers can get help with workforce needs including recruitment, screening, employee training, layoff aversion and employee retention. WIOA Title I-B and the Wagner-Peyser Act provide primary funding for the WorkSource service delivery system. Other formula-based and competitive federal programs that constitute core and required one-stop partners include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG), National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWGs), Job Corps, YouthBuild, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Basic Education, Carl Perkins Career and Technical Education, Community Services Block Grant, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program E&T, Housing and Urban Development E&T, unemployment insurance, Senior Community Services Employment Program, Indian and Native American Program, and the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP).

Washington's economy and labor market

PY 2023 marked a period of transition – the beginning of a softening labor market in Washington. Total employment growth from June 2023 to June 2024 dropped by 46,400 or 1.3%. For reference, total employment growth in PY 2022 was 2.8%, following 4.8% in 2021 and 5.9% in 2020. During the recovery phase, 2020-2023, employment in most sectors expanded. During the program year referenced in this report, employment in most sectors continued to expand and employment in a few sectors began to fall. The information sector suffered the deepest losses as it entered a second year of negative growth (down 2.8%). Other sectors that shed jobs included retail trade, wholesale trade, and construction.

The statewide unemployment rate increased from 3.8% (dipping to a record low of 3.6%) to 4.8%. Over the year, the size of the labor force contracted by 49,070 people or 1.2%. The increasing unemployment rate signaled an increasingly challenging market for job seekers and some relief for employers. Job postings dipped from the record highs observed following the pandemic.

State and local roles

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTB) is the state's workforce development board and manages performance accountability for WIOA. The WTB's core business is to coordinate state policy and strategic planning for the workforce development system, evaluate results, and facilitate demonstration projects that test innovations and ideas. WTB is the designated hub, serving as a coordination point for government, education, and industry partnerships.

The Employment Security Department serves as the state's WIOA Title I-B grant recipient. Employment Security's WIOA responsibilities include stewardship of the funds, oversight and monitoring, issuing

statewide policy, management of grants and contracts and allocation of WIOA Title I-B funds to local workforce development boards (LWDBs) for the delivery of services. Employment Security also provides services funded by Wagner-Peyser, TAA, Jobs for Veterans State Grant, and unemployment insurance (which includes RESEA).

LWDBs are the local leaders, conveners, and strategists of local WorkSource systems through which WIOA-affiliated programs are accessed. There are 12 LWDBs in Washington, and each is locally focused and led by a mix of business, community, labor organizations, economic development agencies, and education and training providers. Board members are appointed by Chief Elected Officials (CEOs), and councils are certified by the governor. CEOs are the local area WIOA Title I grant recipients. CEOs direct LWDB staff to administer the funds and ensure the area's workforce development system effectively responds to needs of the local economy and citizens. LWDBs convene with regional partners and stakeholders to assess skill gaps, identify emerging and future employment possibilities, and collaborate with economic developers and other partners to develop and implement the region's workforce development plan. LWDBs are the system's portal into the business community and are responsible for facilitating multiple interagency projects and programs.

WIOA Title I-B Youth Program description

Who is served: Youth must be between 14 and 24 years old, disconnected from K-12 education, low income, and meet other criteria described in the WIOA. Youth served receive additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment. To qualify as low income, one must be a TANF or SNAP recipient, experiencing homelessness, engaged in the foster care system, or have a family income below 70% of the lower living standard income level.

Participation: 2,609 young people were served by the WIOA Youth Program between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024.

Program description: The program prepares youth for success in school and work by providing counseling, tutoring, job training, mentoring, work experience, leadership development, and supportive services. Other service options include summer employment, study skills training, and instruction in obtaining a GED or equivalent.

WIOA Title I-B Adult Program description

Who is served: Specific eligibility guidelines include factors such as income, veteran status, and membership in other priority populations. Basic services are available to all adults with minimal eligibility requirements. Basic, individualized or training services are authorized for unemployed individuals unable to find jobs. In some cases, these services are available to employed workers who need more help to reach self-sufficiency.

Participation: 11,987 participants received career services, and 2,190 participants received training services from the WIOA Adult Program between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024.

Program description: The program prepares individuals 18 and older for participation in the labor force. Services are coordinated through the state's one-stop system, WorkSource. Basic services include skill assessment, labor market information, reports on training programs, and job search and placement assistance. Individualized services include more intensive assessments, work experiences and occupational skills training. Priority is given to veterans and eligible spouses over non-covered persons, followed by low-income individuals, recipients of public assistance, and those who are basic skills deficient.

WIOA Title I-B Dislocated Worker Program description

Who is served: Dislocated workers are individuals who lost jobs due to plant closures, company downsizing or some other significant change in local economic conditions. In most cases, eligible workers are unlikely to return to their occupations because those jobs are no longer economically viable, and they must be eligible for (or have exhausted) unemployment compensation. Other conditions can lead to eligibility, such as separating military and eligible spouses, being self-employed but not working due to general economic conditions, or being a displaced homemaker.

Participation: 5,166 participants received career services and 1,374 received training services through the WIOA Dislocated Worker Program between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024.

Program description: The program customizes employment and training services to meet dislocated workers' needs, establishes early intervention for workers and firms facing substantial layoffs, and fosters labor, management, and community partnerships with government to address worker dislocation. Dislocated workers are also eligible for skill assessment, labor market information, consumer reports on training programs, and job search and placement assistance. Individualized services include intensive assessments, customized plans, occupational skills trainings, and work-based learning such as paid internships and on-the-job training.

Annual report coordination with Titles II and IV

As requested by DOL and directed in guidance via TEGL 5-18, WTB staff engaged with the director of Title II programs in Washington (administered by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges) and the directors of the two Title IV programs in Washington, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in the Department of Social and Human Services and the Department of Services for the Blind. A draft of the narrative was presented for their review and feedback.

WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser Program description

Who is served: Career services are available to anyone legally entitled to work in the United States no matter age, income, or employment status. Through Title III, basic and individualized career services are offered. Veterans and their eligible spouses have priority to receive such services.

Participation: 82,781 participants were served under Wagner-Peyser with 82,781 having received career services between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024. Furthermore, 3,608 Wagner-Peyser participants received training services funded by other programs.

Program description: The Wagner-Peyser Act established a nationwide system of public employment offices, known as the Employment Service. The Employment Service seeks to improve the functioning of the nation's labor markets by bringing together job seekers and employers. The Employment Service is part of the one-stop delivery system and is co-located with the nearly 2,400 American Job Centers nationwide. Basic services include skill assessment, labor market information, consumer reports on training programs, and job search and placement assistance. Individualized services include career and vocational counseling. Business services include labor exchange, posting of job orders, job fairs, and applicant screening.

II: Customer satisfaction and effectiveness

The WTB is statutorily ([RCW 28C.18](#)) tasked to assess employer workforce needs and participant satisfaction with workforce programs. The WTB also assesses hiring practices and incumbent worker training. As WIOA Title I-B is included in these evaluations, all of them are partially funded by the WIOA state set-aside. The evaluations are used to improve our one-stop certification process.

Employer survey

The employer survey identifies employer needs and practices, and employer satisfaction with workforce system services. The findings are generalizable to employers on average in the state. They help clarify the workforce system's value proposition, customer pain points, areas for improvement, and strengths. It also estimates employer awareness of services. Primary research objectives:

- Assess the difficulty Washington employers have finding qualified applicants.
- Estimate future needs for skilled employees.
- Identify types of training that employers provide themselves.
- Assess employer awareness and engagement with the workforce system.

The employer survey uses mail, phone, and online collection. The latest survey completed in 2023 included over 20,000 records and achieved a 15% response rate.

Local workforce boards and state agencies were consulted on questionnaire development. The survey is used in state-level and local strategic workforce development plans. The governor and state legislature have used past survey estimates to prepare the budget related to workforce development in the state. Project budget was approximately \$200,000.

The 2023 employer survey yielded key insights about opportunities for improvement in service delivery. The biggest workforce challenge is finding job candidates. This holds true for openings at all levels.

- **Entry-level** hiring difficulties among those who had an opening:
 - 86% had a low number of applicants or no applicants.
 - 61% reported lack employability.
 - 56% reported lack of relevant work experience.
- **Mid-level** hiring difficulties among those who had an opening:
 - 91% claimed a low number of applicants or no applicants.
 - 71% reported lack of relevant work experience.
 - 57% reported lack of education, certification, or training.
- **Senior-level** hiring difficulties among those who had an opening:
 - 89% claimed a low number of applicants or no applicants.
 - 68% reported lack of relevant work experience.
 - 57% reported lack of education, certification, or training.

Responses to workforce challenges include revising pay scale and benefits (83%), increasing recruitment efforts (65%), and/or increasing training (56%). The complete employer survey report includes the technical methodology and in-depth findings. It is available on the [WTB website](#).

Participant survey

The participant survey is being analyzed. The questionnaire was designed in collaboration with state workforce system partners. The objectives are to measure:

- Participant satisfaction with services provided.
- Job and occupational relevancy of training and education services, i.e., usefulness of skills gained.
- The extent by which training and education services helped the participant get a job and receive better compensation.

Survey data will be combined with program administrative data to determine equity gaps in service delivery, best practices, and areas for improvement. The starting sample size for each program is 1,300 with a target of 210 completed surveys. This target is consistent with past participant survey response rates of above 10%.

The WTB has contracted with Washington State University to administer the survey. It is conducted by phone, mail, and email. The contract started in April 2023; data collection began in June 2023; data and reports were delivered in March 2024.

Effectiveness in serving employers

WIOA implemented a pilot performance measure to determine the effectiveness in serving employers. Washington chose to report on repeat business customers and employer penetration. After the pilot Washington will report on the retention metric.

III: Research and evaluations

The legislation that established the WTB also created a comprehensive research program. This program measures workforce investment activities. All evaluations are, in part, paid for by the state set-aside. Other fund sources are the state general fund and Perkins where applicable.

Performance measures focus on results for WorkSource customers who are registered for basic, individualized or training (only Title I-B) services funded under Title I-B and Title III. Separate Title I-B programs are operated for disadvantaged adults, dislocated workers and disadvantaged youth. Each program has its own measures for employment, education, and training progress.

Federal and state performance measures have precise definitions. Employment and earnings measures are based on wage records collected by state unemployment insurance systems for employer payroll taxes. Washington's federal and state measures use unemployment insurance wage records from Employment Security. In addition, Washington participates in the state wage record interchange system (SWIS), which provides unemployment insurance wage records from 52 states and the District of Columbia.

Some performance measures use information about enrollment in education or training following program exit. This information is gathered by matching enrollment data from state colleges, private career schools, apprenticeship programs, and programs seeking eligibility as WIOA training providers.

Net Impact Study

The WTB, per its statute, conducts the net impact and cost-benefit evaluation of Washington's workforce development system every four years. The study uses a control group to evaluate workforce training participants' outcomes. Prior studies were contracted to third parties at considerable expense. The most recent study was done in-house and completed in 2021. The next net impact study will begin in 2025.

The findings inform – in direct quantitative terms – the attributable economic impact of various workforce development programs. More frequent and consistent evaluation of these programs will help economic recovery and future workforce development planning efforts.

All programs evaluated in this study have a positive earnings and employment impact directly attributed to program participation for individuals on average within three years of program exit. Other influencing factors, such as race, education, employment history, and prior earnings, are constant. The remaining net impact is due to program participation itself. Using the net impact findings, it is then possible to use average program costs per person and calculate a program's cost-benefit.

Most programs achieve a measurable positive taxpayer return on investment (ROI), with programs breaking even within that same three-year observation period. However, there are several important considerations. For example, many program benefits are unobserved or intangible. Increased personal satisfaction, social justice, civic engagement, crime reduction, public health, and economic multiplier effects are linked to public investments in education and training. Public costs, such as consumption of welfare benefits, may also be reduced following program participation, which is not accounted for in this study, with the exception of unemployment insurance and Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income for vocational rehabilitation program participants. For more detail see [the 2021 Net Impact and Cost-Benefit Evaluation of Washington State's Workforce Development Programs](#).

Workforce System Matrix

Some of the work of the Net Impact Study feeds into WTB's Workforce System Matrix. For example, the program ROI is updated and used in this product. For the most recent version, see [this summary of Washington's key workforce development programs](#).

Workforce Training Results

Workforce Training Results is an annual evaluation of Washington state's workforce development system, studying outcomes of participants from 12 workforce development programs, using a standard set of performance measures. The evaluation uses a data comparison approach to answer this question: Are training programs providing opportunities and positive outcomes? The report describes the demographics and employment outcomes of each population and participant. The evaluation

includes representative programs from all four WIOA Titles. The Workforce Training Results report also includes measures such as hourly wage and hours worked. For the most recent report, see [the Workforce Training Results](#). We produced Workforce Training Results reports for the following programs:

- Programs for adults including community and technical college, job preparatory training, private career schools, apprenticeship, and a state-funded worker retraining program at community and technical colleges and WIOA dislocated worker services.
- Programs serving adults with barriers to employment including adult basic education, WIOA adult services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Services for the Blind and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) WorkFirst.
- Programs serving youth, including secondary career and technical education and WIOA youth services.

Figure 1: Participants and expenditures in PY 2023

Source: Employment Security, Labor Market Information and Research Division

Target population	PY 2023 participants	PY 2023 Expenditures	Cost per participant
Adults	11,989	\$15,973,648	\$1,332
Dislocated workers	5,166	\$16,571,580	\$3,208
Youth	2,609	\$17,588,703	\$6,742
Wagner-Peyser	82,781	\$15,464,004	\$187
Total	102,545	\$65,597,935	\$640

ESD program evaluation

Employment Security's program evaluation team within the Labor Market Information and Research Division conducts several program evaluations and research projects. These programs tend to benefit WIOA program participants. The evaluations are described below.

Re-Employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) evaluation

USDOL requires states that receive RESEA funds to spend at least 25% of these funds on effective, evidence-based components that reduce claim duration and improve employment outcomes, in fiscal year 2024. Evaluations that receive a high or moderate rating from USDOL provide evidence of effectiveness. RESEA objectives include improving claimants' employment outcomes, reducing the average duration of benefit receipt, reducing improper unemployment insurance (UI) payments, promoting alignment with the broader vision of WIOA, and giving people receiving unemployment compensation a gateway into other workforce system programs. RESEA evaluations are required by the

Social Security Act 306(c), and [UIPL 1-20](#), [UIPL 10-22](#), [TEGL 5-21](#), and [UIPL 08-24](#) provide guidance to states about the program and mandated evaluations.

Employment Security's evaluation team is conducting a randomized controlled trial (RCT) to investigate how RESEA affects claimants' earnings, employment, and claim duration. The team assigns RESEA participants to the program based on a random score. Employment Security administrative data capture information on claimant demographics, employment, and earnings, their participation in the RESEA program, and their claims data. The team supplements this data with information on the RESEA program queue and the treatment group assignment from the self-scheduling system. This study demonstrates whether RESEA, as currently provided, is effective in improving UI claimant outcomes.

The RCT is in progress. It began in December 2021. The [phase 1 report](#) assesses RESEA services delivered in 2022. It shows that, on average, being randomly assigned to receive RESEA services:

- Increased the probability of a claimant being employed in the first and second quarter after their claim by 2.4 and 1.7 percentage points, respectively.
- Increased a claimant's earnings in the two quarters following their claim by \$842.93.
- Reduced the amount of UI benefits a claimant received by 0.78 weeks or \$435.75.
- Decreased the probability that a claimant would exhaust their UI benefits by 2.7 percentage points.
- Increased the probability that a claimant utilized additional WorkSource services by at least 24.3 percentage points.

Subsequent work will include analysis of data from 2023 and 2024. The final report is expected in 2025.

The evaluation team has sought consultation on the project with Abt Global, a consulting firm hired by USDOL as a RESEA evaluation technical assistant.

The federal RESEA grant funds the evaluations. The amounts spent during state fiscal years (SFY)¹ 2020-2023 are included in the previous WIOA annual performance reports. In SFY 2024, the evaluation staff spent \$406,850.16 on the RESEA evaluation. No other funds or sources, including Washington state funds, are used to fund this project. The total expected cost of the evaluation can be up to 10% of the state's annual RESEA funding.

Agricultural and seasonal workforce services customer experience study

The Agricultural and Seasonal Workforce Services (ASWS) Advisory Committee, per [RCW 50.75.040](#), completes a report in even years suggesting how to improve the effectiveness of Employment Security's

¹ Washington state fiscal year *i* includes July 1 of year *i-1* through June 30 of year *i*, e.g., SFY 2024 runs from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024.

domestic recruitment process as part of the H-2A application. In the [2020 ASWS report](#), the advisory committee recommended a customer experience study to better understand the experience of farmworkers and employers in the Employment Security application and referral process.

Following a competitive solicitation process in 2022, human-centered design research firm Anthro-Tech was selected to conduct the customer experience study. The completed study consists of two phases. The first phase, completed in summer 2023, examined the experience of apple, berry, cherry, grape, and pear farmworkers and growers with Washington’s agricultural recruitment system, and identified areas to improve the recruitment system for U.S. workers. The second phase, completed in summer 2024, addressed the same broad research question. It built on the first phase and addressed sampling gaps, explored new topics, and examined the potential impact of policy improvements.

Anthro-Tech conducted interviews and focus groups with the agricultural employers, farmworkers, foreign labor contractors (FLCs), and WorkSource staff. In the first phase, they described how community culture influences farmwork culture; documented mismatches in employer-employee communication channels; highlighted problematic perceptions of worker reliability; and highlighted how government complexity may influence recruitment and hiring. In the second phase, Anthro-Tech provided additional insights on WorkSource office processes; employer and FLC operations and interactions with WorkSource office staff; the role of FLCs; the process of job search, recruitment, and retention during the harvest season; communication channels and barriers in agricultural recruitment; and economic pressures and labor market dynamics in the agricultural sector.

The final report contains recommendations for improving Employment Security’s agricultural recruitment system, thereby improving the recruitment and hiring experiences and outcomes of agricultural employers and workers. The ASWS Advisory Committee provided input and feedback throughout the study. The first phase of the study was funded by Washington state funds. The second phase was funded by a federal grant via the Washington State Department of Agriculture. In SFY 2024, evaluation staff spent \$210,707, including the cost of the contract.

Opioid disaster relief dislocated worker grant evaluation

The Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council (PacMtn) was awarded an Opioid Disaster National Dislocated Worker Grant program in 2019. The opioid program helps people affected by the opioid crisis by improving their employment and health outcomes. It offers reemployment services, temporary employment opportunities, and may finance training for people transitioning into health care careers related to the opioid epidemic.

The completed opioid program evaluation assessed the efficacy of these services and whether they are associated with higher earnings and decreased use of UI benefits. [TEGL 04-18](#) and [TEGL 16-21](#) provide

guidelines for the opioid program evaluation. The program evaluation team was responsible for conducting the evaluation. PacMtn was involved in planning and developing the evaluation.

The [initial opioid evaluation report](#) was published in January 2022. It found that the augmented services offered through the opioid program improve career outcomes for recipients more than if they had received WIOA dislocated worker grant services. The [second opioid evaluation report](#) was published in October 2023. It assessed whether opioid grant training and service funds are associated with better intermediate outcomes, such as service completion. The research compares program participation and outcomes for dislocated workers served by the opioid program in multiple quarters in 2022 and 2023 to the outcomes of dislocated workers served by the opioid program in multiple quarters in 2019 and 2021. The evaluation team conducted the second stage of evaluation in partnership with PacMtn.

The initial evaluation demonstrates that augmented services, especially when targeted to populations in need, can positively affect recipients. The second stage supports this conclusion and provides additional evidence about the program and its outcomes. This research informs how the state provides comprehensive services to people affected by the opioid crisis. The National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) under WIOA funded this project. The amounts spent during SFY 2020-2023 are included in the previous WIOA annual performance reports. In SFY 2024 evaluation staff spent \$37,894 on this project.

The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program evaluation

The federal TAA program, established under the Trade Adjustment Assistance Reauthorization Act of 2015, helps workers whose employment is adversely affected as a result of foreign trade. Per USDOL, the termination provision under Section 285(a) of the Trade Act of 1974 took effect as of July 1, 2022. Employment Security conducted an outcome evaluation of the TAA program to generate evidence on the career outcomes of program participants. This evaluation documents differences in outcomes based on whether claimants enrolled in a training program were co-enrolled with the WIOA Dislocated Worker program, or were eligible for wage insurance payments through the Alternative or Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance programs. The analysis used administrative data from Employment Security's ETO case management system and administrative data on UI claims, claimants' employment, and claimants' earnings. The analysis employed descriptive methods to understand whether the program has achieved its objectives and success measures, and whether certain program components were associated with better outcomes. The research will inform future program decisions. The evaluation team was responsible for conducting the evaluation. This work was completed in fall 2024. The project was funded through the federal TAA funds. In SFY 2024, evaluation staff spent \$124,810.97 on this project.

Impact evaluation of increasing the minimum weekly benefit amount

In 2021, [Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill \(ESSB\) 5061](#) amended the existing RCW to increase the minimum weekly benefit amount (MWBA) from 15% of the average weekly wage to 20% of the average weekly wage for UI claims filed July 1, 2021 or after. This effectively increased the MWBA from \$201 per week to \$295 per week. [RCW 50.12.355](#) requires Employment Security to produce an annual report from 2021 to 2025 analyzing the impact of the MWBA increase. The [2023 report](#) documents how the MWBA increase resulted in shorter possible claim durations for some MWBA recipients. The ESD Government Relations team is responsible for delivering this report. The Unemployment Insurance Advisory Committee provides feedback throughout the process. The work is funded through UI funds. In SFY 2024, the evaluation staff spent \$95,741.14 on this study.

Documenting and measuring inequities in unemployment insurance

Washington's UI program provides temporary income to qualifying individuals who lose jobs through no fault of their own. Not everyone who qualifies for the UI program applies for or is approved for benefits. The provision of UI benefits may also not be equitable. Following guidelines in [UIPL 23-21](#), Employment Security's evaluation team is examining equity and access in the UI program. This project builds capacity to prepare, organize, and analyze data related to equity within the UI program and considers possible changes that may improve equity in the provision of UI. The report to the USDOL is expected to be completed by March 2025.

The study consists of two parts. The first part measures, documents, and describes inequities in the provision of UI. The research team leverages administrative data on claims and appeals and uses descriptive methods to examine how different demographic and socio-economic groups interact with the UI program. The goal is to identify whether certain workers are less likely to apply for or receive benefits conditional on applying. Additionally, the report explores how policies such as benefit level or monetary eligibility affect program participation. The second part of the study examines the impacts of UI services on UI program outcomes. It employs an RCT where Employment Security sends letters with information about UI benefits to workers who likely experienced a recent job loss. Outreach occurred in March, May, and August of 2024. Research findings will help Employment Security improve the quality of services it provides to UI claimants and ensure services are delivered in an equitable way.

The ESD program evaluation team is primarily responsible for this research. The federal USDOL UI Equity Grant funds this project. The amount spent in the previous SFY is included in the previous WIOA annual performance report. In SFY 2024, evaluation staff spent \$585,412 on this project.

Economic Security for All (EcSA) evaluation summary

In 2023, the Washington State Department of Commerce signed a contract with Employment Security to provide the Community Reinvestment Economic Development Programs. The contract required an evaluation of Washington's state-funded EcSA initiative. The evaluation team is conducting the

evaluation. The expected completion date is June 2025. The evaluation will help inform future initiative decisions.

The study is an outcome evaluation of the state-funded EcSA program and of the Community Reinvestment Funds incentive payments introduced in December 2023 as part of the inter-agency agreement. The evaluation documents the trajectories of labor market outcomes (such as employment, earnings and hours worked) after individuals enroll in EcSA, and documents the services used by participants during their enrollment. It also tracks individual's path to self-sufficiency by comparing their quarterly earnings with their self-sufficiency goal provided by the program when they enroll.

Employment Security is also conducting an impact evaluation of EcSA using a matched sample of participants in the WIOA Adult and WIOA Youth programs as a comparison group in an event-study framework. The evaluation focuses on the effect that enrollment in EcSA has on labor market outcomes of participants, compared to what their outcomes would have been if they had instead enrolled in the WIOA Adult or WIOA Youth programs. These evaluations use data from the ETO case management system and Employment Security's wage records. Employment Security also uses data from the self-sufficiency calculator database from the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County.

This project is funded through an inter-agency agreement between the Washington State Department of Commerce and Employment Security. In SFY 2024, evaluation staff spent \$96,544.01 on this study.

Partners for Reentry Opportunities in Workforce Development (PROWD)

This project evaluates the implementation of the PROWD Program that began early 2024. The research investigates the program's roll-out and how job training and skills development services get delivered to participants. This research will explore how the program was designed, planned and delivered during the initial period of enrollment. It will also explore the strategic and operational aspects of program design and planning, and how the program continues to be delivered. The reports will contain recommendations that Employment Security can use to improve delivery of reentry workforce development services.

The evaluation team is working on the evaluation with the Workforce Development Center of Seattle-King County. The study is expected in 2026. Research activities include document review, qualitative interviews with staff and administrators, and field observations at participating partners in the Seattle area. Participant data comes from the federal Grants Proposal Management System (GPMS) and Employment Security's ETO case management system.

The U.S. Department of Justice and the USDOL fund this evaluation. In SFY 2024, evaluation staff spent \$21,477.74 on this evaluation.

IV: Common exit

Washington's common exit policy is found in Section 1.5 of the [Data Integrity and Performance Policy Handbook](#) affiliated with [WorkSource System Policy 1020, Revision 2](#). The common exit policy applies to the following ETA-funded programs:

- WIOA Title I-B youth
- WIOA Title I-B adult
- WIOA Title I-B dislocated workers
- WIOA Title III (Wagner-Peyser Act)
- National Dislocated Worker Grants
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- Jobs for Veterans State Grant

Section 1.5.1 of the handbook notes that our state calculates the "Exit Date" automatically, after the system determines that participants have not received any participation-level service for 90 consecutive calendar days and are not scheduled to receive future services. In accordance with the requirements of TEGL 14-18, the exit date is applied retroactively, after a 90-consecutive day period without participation-level services, back to the last day on which individuals received participation-level services provided by any program included in WorkSource System Policy 1020, Revision 2. Individuals who are participating in more than one program will have a single common exit date based on the last completed participation-level service. This ensures the exit date is the same as the last date of service for all programs in the participation period.

V: Data validation, reporting and integrity

Employment Security's workforce monitoring unit is the agency's principal WIOA Title I-B, Wagner-Peyser, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), and Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program monitor. The unit performs annual onsite monitoring of each local workforce development board (LWDB) and other direct sub-recipients for WIOA. The unit conducted quarterly monitoring of TAA and performs ongoing monitoring of Wagner-Peyser. The unit incorporated data element validation (DEV) into the annual PY 2023 WIOA Title I-B monitoring visits, TAA quarterly monitoring visits, and ongoing Wagner-Peyser reviews. Data validation activities for WIOA Title I-B, Wagner-Peyser, and TAA were based on guidance in Washington state's data element validation policy, [WorkSource System Policy 1003, Revision 6](#), which was based on guidance in TEGL 23-19, Change 2. Below are the procedures for each program.

WIOA Title I-B programs and Dislocated Worker Grants

A participant record table assigns a random number to each record in the “rnum” field four weeks before each LWDB monitoring entrance. The table includes the participant individual record layout (PIRL) data values to be validated against source documentation.

The participant record table is filtered by report name to only display participant records that include ITSS services. The table is then filtered by enrollment start date to include new enrollments since the last monitoring review up to the last day of the last quarter. This ensures all records have data values on the current PIRL to validate. Using the rnum field to create a random sort of the filtered results, the first respective number of unduplicated participant records is selected to reach the desired sample size as detailed below.

Sample size and methodology: For each of the 12 LWDB monitoring reviews ([PY 2023 Monitoring Schedule](#)):

- Each core Title I-B program has 10 records selected, with a minimum of seven reviewed depending on resources.
- Each DWG program, as identified in scope on the LWDB monitoring entrance letter, has five records selected with a minimum of three reviewed depending on resources. (Note: all DWG records will be recorded on one DWG worksheet.)
- If less than 10 or five records, respectively, appear in the table, all will be sampled.

The sample size methodology is based on a fixed number of participant records with all required data elements being reviewed per the resources available. The sample includes a mix of active and exited participant records. Monitoring validates all elements identified in each program’s DEV worksheet.

Timelines and documentation of error resolution: Once the review is complete, the LWDB receives the program daily observation report (DOR), which includes a DEV tab listing failed items. They are required to resolve the items and communicate when resolved or, if they can’t, why they can’t. It will also list any elements that exceed the 20% programmatic pass/fail ratio that requires a corrective action plan from the LWDB.

DEV worksheets identify passes and failures for each record by element. A comment is added to each cell in the worksheet with a failure value, identifying the cause of the failure. LWDB failures are color coded light orange, and MIS system issues are coded bright yellow. LWDB failures are copied into the program DOR.

The pass/fail column in the DEV worksheet indicates whether each data element passed or failed based on exceeding the 20% programmatic pass/fail ratio as prescribed in Policy 1003, Revision 6. If any element fails, it will be coded light orange for LWDB level failures and bright yellow for MIS system issue

failures. LWDBs and Employment Security are required to develop and submit a corrective action plan for element failures assigned to them.

LWDBs and Employment Security have 30 business days from the day they receive either the program DOR or the DEV worksheets to resolve errors, document resolution and outcome, or reason for failure to resolve in the respective program worksheets and send the completed worksheets back to the monitoring unit. Responses are used to document and communicate the resolution, or reason for failure to resolve, or the corrective action plan.

Wagner-Peyser

A participant record table assigns a random number to each record in the rnum field four weeks prior to each WorkSource office monitoring entrance. The table includes the PIRL data values to be validated against source documentation.

Sample size and methodology: For monitoring visits to workforce development offices ([PY 2023 Wagner-Peyser monitoring schedule](#)), the sample is pulled from the Workforce Development Area records. A sample of at least 15 records from the offices being monitored is selected. If there are fewer than 15 records, then all records are selected, including at least two migrant seasonal farm worker records if available.

The sample size methodology is based on a fixed number of participant records. The required data elements selected for review are identified on each PY 2023 program DEV Worksheet, being reviewed per the resources available. The sample includes a mix of active and exited participant records. Monitoring validates all elements identified in each program's DEV worksheet.

Timelines and documentation of error resolution: The monitoring unit identifies passes and failures at the division level. The Monitoring unit summarizes the results on a DEV action item worksheet.

After each monitoring, the WorkSource office receives the DEV action items worksheet showing items that failed. The office has 30 business days to resolve errors, document resolution and outcome, or reason for failure to resolve an item. The office uses the correction section of the DEV action items worksheet to communicate the resolution or reason for failure to resolve an individual participant item.

Semi-annually and annually DEV results are provided to Wagner-Peyser division contacts on a DEV action items worksheet. If any element fails across the quarter, the owner of the failure develops and submits a corrective action plan for element failures that exceed the 20% programmatic pass/fail. Wagner-Peyser division staff send any required corrective action plans or progress updates to the monitoring unit within 30 business days of receiving the DEV action items worksheet.

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

Labor Market Information and Research Division staff provide the Monitoring unit with a participant record table that assigns a random number to each record in the rnum field four weeks prior to each WorkSource office monitoring entrance. The table includes the PIRL data values to be validated against source documentation.

The table is filtered by enrollment start date to include all new enrollments since the last monitoring review up to the last day of the last quarter. This ensures all records have data values on the current PIRL to validate. Using the rnum field to create a random sort of filtered results, the first five unduplicated participant records are selected, or the number of records needed to reach the desired sample size detailed below.

Sample size and methodology: Annually, a sample of 80 records are selected and reviewed. The sample records are distributed across four quarterly samples within a calendar year. The sample records cover at least five regions each year ([PY 2023 TAA monitoring schedule](#)). Sample records total 20 records reviewed for each quarter and cover at least two trade certifications.

For each WorkSource office, the monitoring unit reviews at least five records randomly selected. If less than five records appear in the table, all available records are sampled. (Note: records are recorded on one Trade Act Program DEV worksheet for each WorkSource office to resolve any record failures.) If less than 20 records appear in the table across the quarter, then all available records are sampled.

The sample size methodology is based on a fixed number of participant records with all required data elements being reviewed per the resources available. The sample includes a mix of active and exited participant records. Monitoring validates all elements identified in each program's DEV worksheet.

Timelines and documentation of error resolution: Once the review is complete, WorkSource offices receive the DEV worksheet showing items that failed and required a response that identifies their efforts to resolve any failed items. The local WorkSource office has 30 business days from the day they receive their DEV worksheet to resolve errors, document resolution and outcome, or reason for failure to resolve an item in their respective worksheets.

On a bi-annual and annual basis, overall DEV pass/fail results were provided to TAA program operations and Employment Security's IT and LMIR divisions. The pass/fail column in the DEV worksheet indicates whether each data element passed or failed based on exceeding the 20% programmatic pass/fail ratio. If any element failed across the quarter, the owner of the failure is required to develop and submit a corrective action plan for those element failures that exceed the 20% pass/fail ratio. Program and division staff have 30 business days from the day they receive their DEV worksheet to submit corrective

action plans. Existing/historical corrective action plans for known element failures will require an update rather than a new plan.

Title I-B, Dislocated Worker Grants, Wagner-Peyser and TAA

In the second quarter of the program year, Employment Security's Data Integrity Team pulled a sample of participants and exiters for validation of elements 1600-1607, 1614-1618, and 1700-1706. Elements 1610, 1612, and 1613 are not being populated.

Sample size and methodology for the 12 LWDB monitoring areas:

- For core Title I-B programs 5% of records or a minimum of 25 records will be selected, if 5% of records is less than 25 records then those will be reviewed.
- For Title III program (Wagner-Peyser) 5% of records or a minimum of 25 records will be selected, if 5% of records is less than 25 records then those will be reviewed.
- For TAA program, as applicable, 5% of records or a minimum of 10 records will be selected, if 5% of records is less than 10 records then those will be reviewed.
- For DWG program, as applicable, 5% of records or a minimum of 10 records will be selected, if 5% of records is less than 10 records then those will be reviewed.
- If the sample size is less than the sample mentioned above, all will be sampled.

The sample size methodology is based on a fixed number of records with all required data elements being reviewed per the resources available. The sample includes a mix of active and exited participant records.

On an annual basis, following completion of the monitoring reviews, the monitoring unit reviews the results of the full sample for each program to identify what elements exceed the error rate. The elements identified are included as technical assistance in our annual DEV training, except for MIS system failures. The MIS systems failures are addressed in the WIT replacement process.

At the conclusion of the PY 2023 data element validation, Employment Security assessed the effectiveness of the data validation process and updated procedures for PY 2023 to address any gaps, inconsistencies, and inefficiencies. Employment Security provided data element validation training during annual monitoring tool review sessions in September 2023. Employment Security's approach for the regular review of the quality of reported program data is addressed during annual, quarterly, and ongoing monitoring visits. Data validation results are saved for five years. Source data for wages is destroyed immediately after use.

Data quality control and integrity

Each quarter, Employment Security uses a combination of standardized SQL queries and repeated test submissions to the workforce integrated performance system (WIPS) edit check system to identify data requiring correction prior to submitting the quarterly PIRL. Once records are identified for correction, records are sent to area contacts who work with staff to ensure adequate training to correct existing errors and prevent future errors. If widespread data entry problems are identified, the configuration is reviewed to determine if additional safeguards can be added to the system configuration and additional training materials are developed and delivered to the field. Where data is associated with critical areas of performance (e.g., measurable skill gains), Employment Security creates specialized reports addressing data gaps, errors, needed corrections, and opportunities to improve business processes. Due to State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) agreement requirements, the Data Integrity Team validated the wage data elements for records identified by the monitoring unit for review. The wage data elements are validated the second quarter of each program year.

VI: Waivers

Washington is not in receipt of any WIOA waivers.

VII: Rapid Response activities

The purpose of the statewide Rapid Response Team (SRRT) is to strengthen relationships and collaborate across the state to provide effective, locally driven Rapid Response services and strategic guidance to the 12 local LWDBs. SRRT is composed of three entities.

1. The WIOA required Rapid Response unit at Employment Security made up of the Rapid Response manager, Trade Adjustment Assistance operator, unemployment insurance liaison, and Dislocated Worker Program manager.
2. The Washington State Labor Council (WSLC), a statewide labor consortium that participates in Rapid Response events, assists with trade application research, collaborates with the unions for represented worker groups in layoffs and closures, and provides Rapid Response services to all impacted workers irrespective of whether they are union represented.
3. Washington Workforce Association (WWA), a membership organization of the local workforce development boards that collaborates on statewide strategy and direction.

Rapid Response and layoff aversion activities

- Facilitated quarterly community of practice events to share best practices and resources, strategize how best to serve business and job seeker customers, and strengthen services across the state.
- The Rapid Response system came together to update the unemployment insurance section of the standard Rapid Response presentation that can be customized to local areas and used for in-person and virtual sessions.
- Rapid Response/Business Services teams worked with businesses on recruitment and retention and layoff aversion including offering incumbent worker training (IWT), on-the-job training (OJT) candidates, and promoting SharedWork to businesses who will need to lay off staff temporarily due to business changes.
- Trained and upskilled additional unemployment insurance and WorkSource staff to present at RR events.
- Rapid Response teams in Seattle-King County, Pierce County, and Snohomish County workforce development areas present monthly public virtual sessions called Life After Layoff to increase access to Rapid Response for laid off workers. The events are promoted through the UI recent applicant lists, social media, local news media, WorkSource, and to affected workers through their employer.
- In PY23 the Rapid Response system served 4,686 impacted workers from 1,657 businesses.

Strategies for linking Rapid Response recipients to American Job Centers

- During Rapid Response events we provide information packets and contact information for the Rapid Response coordinator for follow-up. WorkSource partners attend to create familiarity, so when customers come into the WorkSource office for services, they see a familiar face. We follow up with impacted workers using surveys.
- Larger WDAs use online referral portals to direct impacted workers to program staff.
- Life After Layoff event attendees are provided presentation materials and referrals to WorkSource, WIOA, and Worker Retraining as needed.
- Rapid Response coordinators collaborate with Employment Security staff to reach recent unemployment insurance applicants.

Business engagement, sector strategy and career pathways

The Rapid Response program is integrated into the overall Business Services program and menu of business services in the 12 local areas. Following a layoff in a certain industry or sector, Rapid Response

coordinators and Business Services teams host targeted job fairs with local businesses in the same industry or sector for workers interested in staying in the same industry. The program also focuses on transferable skills that benefit businesses and workers by matching them to available jobs in local sectors.

National Dislocated Worker Grant activities

Employment Security, in partnership with three LWDBs, applied for and received several federal grant funds from the USDOL to help Washingtonians affected by the opioid crisis.

Figure 2: Opioid Crisis Disaster Relief Grant Funds

Source: Washington state, Employment Security Department

Grant	Grant recipient	Grant period	Grant amount	Grant status
Opioid Crisis Disaster Relief NHE NDWG	Pacific Mountain LWDB	11/01/2021 to 10/31/2023	\$800,000 first increment of \$1,785,474	Expended Thru 6/30/23 \$860,282
WA Southwest NHE DWG	Workforce Southwest Washington LWDB	9/27/2023 to 9/30/2025	\$800,000 first increment of \$1,427,124	Expended Thru 6/30/24 \$377,192
WA Spokane NHE DWG	Spokane Workforce Council LWDB	9/18/2023 to 9/30/2025	\$992,363 first increment of \$2,997,088	Expended Thru 6/30/24 \$527,519

Opioid Crisis Disaster Relief NHE NDWGs (TEGL 4-18)

These projects provide employment services to eligible people impacted by health and economic effects of opioid use disorder. LWDBs expanded their regional partnership between Employment Security, local governments, nonprofit organizations, regional health networks, and higher education to provide individualized career, training, and support services. Individuals were also placed into disaster relief employment and transitional jobs to serve as peer recovery navigators for other participants.

- **Opioid Crisis Disaster Relief NHE NDWG/Pacific Mountain LWDB/\$1,785,474:** After receiving a no cost extension of the period of performance to Oct. 31, 2024, Pacific Mountain achieved 122% of contract enrollments (237 of 195) and employed participants at exit at a rate of 70% of goal (90 of 129).
- **WA Southwest NHE DWG/Workforce Southwest WA LWDB/\$800,000:** Within the first three quarters of implementation, Workforce Southwest WA achieved 370% of contract enrollments (222 of 60) and employed more participants at exit than anticipated with 420% of goal (84 of 20).

- **WA Spokane NHE DWG/Spokane Workforce Council LWDB/\$992,363:** Throughout the first three quarters of the grant, Spokane Workforce Council achieved 87% of contract enrollments (58 of 67) and employed more participants at exit than anticipated with 113% of goal (9 of 8).

The state was awarded \$15 million for the QUEST Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) from USDOL which had an initial performance period of Sept. 26, 2022, through Sept. 30, 2024. Employment Security received a no cost extension of this award, extending the period of performance through Sept. 30, 2025. This grant supports employment equity and individual, community and industry resilience as the nation prioritizes economic and employment recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Funds enhance ongoing workforce system efforts to empower our state's unemployed and underemployed workers through worker and business engagement, elevating equity, and connecting job seekers with high quality jobs. Eleven of the 12 Washington LWDBs received funds as subrecipients under the grant.

As of June 30, 2024, performance exceeded expectations, with enrollments statewide 218% of the goal (2,111 of 968). Exits to employment exceeded the goal at a rate of 172% (806 of 468), and statewide expenditures were \$10,521,571, or 70% of the total available funds.

VIII: Statewide fund activities

Economic Security for All (EcSA)

EcSA is a poverty reduction and equity program that aims to help participants, namely those experiencing poverty, reach economic self-sufficiency. It launched in 2019 in four pilot areas. In 2021, Gov. Jay Inslee expanded EcSA to seven more regions. In 2022, state general funds were dedicated to the program giving additional local flexibility and making EcSA a statewide program. The program was codified by the legislature into law in 2024, ensuring that EcSA will continue to support participants for years to come.

EcSA brings multiple programs together at the local level to help people move out of poverty. EcSA partners with Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and focuses on serving participants that qualify for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and people at risk of experiencing poverty.

Promising developments

- **Investment in equity:** LWDBs are building relationships with organizations and community groups that serve homeless and Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) communities. In

Seattle-King County, service providers contract directly with organizations that have long-standing relationships in highly impoverished and BIPOC neighborhoods.

- **Partnership with Washington Department of Commerce:** The EcSA program partnered with the Department of Commerce’s Community Reinvestment Fund to make \$50 million available to expand EcSA participant incentives and increase business services with a focus on Black, Latine, and Tribal populations.
- **Free college:** Employment Security and the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) finalized a partnership that offers EcSA participants automatic income eligibility through Washington College Grant – Connect. This automatic eligibility allows participants to begin pursuing training and academic pathways without completing a Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA) or Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- **Demonstrated success:** Independent third-party evaluator, Social Policy Research, indicates: “While in many workforce development programs most participants tend to return to their pre-participation earnings level, EcSA completers’ post-completion earnings appear considerably higher than their pre-participation levels, with median quarterly earnings increasing by 71%. The reason for this appears to be the ability of EcSA to switch participants’ employment from lower paying to higher paying jobs.”

Significant performance milestones

- EcSA exceeded all statewide enrollment, training, and self-sufficiency goals.
- Helped 844 people reach self-sufficiency, with a median annualized income of \$42,300.
- Significantly increased recruitment and participation of historically marginalized populations and unhoused people. Washington’s population is 22% BIPOC; EcSA participation is 48% BIPOC.
- EcSA is helping 4,751 people statewide achieve and maintain self-sufficiency. 85% of them had annual incomes below \$9,860 when they enrolled.
- Total cost for the most recent single year was \$11,194,234, including federal and state funding.
- The USDOL highlighted EcSA as a best practice. It was also featured at the annual convening of the Governor’s Office of Equity and the National Association of Workforce Boards.

Career Connect Washington

Career Connect Washington legislation passed in April 2019, along with significant funding to begin implementation. Program builders create, manage, and scale specific career-connected learning programs. To date, 151 unique program builder proposals have been funded, 121 of which were funded by WIOA Statewide Activities funds allocated by Gov. Jay Inslee. During PY 2023, at the direction of Gov. Inslee, 23 proposals were competitively selected, totaling \$3.9 million of PY23 WIOA Title I

Statewide Activities funds. These program builders will provide professional services to industry, education, and workforce partners to assist them in building, scaling, and enhancing career connected learning programs. These programs will provide access to training, credentials, and career opportunities for populations with barriers to employment in the advanced manufacturing, agriculture, automotive, construction, health care, hospitality, information technology, maritime, and life sciences sectors.

Industry and philanthropic leaders from the private sector provide critical feedback on CCW work. This helps ensure that industry voices are represented throughout the system.

The U.S. Department of Commerce awarded \$23.5 million of Good Jobs Challenge funds to the Washington Student Achievement Council to support sector-based CCW program expansion. USDOL awarded \$5.6 million of Apprenticeship Building America funds to ESD to develop new registered apprenticeship and apprenticeship preparation programs. Implementation of both projects began in earnest during PY 2023. Through the Good Jobs Challenge, CCW Sectoral Partnerships (many of which are led by local workforce development boards) will train 5,000 Washingtonians and place more than 3,150 into good jobs. Apprenticeship Building America is on track to support the development and expansion of more than 20 registered apprenticeships and 10 recognized pre-apprenticeships.

Five years of WIOA Statewide Activities investments by the Inslee administration has grown CCW from a Governor's initiative into a comprehensive system supported by state appropriations and numerous federal grants. The approach could be a promising practice for states seeking to scale public and private investment in work-based learning programs to better meet the needs of both young adults and industry.

Appendix 1: Statewide performance reports

This section looks at specific statewide outcomes (participant counts, expenditures, employment and earnings) for Title I-B and III programs. A few notes may help with interpretation. Federal deadlines and the need for prompt reporting mean that the year-long periods used for some measures are not the same year-long periods used for others. Finally, since these are outcome measures, they concentrate on participants who have left WIOA programs and do not include those who are still participating.

Employment rates fourth quarter after exit and median earnings measures are calculated for participants who exited between July 2021 and June 2022. The two-year span is denoted as exit year in the table but is often also called program year. All metrics for participants who exited between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022, were that of July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023. Federal employment rates four quarters after exit are calculated for participants who exited between January 2021 and December 2021.

Federal youth employment, education and training rates second quarter after exit and median earnings measures are calculated for participants who exited between July 2021 and June 2022. Federal youth employment, education and training rates fourth quarter after exit are calculated for participants who exited between January 2021 and December 2021.

Not all individuals who exited are included in performance measures for a variety of reasons. For example, it does not include federal employment or self-employment.

Results for WIOA adults

Workforce Training Results evaluates the labor market outcomes of program participants using their employment and earnings during the fourth quarter after leaving a program. When considering these outcomes, please note that there is considerable change across years in the labor market conditions.

The annual update of these analyses is underway. Find [data for participants exiting for the most recently available year](#) on the WTB website.

Unemployment insurance wage files were used to examine employment rates and earnings among participants who left programs during recent program years. Data was collected from the unemployment insurance agencies in Washington as well as those outside of the state. Results are shown in *Figure 3*.

Figure 3: Employment and earnings of WIOA adult participants in fourth quarter after leaving program
Washington state, 2016 through 2022. Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR Division, PIRL

Performance measure by exit year	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Employment rate	67%	66%	69%	59%	69%	70%
Employees in full-time job	62%	64%	60%	58%	55%	59%
Median quarterly hours	456	470	450	430	420	440
Median hourly wage	\$23.22	\$25.79	\$26.12	\$23.70	\$23.72	\$26.15
Median annualized earnings	\$41,500	\$44,700	\$43,500	\$41,000	\$39,100	\$45,200

Note: These figures apply to those with employment reported to ESD one year after leaving program. Rate does not include self-employment, employment outside the Northwest or military service. We estimate these figures understate total employment by approximately 10%. Full-time employment is defined as averaging 30 or more hours per week; percent is of those employed. Earnings and wages are inflation-adjusted to first quarter 2023 dollars.

Results for WIOA dislocated workers

In *Figure 4*, dislocated worker results vary with economic conditions and the characteristics of participants. Change can occur quickly from year to year as industrial conditions change and different groups of employees face layoffs. Find the most [recent Dislocated Worker data](#) on the WTB website.

Figure 4: Employment and earnings of WIOA dislocated worker participants in the fourth quarter after leaving program

Washington state, 2016 through 2022. Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR Division, PIRL

Performance measure by exit year	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Employment rate	72%	74%	73%	63%	71%	72%
Employees in full-time job	75%	72%	64%	60%	63%	63%
Median quarterly hours	490	483	450	440	450	450
Median hourly wage	\$27.74	\$26.97	\$26.39	\$26.08	\$26.43	\$26.68
Median annualized earnings	\$47,100	\$51,200	\$47,300	\$45,400	\$48,800	\$47,300

Note: These figures apply to those with employment reported to the state's ESD one year after leaving program. Rate does not include self-employment, employment outside the Northwest or military service. We estimate these figures understate total employment by approximately 10%. Full-time employment is defined as averaging 30 or more hours per week; percent is of those employed. Earnings and wages are inflation-adjusted to first quarter 2023 dollars.

Results for WIOA youth

Figure 5 displays results for the WIOA youth programs. The WIA figures include both older and younger youth. Labor market results are presented for participants who were not enrolled in secondary education at exit. Find the [most recent youth data](#) on the WTB website.

Figure 5: Employment and earnings of WIOA and WIA youth participants in the fourth quarter after leaving program

Washington state, 2016 through 2022. Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR Division, PIRL

Performance measure by exit year	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Employment rate	63%	66%	66%	61%	69%	68%
Employees in full-time job	38%	37%	32%	33%	33%	34%
Median quarterly hours	319	320	300	320	320	330
Median hourly wage	\$15.74	\$16.06	\$16.94	\$17.62	\$17.85	\$18.21
Median annualized earnings	\$19,500	\$20,000	\$18,400	\$20,400	\$20,500	\$22,100

Note: These figures apply to those with employment reported to the state's ESD one year after leaving program. Rate does not include self-employment, employment outside the Northwest or military service and thus understates total employment by approximately 10%. Full-time employment is defined as averaging 30 or more hours per week – percent is of those employed. Earnings and wages are inflation-adjusted to first quarter 2023 dollars.

Annual and quarterly performance reports

[Annual and quarterly WIOA performance reports](#) are available on the Employment Security website. Statewide and regional reports are available as single quarter and rolling four-quarter reports.

Appendix 2: Evaluations, surveys and studies

WTR background

Organizational unit responsible: Research Unit, WTB

Methodology: <https://wtb.wa.gov/research-resources/workforce-training-results/>

State partners involved in planning and feedback: 12 LWDBs, Employment Security Department, Department of Social and Health Services, Labor & Industries, Office of the Superintendent for Public Education, and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Workforce Training Results (WTR) funding: As the WTR evaluation examines the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Title I programs in addition to non-WIOA programs, part of the cost of the evaluation is paid out of the state set-aside.

Coordination with partners: WTB has worked with all of the LWDBs and relevant agencies, particularly the Employment Security Department. The effort has been to ensure that the data is accurate as well as meaningful at the local level. The results are produced and made available for review annually in the fall.

Cooperation with DOL: All WTR analysis and results have been made available when requested and all surveys and requested site visits have been accommodated.

Customer satisfaction and net impact evaluations

The Washington Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTB) conducts three evaluation studies on a staggered schedule. Two of the research studies focus on customer needs and satisfaction, while the other seeks to determine the return on investment for participants in workforce training and education programs, taxpayers, and society. These include:

- The Employer Workforce Needs and Practices, and Satisfaction Survey (the Employer Survey)
- Workforce Training and Education Program Participant Satisfaction Survey (the Participant Survey)
- The Net Impact and Cost-Benefit Evaluation of Washington State's Workforce Development Programs (The Net Impact Study)

The employer and participant surveys are conducted on a rotating basis every two years, while the Net Impact Study occurs every four to five years. The Employer Survey was last published in early 2020, the Net Impact Study in early 2021, and the Participant Survey is currently under development and has an expected publication data in late 2023. The workforce training and education programs evaluated are:

- Community and technical college career and technical education programs
- Adult Basic Education programs
- Private career school programs
- Apprenticeship programs
- Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) federally funded programs
- WorkSource Employment Placement programs
- Employment services for students, youth and adults with disabilities through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation at the Department of Social and Health Services.
- WorkFirst services at the Department of Social and Health Services

As WIOA Title I is included in these evaluations, all of them are partially funded by the WIOA state set-aside. They are all used to assess customer sentiment, which is then used as part of the continuous improvement process for one-stop certification process.

Employer survey

The employer survey identifies employer needs and practices, as well as employer satisfaction with workforce system services to better meet the needs of its customers. The findings, which are generalizable to employers on average in the state, helps clarify the workforce system's value proposition, customer pain points, areas of improvement, and domains of strength, as well as estimates for employer awareness of these services. The primary research objectives are:

- Assess the difficulty Washington employers have in finding qualified applicants
- Estimate future needs for skilled employees
- Identify types of training that employers provide themselves
- Assess employer awareness and engagement with the Workforce System

The Employer Survey uses a combination of mail, phone, and online collection. The latest survey sample included over 20,000 records and achieved a 15% response rate. A sufficiently large number of survey mail-outs were required to reliably sample from all 12 workforce development areas. Several factors were identified as contributing to lower response rates in the past, including survey length, bad address data, and lack of an explicit survey follow-up strategy. Past improvements that boosted survey response rates included reduced survey length, supplemental web-survey options, and telephone follow-ups.

Local workforce boards and state agencies charged with administering Workforce Development Programs were consulted on the questionnaire development. The survey is used in the preparation of strategic state-level workforce development plans and in the strategic plans of the workforce development councils serving 12 local workforce areas in Washington. The governor and state legislature have used past survey estimates to prepare the budget related to workforce development in the state. Project budget was approximately \$200,000.

The 2023 Employer Survey yielded key insights regarding opportunities for improvement in service delivery:

Biggest workforce challenge is finding job candidates, this holds true for openings at all levels.

- **Entry-level** hiring difficulties among those who had an opening:
 - 86% had a low number of applicants or no applicants.
 - 61% reported lack employability
 - 56% reported lack of relevant work experience
- **Mid-level** hiring difficulties among those who had an opening:
 - 91% claimed a low number of applicants or no applicants
 - 71% reported lack of relevant work experience
 - 57% reported lack of education, certification, or training
- **Senior-level** hiring difficulties among those who had an opening:
 - 89% claimed a low number of applicants or no applicants
 - 68% reported lack of relevant work experience
 - 57% reported lack of education, certification, or training

Responses to workforce challenges include revising pay scale and benefits (83%), increasing recruitment efforts (65%), and/or increasing training (56%).

The complete employer survey report is thorough and includes a full description of the technical methodology and in-depth findings. The report is available through the WTB website.

Participant survey

The participant survey is currently under development and will closely follow the methodology of the Employer Survey. Questionnaire design is being done in collaboration with State Workforce System partners. The objectives are to measure:

- Participant satisfaction with services provided.

- Job and occupational relevancy of training and education services, i.e., usefulness of skills gained.
- The extent of which training and education services helped the participant get a job and receive better compensation.

Data gleaned from these measures will be combined with program administrative data to determine equity gaps in service delivery, best practices, and areas of improvement. The starting sample size for each program is 1,300 with a target of 210 completed surveys for each of the 8 to 12 programs being evaluated. This target is consistent with past participant survey response rates of between 10% to 50%.

The WTB has contracted with the Social and Economic Sciences Research Center (SESRC) at Washington State University (WSU) to handle the administrative aspects of the survey. The survey is conducted by phone, mail, and email over the course of two months. The survey contract with SESRC started in April 2023; data collection began in June 2023, data and reports were delivered in August 2023.

The net impact and cost-benefit evaluation of Washington state's workforce development programs

The WTB serves as the state's objective evaluator of public investments in workforce development and maintains a dashboard of annual performance outcomes. Every four to five years, the WTB takes a closer look at the state's workforce development system to evaluate how well it is serving its customers by measuring the direct economic impact programs have on participants and the broader public.

The net impact and cost-benefit evaluation study is rigorous and detailed. While most evaluations of workforce system programs identify average participant outcomes like earnings and employment, this study takes it a step further by using a quasi-experimental design to estimate the causal relationship between programs and participant outcomes. The findings produce employment, earnings, and social assistance outcomes that are attributed to program participation itself by isolating other influencing factors, such as prior employment history, education, gender, or race. This makes it possible to calculate the average net benefit of these programs for individual participants, and a return on investment to society and taxpayers.

Prior studies were contracted out to third parties at significant cost. In 2018, the WTB's research unit successfully replicated findings from previous studies to determine the feasibility of bringing the study in-house, and within an acceptable level of staff time. Bringing the study in-house was made possible by increased staff expertise and technical know-how in econometric research design, statistical programming, and project management. An independent review was conducted to validate the evaluation methodology used. This new approach yields several advantages:

- Substantial cost-savings.

- Standardization of research design and evaluation methodology.
- Study repeatability and reproducibility.
- Increased research unit capabilities.

These improvements make it feasible to conduct the study more frequently and make incremental improvements to the process with acceptable fiscal commitment. Independent reviews can be conducted periodically to preserve the integrity of the study.

The findings of this study reveal – in direct quantitative terms – the economic impact of workforce development programs. More frequent and consistent net impact and cost-benefit evaluation of these programs will be helpful to ongoing economic recovery, and workforce planning efforts.

The programs evaluated serve around 343,000 Washingtonians per year at an average total cost of \$2.6 billion, which includes federal and state funds plus student tuition. The direct social impact – the total economic impact of these programs – is a net gain of \$14.5 billion over five years, for a social return on investment (ROI) of \$5.60 per \$1.00 spent.

From a taxpayer perspective the total cost is about \$1.6 billion, with an estimated net gain in federal, state, and local tax revenues of \$1.1 billion over five years, rising to \$3.3 billion over 10 years, which is a net five-year taxpayer ROI of \$0.67 per dollar spent, and a 10-year ROI of \$2.02.

The programs evaluated in this study address different populations with different needs and barriers. Because of these differences, comparing program ROI, as a means of ranking program efficacy or allocating public resources between these programs, requires a closer look at participant barriers — and outcomes — over time. Findings from more frequent and regularly conducted studies will help track specific program performance, measuring improvements or setbacks over multiple years and provide insights into larger trends in Washington state’s workforce development system.

Project budget for the independent peer review was \$50,000, with an additional estimated 960 FTE staff hours allocated to the project at a cost of about \$67,200.

The [complete report is available](#) on the WTB website.

Appendix 3: Washington's local workforce development boards



Each of the 12 certified local workforce development boards (LWDBs) oversee their respective areas ensuring the workforce system focuses on the local economy. LWDBs are authorized by local elected officials and board members are appointed by the chief local elected official. Boards are governed by business majority, and local business leaders chair the boards. LWDBs serve local needs and are responsive to the thinking and demands of local business and community leaders. As community-based organizations, they are grounded by the values and commitments of the people they serve to the vitality of that region.

LWDBs are the strategic visionaries for local implementation of WIOA legislation and funds. They convene a diverse set of public and private stakeholders to develop workforce solutions that drive the economic prosperity for their residents, businesses and industries. LWDBs analyze economic and labor force data to identify targeted industries and determine where talent gaps exist; cultivate the local partnerships needed to fill those gaps; and pursue the resources necessary to execute local workforce

development strategies, interagency initiatives, projects and programs. Their oversight of the local service delivery system, including WorkSource, requires they determine strategic outcomes and local performance standards.

LWDBs understand that workforce development must directly focus on overcoming barriers that limit people and economies. Equitable recovery and prosperity require strong focus on the untapped, underutilized talent of Black, Asian, Latinx, and other communities of color; and those who are affected by poverty and the justice system.

LWDBs are a group of community leaders appointed by local elected officials and charged with planning and overseeing workforce programs and services in their area. These boards are made up of people who represent business, education, economic development, organized labor, community-based organizations, state agencies, and local government. Washington has 12 local workforce areas to support locally-driven decisions and programs. These boards play multiple roles in their communities in support of the local workforce:

- Convener: Bringing together business, labor, education, and economic development to focus on workforce issues and promote strategic alignment. These collaborations strengthen our local economy.
- Workforce analyst: Developing, disseminating, and assisting with the analysis of current labor market and economic information and trends in industry sectors in partnership with the Employment Security Department and local community-based organizations.
- Broker: Bringing together community stakeholders to solve common problems; aligning systems and strategies; forging new relationships between business and education.
- Community voice: Articulating the issues for the needs of a skilled workforce. Demonstrating and speaking to the effectiveness of training programs.

Capacity builder and investor: Enhancing the region's ability to meet the workforce needs of local employers through the utilization of federal and state funds.



Olympic Workforce Development Council

Our purpose

The OWDC leads regional workforce efforts, dedicated to the development and implementation of innovative workforce systems, with a focus on community prosperity and economic well-being.



Serving Clallam, Jefferson and Kitsap counties

Workforce development plan

In 2023-2024, the Olympic Consortium Board and Olympic Workforce Development Council successfully developed, approved, and began implementing a comprehensive 4-year Workforce Development Plan, designed to address current and emerging business needs across our region. This initiative was guided by an extensive Business Needs Assessment, which formed the foundation for identifying key labor market gaps, sector growth opportunities, and skills mismatches. This assessment included engagement with businesses across diverse industries, workforce analysis, and economic trend reviews to ensure a well-rounded understanding of the workforce demands.

Through the collective efforts of three work groups, Economic Development, Sector Strategies, and Community Resources and Services, developed and refined an agile Strategic Workforce Development (SWD) Coalition. These groups consisted of representatives from economic development agencies, key industry sectors, community resources, and service providers. The SWD Coalition serves as a dynamic partnership between employers, educators, workforce agencies, and community organizations, ensuring that the Plan remains responsive to changing economic conditions and labor market demands. The coalition along with the OCB and OWDC, will continue to guide workforce initiatives, monitor the effectiveness of programs, and make data-driven adjustments to meet evolving business, job seekers, and community needs over the next four years.

Exceptional business and job seeker services

This year's additional influx of Washington State funds, we were able to leverage WIOA funding to provide new opportunities to serve businesses and job seekers. This unique funding enabled the area the chance to offer a diverse range of programs tailored to meet the unique needs of our region's workforce. From youth employment initiatives to specialized training for high-demand industries, we ensured that businesses and job seekers alike continue to have access to comprehensive support and

resources. We've worked extensively to solidify, strengthen and create opportunities for all populations to succeed and for businesses to thrive in a dynamic and evolving economy.

In response to the recent closure of the McKinley Paper Company in Clallam County, we successfully executed a Rapid Response event aimed at supporting the 419 impacted workers. The event featured a range of services, including details about unemployment insurance, health benefits, job search assistance, workforce development services, training and education, and other support services to aid workers during the challenging time. OWDC remains committed to ensuring that all affected individuals receive the necessary assistance to secure sustainable employment.

WIOA business development and the SWD Coalition

The OWDC successfully organized the first event of the SWD coalitions in Kitsap County. The Women's Empowerment Workshop focused on women looking to enter or re-enter the workforce. In collaboration with multiple community resources and businesses, the event included resume building, mock interviews, dressing for success, financial support, education options, entrepreneurial information, and an inspiring keynote speaker.



Frank Portello, Alissa Durkin, Monica Blackwood, Molly Propst, Nicole Brickman, and Luci Bench

We successfully implemented and facilitated a commerce reinvestment fund small business grant, awarded to five Black, tribal and Latine business owners in Clallam, Jefferson, and Kitsap counties. Each awardee received up to \$10,000 in funding for employee development or asset purchases for their business. This initiative not only supported these small businesses but also allowed us to further leverage our limited WIOA business resources effectively.

We continue to increase collaboration with local business development organizations in our region including Kitsap Economic Development Association, SBDC, Regional Small Business Development Offices, Greater Kitsap Chamber of Commerce's Workforce Development Committee, North Olympic Peninsula Resource Conservation & Development Council, and Olympic and Peninsula College's Workforce Development departments has led to promoting a stronger network of resources and opportunities for growth.

Successful partnerships and program innovations

The Pathways to Success WIOA Youth Program and the Olympic Federal EcSA Young Adult Program actively foster and expand partnerships that enhance the services available to participants. By connecting individuals to community resources, these programs help youth and young adults overcome barriers to achieving their career goals. Notable partnerships include HeadStart, Northwest Maritime Center, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Olympic and Peninsula Colleges, Coffee Oasis Shelter, and many others, all of which provide crucial support in education, housing, vocational training, and social services. This year also marked significant collaboration with the Suquamish Indian Tribe and Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe. WIOA case managers connected with these tribal communities to explore worker-based grant options, enhancing our ability to serve diverse community members. Furthermore, we entered into an agreement with the Suquamish Indian Tribe to assist the OWDC with outreach and prioritize recruitment of participants from members of the Suquamish community, as well as individuals from Black, Latine, and tribal populations.

Innovations in co-enrollment and referral processes

This year, the programs focused on streamlining co-enrollment processes, especially with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), allowing youth to access additional services without duplicating efforts. By aligning enrollment timelines between DVR and the youth programs, case managers can offer participants more efficient and coordinated services. Additionally, these improvements help overcome common barriers like transportation and scheduling conflicts.

WIOA Title I – Youth Pathways success stories

One young man enrolled in the program after struggling to complete high school and support himself. With program support, he transitioned to online school and secured an internship with Habitat for Humanity. After gaining valuable experience and earning his high school diploma, he found full-time employment, earned a management position, and achieved self-sufficiency.

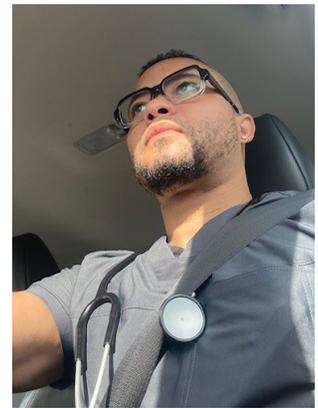
Another participant connected with the program after release from juvenile detention. With guidance, she secured employment and earned her GED. Now enrolled in the Welding Program at Peninsula College, she maintains excellent grades and is on track to graduate in 2025 as a certified welder.

WIOA Title I – Adult and Dislocated Worker

OWDC WIOA Title I wrap-around services and co-enrollment in a collaborative, integrated service delivery design plays a crucial role in supporting individuals by addressing a broad range of needs. By combining workforce development services with supportive resources like housing, transportation, and health care, this approach ensures that participants have the tools they need to succeed both personally and professionally. Through co-enrollment, programs can maximize available resources and

streamline support for participants, creating a seamless experience that leads to sustainable employment outcomes. These comprehensive strategies have produced numerous success stories, demonstrating the power of collaboration in transforming lives.

After the pandemic, **Jhon** left retail and took an entry-level position at a clinic, aspiring to start a medical career. Realizing that advancement required further training and certification, he sought assistance at WorkSource Sequim. With support from WIOA and WorkSource staff and Peninsula College, they were able to cover educational costs and he was able to enroll. After 10 months of study, Jhon said, "I am a proud, nationally certified phlebotomist and a Washington state certified medical assistant. I could have not done this successfully without WIOA, the Sequim office team and the Peninsula team. I am forever grateful. Thank you for changing my life and providing for a brighter future for me and my family."



Jhon became a phlebotomist with the help of WIOA

Alejandra is a single mother and full-time student who struggled with balancing part-time work, school, and child care, and faced financial hardship and mental health challenges. The WIOA program helped her with child care assistance and financial incentives eased her transition into a better job. She made the dean's list, was invited to join the honor society, and will graduate with honors. The support of her WIOA caseworker was especially motivating, providing encouragement and accountability throughout her journey. She expressed deep gratitude for the WIOA program and staff's unwavering support.



Alejandra secured full-time employment with support from WIOA

Patrick attributes the program's financial and career support to their ability to pursue educational and career goals in environmental science. With financial aid from WIOA's QUEST program, they returned to college to work toward a degree in forestry. This assistance has not only alleviated financial stress but also enabled them to focus on studies, volunteer work, and job training. WIOA covered food and transportation expenses, allowing participation in medical appointments, professional development, and outreach initiatives. They expressed deep gratitude for their case manager, whose mentorship and support have been invaluable, inspiring them to achieve their goals. The program provided guidance on financial



WIOA helped Patrick return to college

management and continues to play a vital role in helping them take tangible steps toward a fulfilling career.

Northwest Wooden Boat School partnership

This year, with the implementation of National Dislocated Worker Grant QUEST, OWDC staff partnered with the Northwest Wooden Boat School. The partnership created dynamic opportunities for workforce development, skill-building, and community growth in an in-demand industry. WIOA has implemented Work Experience positions and On-the-Job trainings including systems internships and digital media coordinator position, promotion of facilities Manager to operations manager, and upcoming hire of an administrative assistant.



WIOA partners with Northwest Wooden Boat School to offer internships

“I am grateful for the significant impact this collaboration has had and am happy to publicly share my appreciation for the contributions WorkSource has made to both our students and staff at the Boat School,” said Betsy Davis, executive director.

In conclusion

This year’s efforts and braiding of multiple funding streams have demonstrated our commitment to promoting a skilled and adaptable workforce within our region. Through targeted initiatives such as the Rapid Response event for McKinley Paper Company workers, Northwest Wooden Boat School partnership, collaboration with local business development organizations, and the implementation of programs like on-the-job training, we have made significant strides in addressing the needs of both job seekers and employers.

We look forward to building on this year’s successes and continuing our purpose to lead regional workforce efforts, committed to developing and implementing innovative workforce systems with a focus on community prosperity and economic well-being.

Introduction

The Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council (PacMtn) serves Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, and Thurston counties, continuing its mission to develop a thriving, equitable, and inclusive regional workforce. In PY23, PacMtn strengthened its commitment to strategic coordination, customer-centric services, and data-driven decision-making through the One Workforce initiative, aligning with federal and state workforce guidelines. This year, PacMtn leveraged key programs, including Economic Security for All (EcSA), Journey 2 Jobs (J2J), and various WIOA initiatives, to deliver impactful services across its region.



Serving Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, Pacific and Thurston counties

Key program highlights

The One Workforce Initiative

Building on the success of previous efforts, PacMtn fully implemented the One Workforce model to enhance service delivery and align workforce development efforts with local labor market demands. The model aimed to streamline service duplication and co-enroll participants across workforce programs. By refining this approach and using up-to-date economic data, PacMtn ensured participants had access to jobs that aligned with regional labor market needs.

Focus on Economic Security for All (EcSA)

PacMtn's EcSA programs continued to play a pivotal role in reducing poverty and promoting economic stability by supporting individuals and families at or below the federal poverty level. The program provided participants with essential training, credentialing, and employment services to help them achieve financial independence. EcSA's targeted efforts ensured a meaningful reduction in barriers to employment for underserved communities.

Journey 2 Jobs (J2J)

PacMtn's Journey 2 Jobs program continued its support of Olympia's unhoused community by providing peer navigator training, work experience, and access to essential employment services. In PY23, J2J served 93 participants, with 65 employed through the HIRE Crew initiative. Additionally, 22 participants transitioned into full-time employment, and 11 secured permanent housing. This program remains a critical resource for connecting individuals to housing-focused partners and linking them with the broader WorkSource system.

Workforce development for justice-involved individuals

PacMtn remains a leader in providing workforce services to individuals transitioning from the justice system. In PY23, the Thurston County Jail Re-Entry program served 45 participants, with 29 securing employment. Additionally, the TST Community Grant supported 99 participants, providing training to 76 individuals and helping 45 secure employment. These initiatives play a vital role in reducing recidivism by ensuring that justice-involved individuals have access to fair employment opportunities and comprehensive workforce development services tailored to their unique needs.

Looking ahead

As PacMtn moves into PY24, it remains committed to expanding access to workforce development services while adapting to the region's evolving labor market conditions. By continuing to strengthen partnerships with employers and community-based organizations, PacMtn is well-positioned to build on its PY23 successes and further its mission of driving positive and inclusive workforce outcomes across the Pacific Mountain region.

Northwest Workforce Council

Creating wealth and financial resiliency for all

The Northwest Workforce Council has maintained a steadfast commitment to reach its vision: to create a robust, sustainable, regional economy. In doing so, actionable strategies this past year include specific and intentional development of services, programs, and projects that target individuals who may be left behind during economic recovery, those who have traditionally not experienced the same levels of economic opportunity, and those who struggle to develop wealth and assets.



Serving Island, San Juan, Skagit and Whatcom counties

Young adults, people living in rural communities, long-term unemployed, people of color, and low-income families with dependent children traditionally had lower training and educational achievement levels, employment outcomes, and advancement opportunities prior to the devastating economic effects of the COVID 19 pandemic. These harder-to-engage populations are now reaping the benefits from investments from the workforce system. The following are a few highlights that illustrate the results of these investments.

Economic Security for All (state funded and federal WIOA IB funded)

The Northwest area saw significant increases in both enrollments and employment outcomes with the EcSA Programs. In PY 2023 NWC had 192 active participants, a 36% increase from 2022. Additionally, there was a parallel upward trend in employment outcomes illustrating the successes of the program with 44 families reaching their self-sufficiency goals. Island County also began offering the full EcSA program this program services in PY23, and planning was initiated to offer the full EcSA program in Skagit for PY 2024. Whatcom has operated the program successfully for three program years.

The Northwest's multigenerational approach to EcSA incorporates a year-long financial literacy program which includes a financial resiliency component. This includes a series of workshops covering all areas of financial literacy, monthly knowledge nights to home in on topics selected by the participants, as well as a financial literacy component for their dependent children. They are matched with a trained financial coach (typically professionals from the financial industry) who work with the families on setting and achieving



Joseph, director of engineering for AC Hotel by Marriot, starting at \$85,000 per year

short-, mid-, and long-term financial goals. This component is provided concurrently with career development services focusing on training in the northwest's key sectors. Participants earn incentives along the way, for reaching their financial and career goals.

During the mid-point of PY 2023, the Community Reinvestment Fund (a state funded initiative targeting increasing the wealth and assets for individuals negatively impacted by the war on drug policies) enhanced the services and supports for participants in the EcSA programs. These funds provide financial incentives for participants in the EcSA programs who are making progress on their career path plans. The funds also allow local areas to create meaningful and innovative strategies to businesses owned or operated by tribal, Black, and Latine communities. Specifically, Northwest launched a business accelerator grant program providing tools and equipment necessary to the vitality of their business. Activities also included partnering with three of the local tribes (Swinomish, Lummi, and Nooksack), launching a young adult entrepreneurial program, and partnering with an agency that interrupts gang violence.

Quality Jobs, Equity, Strategy and Training (QUEST) Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker Grants

The focus of this grant is to recruit, serve, and provide high-quality jobs to individuals whose employment has been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with a strong focus on equity.

QUEST supported the enrollment of 145 individuals (far exceeding the target of 56) into program services with the intention to provide a comprehensive set of services that result in entry into high-wage high-demand occupations for the historically marginalized and underserved populations. Most are still participating in these services. Of those enrolled, the demographics of the participants exceed their percentage in the local civilian labor force and include: 37% are individuals with disabilities, 62% are low income, 17% identified as Latine, and an additional 26% identified as BIPOC, 48% had educational achievement levels of high school or less and 21% are from highly rural areas.

Of special note is a cohort of 20 individuals who participated in increased capacity training with a local CDL training provider in the spring of 2024. All 20 completed their CDL training program by June of 2024. By the following quarter, 50% started employment in commercial driving with starting wages ranging from \$21.50 to \$30.00.

Additionally, QUEST funded the development of the maritime pathway maps (English and Spanish versions) utilized by WIOA IB providers, K-14 educators and Skill Centers. The investment of this resource will outlive the grant for many years to come. Most recently, 350 job seekers attended the Maritime Job Fair in May 2024 and received copies of these maps which outline the career pathways in commercial fishing, shipbuilding and repair, and underway careers (seaman, ferry worker careers).

MARITIME INDUSTRY

SHIPBUILDING & REPAIR

WHAT IS SHIPBUILDING & REPAIR?
 These careers include the manufacture, repair, and maintenance of ships, which may occur onshore or at sea.
 Drug screening (including for marijuana) may be required for your career.
 These careers may require a driver's license, U.S. Passport, Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC), and Merchant Mariner's Credential.
 You may also be required to complete a medical certificate.

EXPLORE THE OTHER SIDE FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES IN NORTHWEST WASHINGTON STATE.



The Northwest Workforce Council is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Washington Relay Service: 7-1-1
 For more information about program funding, visit <https://nwboard.org/about/federal-resources/>

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT NORTHWEST WORKFORCE COUNCIL AND ITS PROGRAMS, VISIT [NWC-CONNECT.ORG](https://nwc-connect.org)




START YOUR CAREER
 These entry level jobs are the perfect way to start your career in shipbuilding and repair.



SHIPYARD WORKER/DETAILER/LABOR
 Assists with boat maintenance, sanding, painting, cleaning and may assist with vessel haul-outs and launching.



REPAIR SHOP OR MAINTENANCE TECH.
 Repairs and installs engines, navigational equipment, operating systems, steering mechanisms and pumps.



RIGGER
 Works with scaffolding, both set-up and teardown, throughout the shipyard. May operate cranes when trained.

© ENTRY-LEVEL WAGE: \$20+/hour.

ADVANCE YOUR CAREER
 From an entry level job, you can advance into these careers (and more) with additional education or on-the-job training.



QUALITY ASSURANCE INSPECTOR – \$50,000+
 Ensures work products and repairs are completed according to safety and technical specifications.



DIVER & UNDERWATER WELDER – \$65,000+
 Inspects and works underwater to monitor and repair the ship's hull and other structures.



DIESEL SERVICE MECHANIC – \$65,000+
 Installs, maintains, and repairs diesel engines.



ELECTRICIAN – \$80,000+
 Installs, maintains, and repairs electrical components of ships, machinery, and equipment.



NAVAL ARCHITECT / MARINE ENGINEER – \$100,000+
 Designs and oversees testing, installation, and repair of marine apparatus and equipment.



SHIPYARD MANAGER / SUPERVISOR – \$100,000+
 Oversees and manages daily operations in a shipyard from shipbuilding to repair.

Sample page from the shipbuilding and repair maritime pathway map

Developing career pathways in the marine industry

With lively waterfronts, filled with hard-working skilled employees, Northwest Washington has long been a hub for commercial fishing, maritime recreation, and shipping. Businesses in the maritime sector generate thousands of jobs in each of the four counties serviced by the Northwest Workforce Council.

Working together with employer partners, waterfront coalitions, and trade groups, NWC supports employment in the businesses in the marine industry. One business that has benefited is Nichols Brothers Boat Builders (NBBB) in Freeland on Whidbey Island. In early 2023, the company identified an opportunity to upskill their managers and supervisors to develop their leadership capabilities and improve operations. As a company that works with the US Navy and the Washington State Ferries system, these skills are required for long-term success.

Through the Path Forward Leadership Workshop, 10 managers and supervisors learned ways to enhance workplace culture, navigate challenges in the workplace, build rapport and trust with their teams, and provide relevant coaching to staff. Through the successful completion of this program, NBBB was able to create backfill positions, and increase productivity as leaders were developed, which resulted in improved teamwork and collaboration.

Pivoting to another important element in developing a robust workforce in the marine trades, is getting young folks interested early in these occupations. In May, NWC was a key player at the Port of Bellingham Marine Trades Career Exploration and Job Fair. The fair, held at Fishermen's Pavilion just a stone's throw from Bellingham Bay, brought together over 40 businesses hiring entry-level and experienced job seekers, training providers looking to provide skills to potential and future employees, and other community organizations interested in the growth of this vital sector. Students from local high schools and adults who have an interest in working in the maritime industry discussed career and training opportunities with the many businesses and training providers that attended.

The Northwest Maritime Apprenticeship recently received full recognition in January of 2024 and are looking to launch a pre-apprenticeship program through NWC that leads to apprenticeships (in 2025). Currently there are three cohorts of apprentices in the marine trades. NWC is enrolling young adult WIOA IB participants to start their journey in the marine career pathways, getting a jumpstart on a lucrative career.

Developing partnerships with construction pre-apprenticeship programs and work experiences

Finding a way to a career in the construction trades can be challenging for someone who has no experience. Working together with Apprenticeship & Non-traditional Employment for Women (ANEW), NWC sponsored a cohort of six WIOA IB Young Adult and Adult participants last summer to take part in the ANEW Construction Boot Camp program. This 4-week pre-apprenticeship program, held at the Northwest Electrical Industry JATC in Mount Vernon, taught pre-apprentices the skills needed to enter the construction trades. Trainees received certifications in Flagging, Forklift and OSHA 10. Nearly 70% of the cohort was able to land good-paying jobs in construction or commercial driving. This partnership really made a difference in their lives and set them on a path forward.

NWC also partnered with Associated General Contractors (AGC) in June of 2024 to host a 6-week work experience in construction. A diverse group of 16 trainees enrolled in WIOA IB Out-of-School Youth and Adult programs, and the Community Reinvestment Funds program completed the work experience with AGC and learned valuable skills that will assist them in getting hired in construction or further their training. All participants earned flagging and forklift certifications, first aid, basic life support and worked one-on-one with their NWC coordinator to secure employment or other training opportunities. In the short time since completing the program, over 60% have found employment or have embarked on other training in a trade to increase their ability to find employment in construction.

The Snohomish County Future Workforce Alliance's (FWA) focus on facilitating an equitable recovery and employer and worker resiliency catalyzed efforts in PY23. Guided by the Workforce Development Strategic Action Plan (WDSAP), initiatives in PY23 continued to focus on system transformation and responsiveness, and advance the plan's three overarching goals:

1. Facilitate and build a culture of collaboration among all workforce system stakeholders.
2. Grow and diversify jobs in Snohomish County.
3. Cultivate talent through increased skill development and opportunities for Snohomish County.



Serving Snohomish County

The FWA's PY23-24 work plan is composed of targeted, short term action items and continued, sustained efforts stemming from the WDSAP and its charter. The WDSAP is aimed at advancing a gold standard workforce development system.

Overview of the PY2023-24 work plan and action items

Collectively, the three overarching goals of FWA are designed to evoke stronger customer outcomes among underserved communities and employers by moving towards a community-responsive model of workforce development and service delivery. The FWA goals, work plan, and correlating action items are inherently and intentionally connected to achieve the desired outcomes. The implementation of the work plan is reflected in the report below.

Over enrollment in programs creates risk associated with performance attainment and overburdens system partners. WFS is actively working with subrecipients to address increased demand for services, emphasize quality service and outcomes for participants, and provide technical guidance to ensure outcome data is properly recorded. Additional measures are being explored (lean process, improved referrals, increased basic services). FWA and Workforce Snohomish are committed to building the capacity of our subrecipients and community partners, as community engaged practice is the key to effective and sustainable workforce service delivery. A community driven approach must shape the future of workforce development, with reciprocal learning and community voice at the forefront.

Goal 1: Facilitate and build a culture of collaboration among all workforce system stakeholders

Community centered service delivery strategy

The community centered service delivery strategy upholds the definition of community-engagement, developing reciprocal partnerships with a wide range of organizations with the intent of improving access and services to historically underserved populations. These partnerships are as diverse as the communities they serve and continue to evolve based on need, organizational mission alignment, and clear definition of community-engaged practice and partnership. In PY23, Future Workforce Alliance, in partnership with Workforce Snohomish and WIOA Adult/DW and Youth subrecipients, continued to expand partnerships with community-based organizations.

Community-based organization partnerships

Informed by an increasing need for services, the Board charged Workforce Snohomish (WFS) with recertifying WorkSource connection sites. WorkSource maintains seven community partners that operate 26 connection sites throughout Snohomish County. An additional six partners have been identified for the creation of connection sites specific to youth. Connection sites provide resources and much needed access to workforce support to residents of Snohomish County who are unable to easily access the WorkSource center.

The Economic Security for All (EcSA) program, funded by a combination of state and WIOA discretionary dollars, offers resources and support to individuals in Washington facing significant financial challenges to help them achieve financial stability and career success. The program, aimed at poverty reduction, has become a vital resource in service to Snohomish County residents. In PY23, Snohomish County served a total of 446 individuals, of which 406 were below 200% of Federal Poverty level. Participants enrolled in EcSA are afforded a greater number of individualized services to achieve their self-sufficiency goal. The advancement of partnerships with local By-and-For Organizations in EcSA programs is planned in the coming year, including Black, Latine, and tribal organizations that are embedded within the communities they serve. As enrollment in EcSA programs continues to increase, these partnerships are a critical component to reaching underserved and diverse populations across the county. Investment in grassroots By-and-For Organizations within our community ensures programming is designed to meet the specific needs of target populations and builds capacity for increased engagement with underserved communities.

Financial empowerment

Financial empowerment occurs when individuals and families have access to the knowledge and resources necessary to make informed financial decisions that promote financial health and wellbeing. It broadens the discussion about employment to include holistic considerations of professional development and financial security. When appropriately integrated into workforce development programs, financial empowerment results in higher rates of training program completion and a more present, motivated and productive workforce. Since PY22, WFS has been a leader in this work, integrating financial empowerment into programming, training community partners, and leveraging resources to further support Snohomish County residents on their path to economic security.

Led by the Workforce Snohomish Financial Empowerment Unit, the Snohomish County Asset Building Coalition (ABC) is a community-driven space for non-profit organizations, government agencies, local businesses and financial institutions to collaborate and share resources, tools and best practices that can be used to support the financial stability and vitality of our community. The Snohomish County ABC has increased the capacity of community partners to integrate financial empowerment support into their service delivery processes, while establishing a forum for more comprehensive community engagement and partnership.

The innovative work of the Financial Empowerment Unit and the Snohomish County ABC is catalyzing efforts to get residents of Snohomish County out of poverty, financially stable, and economically thriving. Named a best practice by Washington State Department of Commerce for its integrative approach to serving residents and businesses of Snohomish County, the Financial Empowerment Unit will continue to become an integral part of the workforce development system as it is embedded into EcSA and the launch of new matched investment savings accounts (MISA). Additional opportunities to integrate financial wellness into workforce development programs is underway for PY24 with the launch of financial coaching initiatives and a pilot local financial opportunity center, in partnership with LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation).

Goal 2: Grow and diversify jobs in Snohomish County

Workforce Compass

In PY23, WFS launched Workforce Compass in partnership with FutureFit AI, a free resource for Snohomish County residents. Workforce Compass navigates job seekers to the most relevant employment opportunities, educational and training programs, and community resources to provide a comprehensive and personalized experience. As a place where job seekers and service providers connect, Workforce Compass furthers the goal of creating a more human-centered approach to workforce development, emphasizing a move toward skills-based hiring. The platform bridges the gap between employers and job seekers, creating a more well-rounded database, through the facilitation of expert matchmaking based on transferrable skills and the infusion of upskilling and reskilling opportunities. User participation of the platform is steadily increasing, with 1,105 total job seeker users registered as of July 2024. Workforce Compass is expanding access in PY24 to include key local employers, increasing our ability to meet high-demand industry employer needs for skilled job candidates and assist local job seekers in building career roadmaps that allow for upskilling, career progression, and sustainable high-quality employment.

Business engagement and retention

The Workforce Snohomish Business Engagement and Retention team continues to adapt to changing economic conditions and employer needs for talent. Despite the slight decline in overall employment, sectors including advanced manufacturing continue to report severe shortages. The Business

Engagement and Retention team maintained its charge in PY23 to foster relationships with local employers and support immediate needs, while cultivating a deep understanding of emerging skill and hiring needs in the advanced manufacturing, health care and social assistance, information and communication technology, maritime and construction and infrastructure sectors.

As job seeker activity increased, employer utilization of business services also increased. In PY23, the Business Engagement and Retention team:

- Engaged 186 unique businesses through events.
- Facilitated the creation of nine Work Experience (WEX) opportunities.
- Delivered three Rapid Response events serving 48 workers from 65 businesses.
- Facilitated 28 successful hires through Employer of the Day events.
- Maintained and engaged with a monthly prospect and follow-up list to respond to the holistic needs of local businesses.

Targeted job fairs and career exploration events have not only catered to industry-specific needs but have also provided a platform for effective career guidance and networking. To increase impact, the Business Engagement and Retention team actively works to align training opportunities with employer demand. Utilization of Workforce Compass to support job and career fair registration in the coming year will also serve to strengthen results for participants. With the increasing demand for talent, the Business Engagement and Retention team will continue to focus on building their relationship and workflow with WIOA subrecipients and system partners in PY24, as well as participating in community-engagement efforts to support employer hiring and skill development needs.

Goal 3: Cultivate talent through increased skill development and opportunities for Snohomish County

Refugees and immigrants

Snohomish County welcomed 1,938 refugee and humanitarian immigrant applicants between October 2022 and June 2023. Although 49% of the local refugee population is estimated to have post-secondary education--up to and including a bachelor's degree--they remain chronically underemployed due to cultural, structural, and personal barriers. In response to this persistent gap and to ensure program design was aligned with the needs of this community, WFS conducted three focus groups through community-based organizations, with community leaders assisting in the groups to ensure a culturally appropriate and responsive setup. These focus groups uplifted the voice of refugee community members and, in response to the system gaps expressed, WFS directed the investment of state funding under the EcSA program to enhance system capability to serve refugees living at or below 200% of federal poverty level. WFS also shifted its strategy to focus on targeted skills reframing, which resulted in more participants achieving gainful employment in a shorter period. Redirecting partnerships to grassroots By-and-For Organizations, like Refugee Empowerment Hub, Congolese Integration Network,

and Latino Educational Training Institute, in PY24 creates an opportunity for better program alignment and ensures both responsiveness and accountability to the communities we serve.

Data analytics and cybersecurity

Data analytics uses various techniques to organize and translate data into concrete action plans that are of critical importance to businesses. Data analysts interpret and contextualize data to support informed decision making and drive strategic advantage. The persistent demand for data analytics talent takes form both in the occupation itself and as a skill to leverage for career progression. Participants continued to engage with Northwest Innovation Resource Center's (NWIRC) 20-week data analytics bootcamp in PY23 to further enhance their employability through upskilling. Support provided by Workforce Snohomish and subrecipients, NWIRC and Washington State University, has yielded strong completion rates and employment outcomes. As intended, bootcamp graduates have successfully leveraged their prior work experience, enhanced by the data skills and credentials attained in the program, to obtain employment. These graduates enter positions in a wide range of industries, including advanced manufacturing, transportation and logistics, finance and health care and social services.

In the coming year, WFS will collaborate with FOUR18 Intelligence to train dislocated workers and adults in cybersecurity through the Tradecraft program. Unique in its design, the Tradecraft program utilizes cognitive and behavioral assessments, coupled with skills profiles captured through Workforce Compass, to identify individuals that will strengthen and diversify the region's cybersecurity workforce-- in both IT and non-IT occupations — with the addition of cybersecurity credentials and practical experience. The program utilizes real-world threat data to feed a gamified platform integrated with industry-standard tools to provide an experience equivalent to performing cyber analysis professionally, with a rich and constantly changing stream of real threats and direct coaching feedback from professional practitioners. Like NWIRC's data analytics bootcamp, Tradecraft enables program participants to bolt cybersecurity on to their current skills, increasing their marketability with capabilities to drive organizational value, mitigate threats and improve resiliency, across a wide range of industries.

Youth

In PY23, new enrollments into WIOA Youth again exceeded local targets. Youth subrecipients continued to grow Work Experience (WEX) opportunities for youth participants and began providing workplace excellence workshops for out-of-school youth WEX participants to strengthen their essential workplace skills. Workforce Compass has been used as a tool to help youth participants examine their current skills, new skills they have cultivated through WEX, and how those skills match up to industry needs. The utilization of Workforce Compass has improved participants' confidence and expanded their view of available career pathways. Youth providers continue to collaborate with local organizations, schools and open doors programs to ensure youth throughout the county have access to the program.

Apprenticeship awareness

Apprenticeship activities in PY23 focused on expanding apprenticeship programs for youth in Snohomish County. WFS collaborated with the Snohomish and Island County Labor Council to host three Trade Up events in 2024, showcasing construction-oriented careers to high school students. Students from across Snohomish County donned neon vests and hard hats to explore apprenticeship opportunities, careers in the trades, and pathways to livable wages and quality jobs through hands-on learning activities. Nearly 20 unions, employers and industry partners participated in the three events. During the first National Youth Apprenticeship Week, the Business Engagement and Retention team, youth program managers and youth subrecipients hosted a Maritime Career Exploration event with 12 maritime industry partners, further showcasing apprenticeship opportunities for high school students.

Conclusion

Demand for upskilling and re-training services remains high as we enter PY24, further necessitating the need for community-engaged practices that yield stronger access, awareness and community-connection. As employer demand for talent remains robust, utilizing Workforce Compass will maximize job seekers' transferable skills, meet employer needs, and allow local employers to engage more effectively with job seekers and the workforce system. At the same time, investments in infrastructure and workforce recovery across several sectors further drive local demand for a skilled workforce. Through lessons learned from past programs and exploration of employer-driven training models, FWA and WFS are rising to meet the increasing and often complex needs of our community through engagement, responsiveness and accountability. Collaboratively, we are excited to continue the advancement of innovative approaches that cultivate local talent aligned with employer needs and ensure that every individual in Snohomish County has access to meaningful work.



Introduction

In Program Year 2023, the WIOA programs administered by the Workforce Development Council (WDC) of Seattle-King County made significant strides in fostering equitable access to employment, education, and economic opportunity. Through the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Business Services programs, we supported individuals and businesses across the region, navigating a landscape marked by challenges and transitions. The year was defined by our commitment to adapting our services to meet the evolving needs of the community while ensuring that our programs continued to deliver meaningful outcomes for those facing systemic barriers.



Serving Seattle-King County

A key focus of our work has been resourcing individuals to achieve self-sufficiency through employment, education, and reskilling opportunities, with the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs helping participants secure credentials, gain employment, and access career pathways. Our WIOA Youth program played a vital role in preparing the next generation of workers by offering job readiness training, internships, and apprenticeships, supporting youth — especially from historically underserved communities — in overcoming challenges like homelessness and language barriers. Meanwhile, the Business Services team refined its employer engagement strategy by adopting a holistic opportunity fair model to create spaces where employers, job seekers, youth, and service providers could connect in meaningful ways. The team also deepened partnerships to promote skills-based hiring, racial equity, and BIPOC-owned business support, with events like the Green Jobs Summit showcasing the power of collaboration in advancing equitable economic growth and job quality.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to building a more inclusive, resilient, and skilled workforce. The challenges of the past year, including staff transitions at service providers and WorkSource offices, increased demand for services, and rising living costs, have prompted us to innovate and adapt. As we move forward, we will continue to prioritize racial equity and job quality through collaboration and innovation, ensuring that Seattle-King County's workforce development efforts benefit all residents, particularly those furthest from opportunity. The WDC's focus on long-term and equitable economic prosperity will remain central as we work to address the needs of both job seekers and employers in a rapidly changing world.

WIOA Adult program

The WIOA Adult grant program made significant strides in PY23, with a notable increase in the number of credentials earned by participants. This achievement was especially impactful, as it underscored the program's ability to support individuals not just with training and work experience, but with tangible, career-advancing qualifications. The program's holistic approach — combining skills development with wraparound support — helped participants overcome personal and professional barriers to success.

Key impact areas

- **Credential attainment:** A substantial increase in earned credentials marked a key success.
- **Support services:** Vital assistance provided through transportation, rent support, and individualized career guidance.
- **Self-sufficiency ratings:** 81% of participants rated their self-sufficiency highly upon exiting the program, showcasing positive outcomes.

Success story: Shuab's journey to stability

After arriving in the U.S. in December 2023, Shuab, a 38-year-old refugee from Afghanistan, faced unemployment and relied on food stamps to meet his basic needs. Despite these challenges, he came with an associate degree in business administration and certifications in basic accounting and digital literacy from his home country. With the support of his career specialist, Shuab accessed critical job search services, including resume writing, mock interviews, and job referrals.

Shuab secured full-time employment as a ramp agent at Sea-Tac Airport, earning \$20.50 per hour. His journey was further supported by transportation and rent assistance, allowing him to focus on securing stability and self-sufficiency. Shuab's success is a testament to the power of coordinated, holistic support in transforming lives.

Addressing challenges and improving solutions

One persistent challenge for the WIOA Adult program has been discrepancies in data reporting. These discrepancies occasionally affected the accuracy of performance tracking. However, ongoing efforts between staff and partner organizations led to improved data collection and reporting methods, ensuring that the full impact of the program is properly captured moving forward.

Strategic partnerships and braided funding

A key strength of the WIOA Adult program lies in its ability to braid funding sources to maximize impact. For example, AS, a 32-year-old participant, faced significant financial hardships as she pursued a bachelor's degree in community health, including managing medical needs for her child, caring for a senior parent, and supporting her husband who lost his truck driving job due to an accident. By

leveraging multiple programs and resources — including rental assistance — AS successfully completed her degree at Tacoma Community College. This flexibility in funding demonstrates the program’s capacity to adapt to individual needs and create sustainable, long-term success.

Collaborators include

- TRAC Associates
- Neighborhood House
- YWCA
- Asian Counseling and Referral Service (ACRS)

These partnerships helped provide culturally sensitive services that resonate with participants, fostering a welcoming and supportive environment for those from underserved backgrounds.

Innovations and lessons learned

In 2023, the WDC experienced organizational shifts that allowed for better coordination, both internally and with external partners. New hires and role adjustments within the team helped streamline operations, improving communication and collaboration across the program. These changes set the stage for enhanced delivery of services and more effective partnerships moving forward.

One standout innovation was the piloting of the Career Capabilities Assessment Tool (CCAT) by the International Rescue Committee with 20 English language learners, to help assess their skills and identify suitable career paths. This tool is already proving invaluable in matching participants to appropriate employment opportunities, enhancing the program’s capacity to meet the needs of diverse communities.

Commitment to racial equity

Serving underserved populations remained a core priority for the WIOA Adult program. Through partnerships with culturally competent organizations such as TRAC Associates, Neighborhood House, YWCA, and ACRS, the program created pathways for participants to connect with staff who understood their cultural backgrounds and unique needs. This approach promoted comfort and trust, ensuring that participants could fully engage with the resources available to them.

By fostering an environment that prioritizes racial equity, the WIOA Adult program is better equipped to meet the needs of the region’s most vulnerable populations, supporting long-term community resilience.

WIOA Dislocated Worker program

In PY23, the WIOA Dislocated Worker program surpassed expectations by enrolling 605 individuals and offering 246 individual training accounts (ITAs) across Trac Associates, Pacific Associates, and Asian Counseling and Referral Services (ACRS). These achievements significantly exceeded our original goals of 539 enrollments and 70 ITAs, demonstrating the program's ability to respond to increased demand and support workers navigating post-pandemic economic challenges.

The Dislocated Worker program worked closely with the Rapid Response team to support dislocated workers, providing interpretation services and linking participants to the broad range of WIOA services. Despite high staff turnover, our partners hired culturally and linguistically diverse staff and developed outreach strategies tailored to their communities, ensuring the program remained accessible to those most in need.

Client success: MD's journey to stability

MD, a single mother of two, approached the WIOA Dislocated Worker program after exhausting her unemployment benefits. Facing eviction and struggling financially, MD worked closely with her case manager to refine her resume and prepare for job interviews. With the help of rental assistance and other support services, she secured a role as an executive office administrator at Boeing, stabilizing her financial situation and providing a brighter future for her family. MD's story illustrates the program's ability to transform lives by offering targeted, individualized support.

Key metrics and industry focus

In 2023, the WIOA Dislocated Worker program prioritized training and employment in high-demand sectors, particularly those affected by post-pandemic economic shifts. The top five ITA sectors included:

- IT: 35%
- Transportation: 18%
- Health care: 13%
- Human Resources: 12%
- Finance: 5%

This sector-based approach aligned with both the needs of dislocated workers and the demands of the local economy, providing participants with the skills and credentials necessary for re-entry into the workforce.

Overcoming challenges with tailored solutions

The program faced an influx of dislocated workers from the technology sector due to widespread layoffs. This increased the demand for experienced-level positions, prompting case managers to focus on identifying training opportunities in high-demand fields like IT and health care. Rising living costs, particularly rent, added another layer of difficulty for participants. However, by leveraging support

services and co-enrollments, the program was able to provide financial assistance, easing these burdens and allowing participants to focus on their career goals.

Partnerships driving community impact

Strategic partnerships were key to the program's success in 2023. Outreach through community events like the Bellevue College Networking Fair and the Juneteenth celebration at Jimi Hendrix Park allowed our team to engage job seekers directly. Meanwhile, partnerships like the one between ACRS and the Aerospace Joint Apprenticeship Committee (AJAC) provided limited English proficiency clients with entry-level manufacturing training, resulting in nine successful job placements in the aerospace industry. Additionally, eight of the participants received fully paid training through a combination of WIOA Dislocated Worker funds and other leveraged resources, demonstrating the program's ability to maximize support through collaboration.

One standout collaboration, led by Trac Associates, was with Weld Works, which provided housing and employment opportunities for justice-involved individuals. This partnership expanded critical services for those re-entering the community, reinforcing our commitment to serving marginalized populations.

Long-term impact and community growth

The program's expansion through contracts with Quest and EcSA allowed for more co-enrollments and provided additional resources, such as work experience placements. These resources were crucial in helping participants gain practical skills and re-enter the workforce more efficiently. A notable partnership with Canadian grocer T&T facilitated the hiring of 350 employees for their new Bellevue store, offering Dislocated Worker participants direct access to employment opportunities that also contributed to local economic growth.

Innovations and lessons learned

In 2023, the WDC implemented several key innovations aimed at improving service delivery and outcomes:

- **Exception request Cognito form:** Streamlined the request process for service providers, improving efficiency.
- **Big Interview platform:** Offered mock interview and resume review resources to better prepare participants for job applications.
- **Professional development:** Focused on staff training in professional communication and business consulting, ensuring high-quality service delivery.
- **Community partnerships:** Expanded outreach by collaborating with organizations like the Filipino Community of Seattle and United Indians of All Tribes.

Additionally, the WDC introduced results-based accountability training with the goal of enhancing reporting processes and improving how outcomes are measured. The programs team is currently undergoing the training, and design and implementation will start soon. New staff were hired to provide technical assistance, and peer meetings were held regularly to share best practices, fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

Commitment to racial equity

The WIOA Dislocated Worker program remained deeply committed to racial equity, focusing on underserved communities such as Black, Indigenous, Latinx populations, and individuals with disabilities. Tailored outreach strategies were developed to meet the unique needs of specific groups, including seniors, caregivers, highly educated immigrants, and BIPOC IT workers. Partnerships with organizations like the Filipino Community of Seattle and United Indians of All Tribes helped justice-involved clients access work experience opportunities, breaking down barriers to employment.

Through intentional program design and targeted support, the WIOA Dislocated Worker program demonstrated its capacity to provide life-changing opportunities while advancing equity in the workforce.

WIOA Youth program overview

In 2023, the WIOA Youth program achieved significant progress by strengthening both internal processes and external opportunities for participants. Internally, the program focused on enhancing technical support for service providers. Based on feedback from peer-to-peer meetings, improvements were made in system reporting, addressing challenges with logging work in the management information system. This initiative reduced errors and improved overall program outcomes, deepening the program's intentional design. Externally, the program focused on educational opportunities for youth uncertain about their next steps. College prep workshops, apprenticeship pathways, and university tours were organized to inspire youth to pursue further education, with one notable success being the YouthForce-BGCKC barbering graduation, a collaboration between a small business and the WIOA Youth program.

Client stories: Transforming lives

The program's impact is best reflected through the success stories of individual participants.

Construction manufacturing pathway

A youth referred to the Port of Seattle's construction manufacturing program was dealing with homelessness and had dropped out of school. With the support of a case manager, the youth enrolled in job training, re-engaged with school, and secured stable housing. He is now on track to graduate in

December, works part-time near the airport, and receives a stipend for his participation in the program, demonstrating a clear path to long-term stability.

Oscar's determination

Oscar faced language barriers and the challenges of adapting to a new environment after immigrating from Uganda in 2023. He completed job readiness training and an internship but struggled to pass his social studies test, taking it eight times. On his ninth attempt, he succeeded, and with the support of his case manager, Oscar enrolled at Renton Technical College to pursue a business degree. His perseverance exemplifies the transformative power of the program.

Challenges and solutions: Addressing staff turnover

A key challenge in 2023 was staff retention, which led to disengagement among some youth. This underscored the need for better training and competitive pay scales to ensure consistent relationships between youth and case managers. Maintaining these relationships is critical for youth success, as they provide the guidance needed to navigate challenges. Internally, staff turnover affected data quality, requiring ongoing retraining efforts. To address these issues, the program fostered open communication with providers, offering unstructured engagement opportunities to better understand their needs and offer targeted support.

Strategic partnerships: Building opportunities

Partnerships played an essential role in the program's success. Partner In Employment (PIE), the Youth OSY provider, stood out for its commitment to professional development and innovative client support. Through the Café PIE Barista training program, youth gained valuable work-based learning experience, with WIOA providing support services and incentives to ensure their success. These partnerships not only improved internship performance but also expanded the range of opportunities available to participants.

Long-term community impact

The WIOA Youth program's focus on education and career connection has had a significant and measurable impact on participants, their families, and the broader community. By providing resources and guidance to help youth explore post-secondary options, the program has been instrumental in decreasing youth disengagement from school. Notably, the program exceeded its enrollment goals for in-school youth by 200% in new enrollments and 133% in total enrollments, showing a marked increase in youth connections.

- **Goal:** 35 new in-school youth enrollments; 114 total in-school youth enrollments
- **Actual:** 70 new in-school youth enrollments; 152 total in-school youth enrollments

This surge in engagement highlights the program's success in building meaningful connections with youth. Partnerships with local colleges and career-connected learning programs have played a critical role, ensuring that young people have the tools they need to succeed. Moving forward, the program aims to further recognize and support the key points where meaningful change is happening for youth.

Innovations and lessons learned

In 2023, the WIOA Youth program concentrated on foundational improvements. Professional development for staff and system enhancements helped solidify the program's structure. One successful innovation was the increased use of youth incentives, which eliminated barriers and motivated youth to stay engaged in the workforce while learning financial responsibility. This initiative helped build skills in budgeting and financial planning, supporting the overall goal of empowering youth to make informed decisions about their futures.

Commitment to racial equity

A central focus of the WIOA Youth program has been ensuring equity in access and service delivery. By adopting a population-based approach, providers like KCYYA and PIE tailored outreach to meet the unique needs of specific demographic groups. PIE's work with East African communities not only supported youth enrollment but also connected family members with Adult WIOA programs. The program's use of demographic data has allowed for more intentional service design, shifting the focus from simply meeting performance goals to creating deeper, more meaningful impacts within underserved communities.

WIOA Business Services

In 2023, the WIOA Business Services Team (BST) made significant strides in transforming how it engages with employers and supports job seekers. By focusing on skills-based hiring, job quality, and racial equity, the team enhanced its approach to workforce development and employer engagement. One of the key internal efforts was conducting peer interviews with industry expert Nicole Trimble, founder of Braided Rivers, to gather best practices from local workforce development boards. This research helped shape a new industry engagement strategy, complemented by the expansion of the WDC's Industry Strategies Team, which added a director and an industry engagement manager to lead these efforts.

Externally, BST adopted a holistic opportunity fair model for job fairs, broadening the scope beyond just job listings to include work-based learning opportunities, apprenticeship pathways, and wraparound resources for job seekers. A prime example of this approach was the Sound Careers in Healthcare event, which focused on BIPOC and low-income students. This event featured 30 hands-on activities and 17 health care organizations, creating a robust environment for career exploration and skill development.

Client success story: Upskilling at Kaiser Permanente

WDC's Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) program supported Kaiser Permanente in upskilling 17 ophthalmic assistants over 12 weeks. The program helped employees prepare for the Certified Ophthalmic Assistant (COA) exam, resulting in a \$2.38 per hour wage increase for those who passed. Their job titles were upgraded to certified ophthalmic assistant, while the backfilled positions were sourced through WDC partners, demonstrating the positive ripple effect of upskilling efforts.

Impact and performance metrics

In Q4, BST organized an impactful event at Seattle Housing Authority's New Holly Building, bringing together over 30 workforce partners to share work-based learning opportunities across various industries. Participating employers included King County Sheriff, Seattle Fire Department, and the Seattle Mariners, showcasing the power of collaboration among agencies, employers, and industry partners to align workforce efforts and create engagement opportunities for job seekers.

Challenges and solutions

The revamp of BST's business services strategy presented challenges, particularly in terms of staff capacity and transitions. Historically, the BST managed all employer relationships on behalf of the WDC, limiting broader engagement. To address this, peer interviews were conducted to gather insights and best practices, which highlighted the importance of:

- Going where employers are already engaged and leveraging existing networks.
- Building and maintaining long-term relationships with employers.
- Offering incentives for employers to stay involved in workforce development.

Moving forward, BST plans to landscape its offerings to employers, explore tiered access to services, and collaborate more closely with industry organizations to create targeted strategies for employer engagement.

Strategic partnerships: Driving innovation and impact

Going above and beyond:

When Seattle Public Schools faced a budget crisis, forcing the closure of 70 elementary schools, Kristan Lortz on the BST worked closely with the human resources department to ensure that employees received critical layoff support information. This effort reached 21 HR representatives across multiple schools and helped mitigate the impact on affected workers.

Innovative partnership:

In September 2023, BST partnered with King County, the Port of Seattle, and the Seattle Good Business Network to host the inaugural Green Jobs Summit. This two-part event connected youth and job

seekers to green jobs in construction, transportation, and clean energy, helping to support the growth of the local green economy. It drew 12 employers and engaged over 300 job seekers, primarily youth ages 16-24, in an interactive exploration of career pathways in the sustainability sector.

Community and long-term impact

BST also collaborated with the newly established Community Business Connector (CBC) program, launched by the Port of Seattle and the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce. This program supports small businesses by helping them access resources for economic recovery and growth. BST contributed workforce development resources that the CBC Connectors could share with their business networks, enhancing pro-equity outreach strategies and fostering small business resilience across the region.

Innovations and lessons learned

New approaches:

BST introduced a standardized process for hosting closed onsite job fairs for businesses facing layoffs or relocation, making it easier for affected employees to transition to new opportunities. Additionally, BST expanded its network to include partnerships with organizations like the Seattle Chamber's CBC program, which helped the team reach small businesses in five geographic hubs across King County.

Key lessons:

The peer interviews underscored the need for the WDC to clearly define its role in employer engagement and develop three to five core employer offerings. This insight will be essential in guiding the team's efforts to build stronger relationships with employers and community providers, fostering economic opportunities for those furthest from access.

Advancing racial equity

In January, BST co-led the annual MLK Opportunity Fair at Garfield High School, bringing together over 400 job seekers — primarily Black youth — and 20 local employers. The event also offered onsite resume and interview support, alongside training and work-based learning programs in fields such as culinary arts, pre-construction, and health care. This successful collaboration, with partners like WSDOT and the Urban League, emphasized the importance of regional partnerships in bridging employment gaps for underserved populations and connecting them to meaningful job opportunities.

WorkForce Central's task is to continue to look for ways to improve services that meet the needs of our different customers. This is an ongoing statement that we are dedicated to assisting customers. We recognize that customer voices are different, and our goal is to meet customers where they are and help them grow. We continue to listen to our experienced partner providers and educators and the incredible customers who shared their voices so we could improve, expand, and create. You will see all the exciting work we have done this year based on the voices and feedback from our community.



Serving Pierce County

Diversity, equity, access and inclusion

WorkForce Central continues the journey to bring equity and diversity into the Pierce County workforce development system. We continue to approach the goal and how we respond to it in a number of different ways, from outreach to our underrepresented communities and updating policies and procedures to bringing in system partners to focus on serving our local communities of color. Most importantly, we are continuously making sure customer voices and communities have an opportunity to be heard when it comes to programs and services.

Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI) is more than just a phrase to us; it's a fundamental value that guides our actions. Our mission now places DEAI at the forefront, recognizing it as an essential pillar of our work. We believe in accountability and responsibility in our services and how we represent ourselves as an organization.

WorkForce Central is committed to DEAI internally and is a proud driving force of the Pierce County Community Engagement Task Force. This collaborative initiative underscores our dedication to serving our communities, irrespective of geographical or demographic boundaries, with a strong focus on equity. Our unwavering support for our community and colleagues continues as we strive to bring economic mobility to all residents of Pierce County.

The Pierce County Community Engagement Task Force has made significant strides in advancing DEAI within our community. Our commitment to serving the community has resulted in more than 2,700 individuals and families receiving support through services, training, education, and employment. We partnered with 185 organizations, employers, businesses, and community partners to ensure that each community member has access to resources and opportunities for all their needs. This event, open to the public and free of charge, facilitated direct engagement with employers, on-the-spot job interviews, and on-site resume assistance. It is a holistic experience that addresses diverse needs, from essential support to specialized resources for various communities. The Pierce County Community Engagement

Task Force remains dedicated to promoting DEAI principles and fostering an inclusive environment. We are immensely proud of our community's resilience and the positive impact we have collectively achieved, continuously supporting the goal of making Pierce County a more diverse, equitable, accessible, and inclusive place for all.

Our DEAI journey

Our staff continues to take steps to increase their knowledge and understanding of diversity, equity, access, and inclusion work. Below is a timeline that highlights some of our journey this past year:

LGBTQ+ – July 2023: WorkSource Pierce staff were honored to receive training by Charlie Best with the Rainbow Center in Tacoma. We learned how to engage, support, serve, and increase awareness/understanding of the LGBTQ+ community.

WorkSource Pierce Partnership Conference – September 2023: We hosted more than 180 workforce development experts from 20 organizations in Pierce County at our inaugural WorkSource Pierce Partnership Conference at Clover Park Technical College. The conference served as a pivotal gathering for fostering collaboration and sharing innovative practices among partners in the Pierce County workforce development network. The conference's core aim was to engage, align, and innovate within the workforce system through a series of educational and interactive sessions. Key trainings included enhancing customer service experiences, fostering community partnerships with Native Americans and veterans, and improving service accessibility for the visually impaired. Moreover, the conference highlighted cutting-edge strategies like virtual engagement, digital literacy, and the use of AI technology to enhance workforce services. These sessions not only provided valuable insights but also equipped attendees with practical tools to implement in their respective roles, significantly enriching the collective efforts to support the community.

Survey on public website – October 2023: We continuously use the website information to improve customer experience. This is an ongoing activity.

Justice Involved – January 2024: The WorkSource Pierce Center formed a Justice Reintegration Team to focus on serving this population, which we were not effective in serving post-COVID-19. We have representation from the Tacoma, Fife, and Sumner court systems, Employment Security Department, WorkForce Central, Goodwill, and Leveled UP. This team is working to build a justice-involved ecosystem and build deeper partnerships in the community to create the most effective streamlined process for justice-involved customers to navigate the current system.

Tribal Governance Training – March 2024: The Pierce County Community Engagement Task Force held a full-day Tribal Governance Training with Culture 2 Culture. The training provided a comprehensive overview of tribal governments and their intricate relationships with federal, state, and local governments.

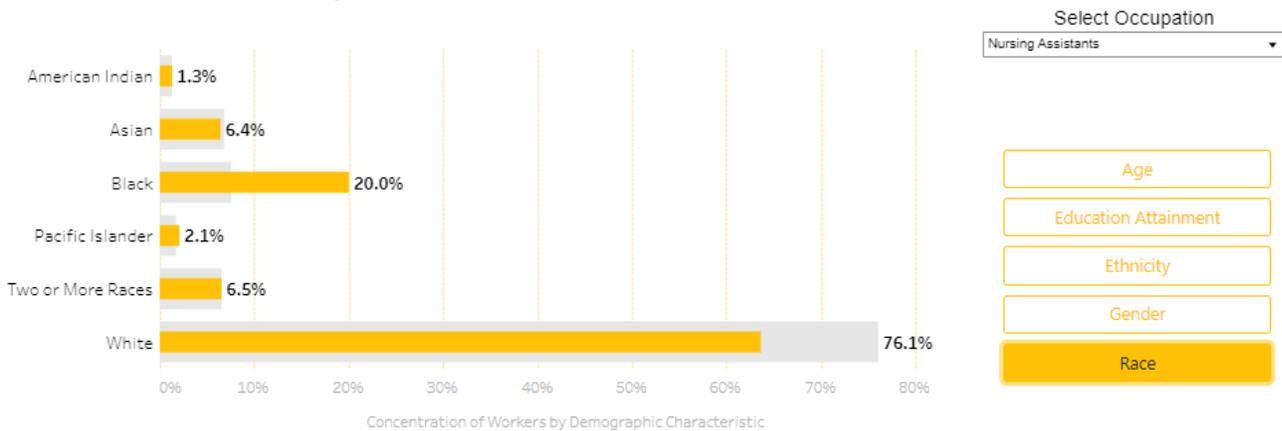
Differently Abled – April 2024: In collaboration with the Department of Services for the Blind and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, we hosted an Employ Ability hiring event dedicated to connecting individuals with disabilities to meaningful employment opportunities that complement their unique skills. The event attracted 19 employers and 85 job seekers, resulting in several reported hires.

Strategic framework

In March 2023, WorkForce Central released our Strategic Framework: January 2023 – June 2026, which is a tool that helps us align our decisions, activities, and goals with our vision and mission. You can [read more about how we implement our set of strategies](#) within our local workforce system and how it guides us in our impact on our website.

[Occupation Demographic Dashboard](#)

Concentration of **Nursing Assistants** by Race

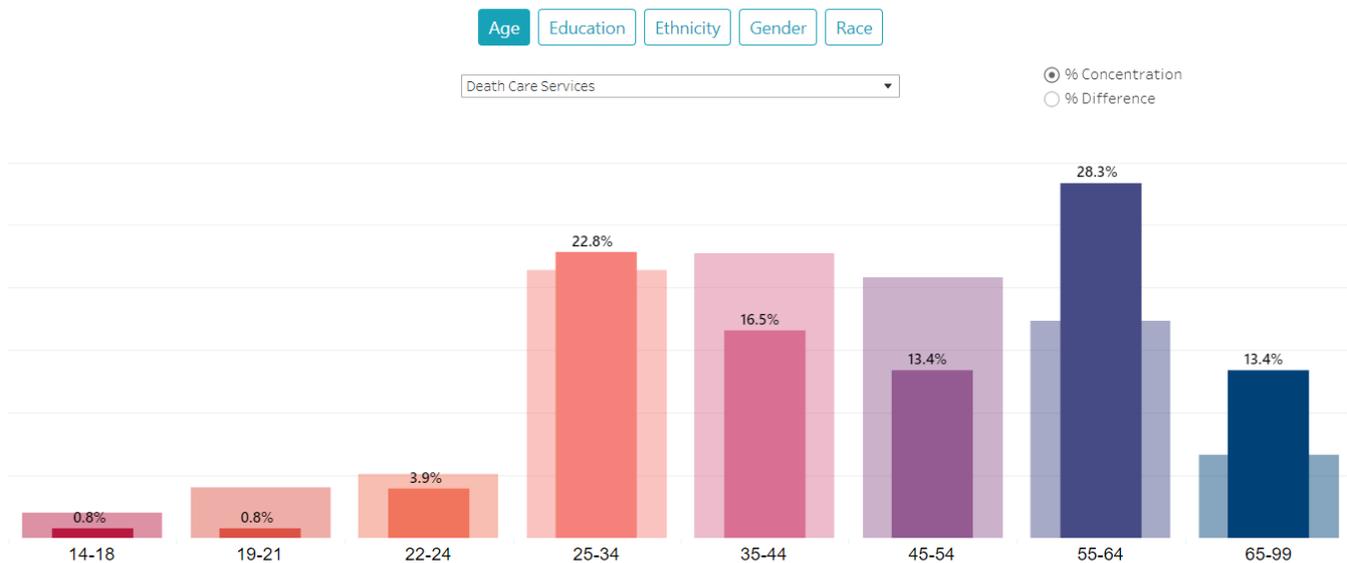


Data such as that displayed in this demographic dashboard informs decisions about outreach and performance outcomes

Occupation segregation remains an issue in Pierce County. This is especially evident when we look at workers' demographic characteristics (race, ethnicity, and gender) by occupation. While there is nothing explicitly wrong with the correlation of demographics and occupations, the differences in compensation, benefits, and opportunities by occupation are a reality that connects occupation segregation to persistent inequities in labor, such as the wage gap.

Internally, we use this information to inform decisions about contract outreach expectations and performance outcomes for training providers to ensure that WorkForce Central is making investments in strategies that address the socio-economic inequities at the earliest stage of engagement. We are also committed to elevating the reality of occupation segregation in our workforce and framing this issue as a responsibility for workforce development organizations, training providers, and employers.

Industry Diversity Dashboard



Data in this industry diversity dashboard shows an aging workforce in death care services

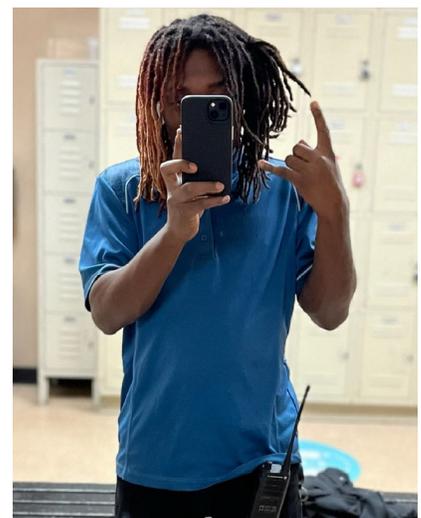
For [industries, occupation segregation](#) can take on an additional layer of significance. Considering age as a function of occupation segregations, we can see that death care services, for example, is poised for a silver tsunami, and is unlikely to have the workers needed to offset retirement separations in the years ahead.

Bridging the gap between job seekers, workers, and employers

Young adult program

Our young adult program is operated by two core providers, Career TEAM and Palmer Scholars. Each provide critical support in job readiness and exploration, education services, navigating community resources, workshops and skill building, and other supportive services to young adults in removing barriers to accessing employment, education and training. Career TEAM serves both in-school and out-of-school youth to meet their goals of employment and/or education.

Participant Success Story: KG was experiencing homelessness and unemployed when he enrolled in the young adult program. He was seeking assistance in getting back to work and finding a career pathway he would enjoy. During his time in the program, KG received labor market information services, supportive services, and completed



a paid work experience. He is now working as a security guard in Seattle, was able to locate housing in Seattle, and hopes to advance in the industry.

Palmer Scholars' mission is dedicated to serving young adults of color through apprenticeship, education and employment.

Participant Success Story: Jabez: "My name is Jabez Manuma. I graduated from this 15-week program on May 1, 2024. This was an opportunity I never thought I'd be able to experience. I loved it! I was the only female in the class and that made me even more proud! This program taught me leadership skills, mentorship, communication on a construction site, being mentally prepared for physical challenges and knowing my limitations. I got the chance to be a part of something that not only helped me find my desire for work, but a future career that can set me and my family up for success. Thank you to Palmer Pathways and the mentors that I met there. I am so lucky that I found this life changing program. I am currently working as a flagger using my certification."



Connecting employers into the community

WorkForce Central's business solutions team has made significant strides in fostering partnerships and advancing projects that benefit both employers and job seekers in Pierce County. Our collaborative efforts with local businesses, community organizations, and educational institutions have facilitated over 252 employers to participate in various events, reaching more than 2,200 job seekers. This engagement not only enhances visibility for employers but also strengthens community ties, ensuring that workforce development remains a communal goal.

Industry alignment

Employers across high-demand industries throughout Pierce County are seeking qualified job seekers to fill positions that provide living-wage employment. Our team continues to work with Virginia Mason Franciscan Health to address specific workforce needs, such as the demand for cardiac monitoring technicians. By partnering with Arivva, we developed a targeted training cohort that prepares participants for this critical health care role. The program boasted a 100% completion rate, with 60% of graduates securing employment directly through our initiative, while others chose to further their careers at MultiCare or pursue additional education.

In June 2024, WorkForce Central hosted two events focused on industry alignment, the Manufacturing Industry Roundtable and the Construction Hub Brainstorm Lunch. Both events focused on training needs, employment opportunities, and strengthening partnerships. The strategic connection between education partners and employers is crucial to ensuring equitable access to quality jobs.

Paid internship milestone reached

WorkForce Central and its service partners have proudly distributed \$1.3 million in wages to interns, significantly reducing labor costs for local businesses. Over four years, 460 interns have dedicated approximately 82,005 hours to serving 125 businesses across the county. This investment not only supports our economic growth but also builds a robust, skilled workforce prepared to meet the diverse needs of our community.

Exploring new funding avenues

WorkForce Central is actively searching for new funding avenues to enhance our paid internship initiatives. Our aim is to discover ways to continue to provide meaningful work experience opportunities for adults and young adults throughout the year.

We are expanding our work into sectoral partnerships and exploring methods to fund sector-driven strategies. Our work with advanced manufacturing and construction sectors proves there is growth and sustainability in these fields, and over the past year, we supported four additional priority sectors, to include warehouse, transportation and logistics, IT/technology, water systems, and health care.

In December 2023, we successfully completed two earn while you learn contracts with the city of Tacoma and Pierce County. Stipends were provided to participants engaged in training activities who completed and earned industry-recognized credentials. We distributed a total of \$642,900 in stipends to 218 unique Pierce County residents. A collective 32,783 training hours were delivered through 22 local training providers. This comprehensive effort culminated in over 142 confirmed job placements, with an impressive average wage of \$25.05 per hour.

In January 2024, we were awarded funding by the Port of Tacoma to implement the Workforce Training & Internship Pathways Initiative, utilizing an innovative earn-and-learn approach. The initiative features a Paid Work Experience program that supports participants' immediate financial needs while they undergo short-term training aimed at securing higher-paying careers.

In May 2024, we were awarded ARPA funding by Pierce County to continue our work to expand young adult internship and employment opportunities. Through this funding, we are partnering with Goodwill of the Olympics and Rainier Region to connect young adults to learning opportunities that improve career opportunities and support economic growth throughout Pierce County with a focus on geographic, economic, and racial equity.

Collaboration community events

Our collaboration community events offer an easy way for individuals and families to access resources and employment opportunities right in their own community. The events first began in 2020 to serve communities struggling during the pandemic. It has grown into a large-scale collaborative event that connects people to resources and services to find stability and quality employment. No two collaboration community events are the same – each one is catered to the identified needs of the host community.



- On Nov. 1, 2023 at the Tacoma Dome, *Collaboration for a Cause: Pierce County* provided a connection to a variety of resources and services, including education and technical training, employment, health, basic needs, youth and young adult services, and more, with a wraparound approach. Employers, education providers, and organizations throughout Pierce County connected with our community in one place at one time to support generational sustainability and a multi-generational approach to careers and career development. We had 157 vendors and 1,206 individuals in attendance.
- The *Elevate Women* event on March 15, 2023 focused on empowering women in their careers and overall wellness. In partnership with United Way of Pierce County, the event was a day filled with inspiration, practical insights, and invaluable networking opportunities, including a job and resource fair and expert guidance on their resumes and job-search questions. Participants were able to connect with prospective employers, get essential resources, and explore career opportunities tailored to their goals. More than 200 people attended the event.
- The *Avenues to Opportunity Career and Resource Fair* was held on June 5, 2023 to address barriers for those experiencing extreme poverty and/or who are justice-involved. Resources and services at the event included affordable housing resources, addiction and mental health, child care services, employment services, re-entry services, utilities assistance, vaccinations and health checks, veterans services, driver license or ID for \$5, free phones and tablets, free haircuts, and free food for the first 300 people to attend.

Green Jobs & Pathways Summit

In May 2024, WorkForce Central hosted the Green Jobs & Pathways Summit in partnership with city of Tacoma and Absher Construction. It was an amazing opportunity to gather industry leaders in one room to share insights, challenges, and expertise on the steps our region needs to take toward growing good green job opportunities. Mayor Victoria Woodards is steering these efforts through the city's Good Jobs, Great Cities initiative. We were joined by partners from U.S. Department of Labor and

National League of Cities to explore opportunities for innovative approaches to ensuring equitable access to quality, local jobs in infrastructure, clean energy, and advanced manufacturing.

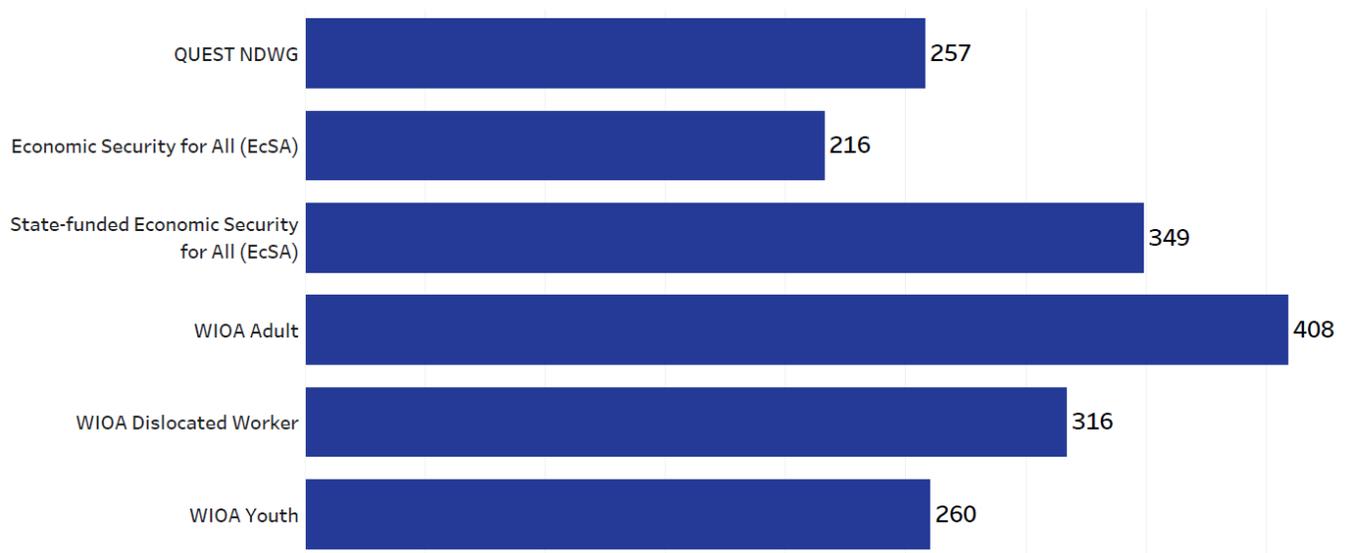
Pierce County Behavioral Health Workforce Initiative

WorkForce Central received a grant from Pierce County in January 2024 to launch the Pierce County Behavioral Health Workforce Initiative. The initiative supports the implementation of workforce development strategies focusing on recruitment and retention, designed by the Pierce County Behavioral Health Consortium and convened and facilitated by WorkForce Central. The grant funding is to pilot and test the workforce recruitment and retention priorities developed, including:

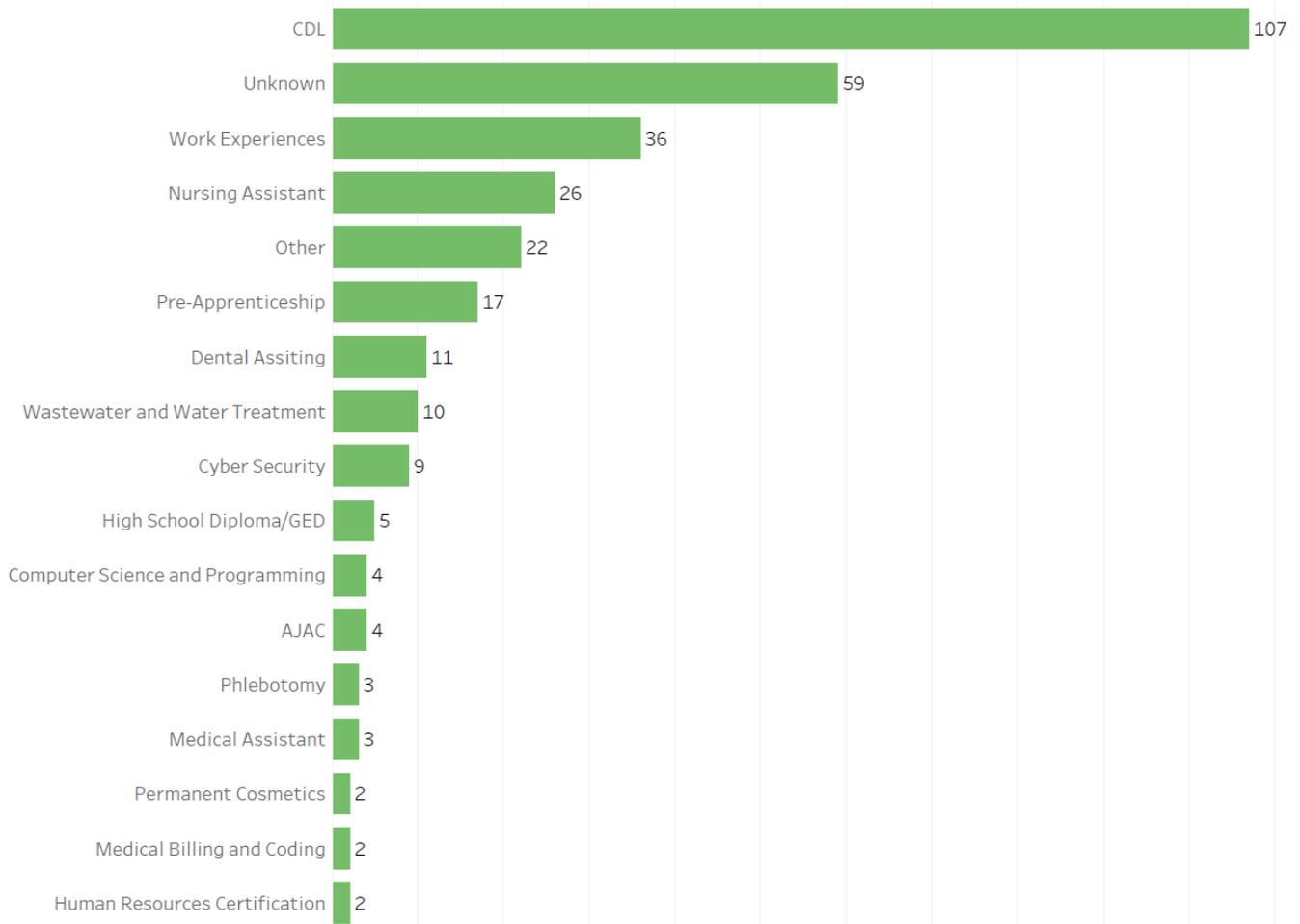
- Career Mapping, Pathways awareness, and Translation
- Intern Retention Support
- Increased Supervision Capacity
- Behavioral Health Workforce Training
- Behavioral Health Apprenticeship Pathways

The initiative will serve over 40 Pierce County behavioral health providers and approximately 300 behavioral health practitioners, interns, and associates across the county.

Customers served by program between July 2023 and June 2024



Training Services between July 2023 and June 2024



Economic Security for All (EcSA) & Community Reinvestment Funds (CRF)

The Federal EcSA grant was originally secured in 2019. The award of State EcSA in July 2023 provided an additional \$1,060,809 to continue to serve individuals above and below 200% of the federal poverty level across Pierce County, as well as provide navigation services to business to support and develop partnerships that lead to training and employment opportunities. By the end of June 2024, over 550 people were connected to jobs, training, financial literacy coaching, education, and resources supporting their future of rising above poverty. While enrolled in the EcSA program, customers are provided with career guidance, labor market information, career research assistance, short-term training, job search and job placement assistance, interview preparation, resume building, personal branding and networking assistance, resource and partner referrals, paid internships, and on-the-job training.

In December of 2023, WorkForce Central was awarded \$7,631,793, funded by the Department of Commerce's Community Reinvestment funding, to work with local partners to expand the Economic Security for All model by providing career accelerator incentive payments to EcSA State enrolled job

seekers, increase outreach and recruitment to local by and for businesses, and provide subsidized training to help low-income families move out of poverty with a focus on Black, Latine, and Native American populations. Through June 2024:

- 160 job seekers have received career accelerator incentives as they make progress towards their career goals, totaling \$383,000 in incentive payments.
- 26 businesses received support for asset purchases totaling \$295,323.10.
- Two Business Navigators with Mi Centro and Black Collective were hired and have played a critical role by providing comprehensive support and personalized outreach to "registered" By and For businesses, ensuring they are aware of available resources and services.

Small Business Success Stories



Chelsea Tornga Photography received funding to purchase new equipment including a drone, a lens, a second camera, lighting gear, and photo booth.



Swae Media used funds to purchase a more powerful workstation to streamline is editing process and workflow, which will contribute to business growth and sustainabilty.



The Pickled Chef, LLC is running more efficiently and is able to increase production after purchasing new equipment including a stand mixer with attachments and a semi-automatic labeling machine.

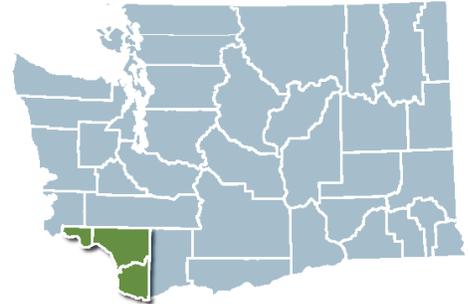
WorkForce Central is excited to continue growing in collaboration with all of our partners, customers, educators, and businesses! We cannot wait to see what is around the next corner and look forward to all the exciting work to be done in our community!



Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW) strives to create a region where economic prosperity and growth exist for every person. Our guide is our strategic plan, which focuses on business growth, economic mobility, and systems change.

Business growth

Quality Jobs Initiative: WSW's Quality Jobs Framework, launched in 2022, is a blueprint of actionable, detailed strategies organizations can use to create inclusive and equitable quality jobs, improve work conditions and aid in employee recruitment and retention.



Serving Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties

This public and private regional initiative aims to advance an equitable economy and address long-standing inequities and disparities. The Quality Jobs Initiative will help increase the number of good jobs and improve the regional economy for everyone, especially those furthest from economic opportunity.

WSW understands that companies may need support and assistance to implement quality job standards. To that end, WSW is seeking consultants specializing in human resources, diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and other areas to work directly with interested companies.

To date, WSW has helped more than 40 companies improve job quality by implementing strategies from the Framework. In addition, WSW hosted a two-day workshop aimed at small, priority population businesses to help them learn human resources strategies and best practices aimed at improving job quality and in turn, improving their recruitment and retention strategies. Approximately 24 representatives from 12 companies participated. Over two days, participants learned how to:

- Evaluate and update their hiring practices to remove bias and reach a larger pool of qualified, diverse candidates.
- Develop effective, consistent, and inclusive recruitment and onboarding processes.
- Develop employee engagement and workplace climate surveys to gather input from workers to improve organizational operations and employee satisfaction.

The free training included a workbook, examples, and a resource toolkit to reinforce the training concepts. The workshops included presentations, interactive activities, small and large group discussions, and planning time so that at the end of the training employers walked away with a recruitment and retention action plan for their company.

Interstate Bridge Replacement Workforce Study: The Interstate 5 Bridge is a critical connection between the states of Washington and Oregon that supports local jobs and families and is a vital trade route for regional, national and international economies.

The [Interstate Bridge Replacement Program](#) (IBR) commissioned WSW and its partners [Clackamas Workforce Partnership](#), [Worksystems](#), [Estolano Advisors](#), [Oregon Employment Department](#), and [Portland State University](#) to conduct a Regional Infrastructure Workforce Market Study to analyze the strengths and opportunities of the regional workforce. The report includes findings and recommendations. To prepare Southwest Washington residents to fill the jobs the IBR Program will create, we will need investments in apprenticeships, training for women and underrepresented communities, and child care, among other things. The region's workforce boards will be working to capitalize on this opportunity to get our community members who have been kept out of high-quality employment into jobs with family-sustaining wages. Read the [Executive Summary](#) and [Report](#) on the WSW website.

Employer Engagement: WSW's business services team focuses on long-term workforce strategy development, program design based on industry needs, and supporting employers as they work to improve job quality. The WorkSource business services team provides direct services to employers in our target and other industries. The WorkSource team helps employers recruit, screen, and refer candidates and hosts hiring events. The two teams work together to connect companies as needed. WSW sees an elevated need to promote a business-driven talent delivery system where talent development is driven by demand and focused on industries offering the greatest opportunities for workers to earn family-sustaining wages and advance in their careers. WorkSource's primary role in business engagement is to serve as our region's talent development and delivery system. Talent is the greatest need of businesses in our region.

WSW's business services team prioritizes time and resources for target industry employers and also for small and micro businesses and businesses owned or operated by women and people of color. We are forming relationships with organizations like Fourth Plain Forward, LatinoBuilt (an association for Latino contractors), Business Impact NW, the Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, and other diverse chambers of commerce in the region. We intend to fund business engagement via organizations such as these to reach more businesses that we aim to prioritize for funding and service delivery.

Economic mobility

One of WSW's primary strategic plan goals is to promote equity for every individual by providing access to high-quality employment and advancement opportunities. We do this by holistically serving families, providing supportive services, and removing barriers to employment for women and historically underrepresented communities.

Economic Security for All (EcSA): One of four pilots that helped launch EcSA, WSW's project began in 2019 in two adjoining neighborhoods in Longview. While Cowlitz County remains a key focus of the program, it has expanded to the entire Southwest Washington region.

EcSA's goal is to help individuals and families move out of poverty and toward sustained economic self-sufficiency in quality jobs. In Southwest, this is done by providing individuals with a variety of services including work experience, mentorship, financial literacy, personal stability workshops, job training, and supportive services such as rent and transportation assistance, work clothing and tools, books for college, school supplies, and child care subsidies.

Economic Security for All (EcSA) outcomes 2019-6/30/2024

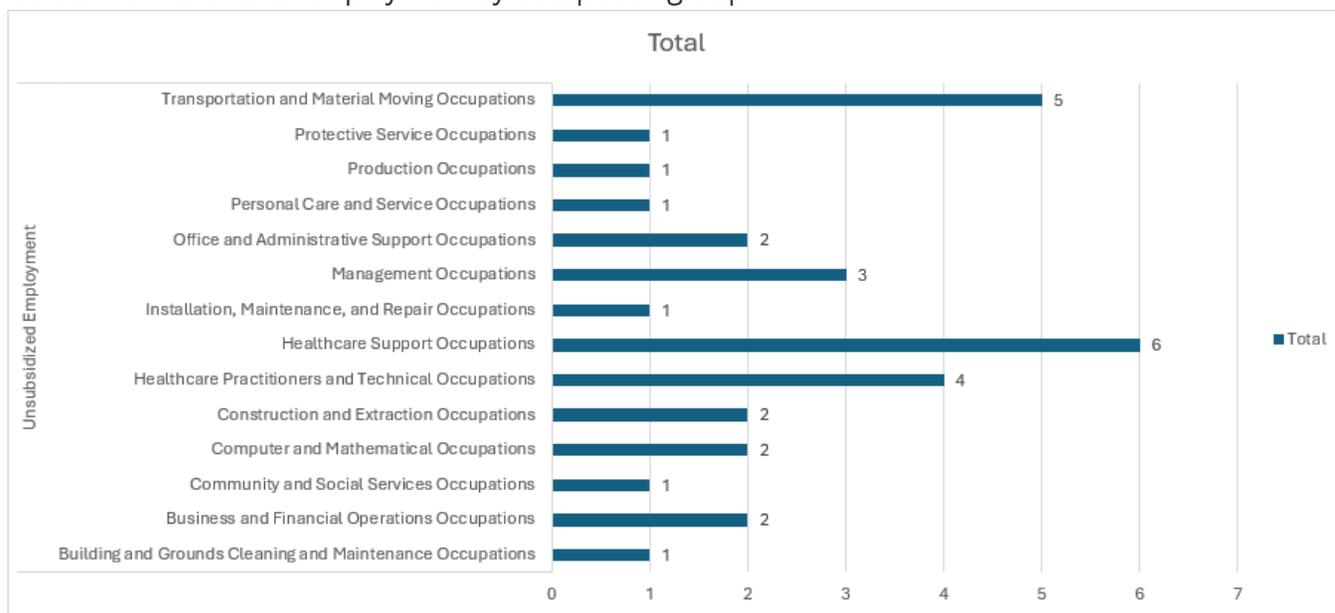
Outcome	Realized
Enrollments	700
Participants Received Training	262
Participants Received Supportive Services	202
Participants Entered Unsubsidized Employment at Exit	362
Median Annual Income After EcSA	\$40,560

Career NDWG: Career NDWG, a Workforce Childcare Navigation Services grant is a strategic, regional response by WSW, along with local workforce development boards (LWDB) in Clackamas and Multnomah counties to address the challenges of workforce dislocations created by the pandemic and address the lack of affordable, accessible child care for job seekers, among the priority populations most severely impacted. The purpose of this contract is to serve job seekers who need child care assistance so they may participate in training, earn credentials, and build skills for a new career. The program connects new and existing child care programs to the public workforce system to enable women and people of color to return to the workforce.

Career NDWG outcomes

Outcome	Realized
Enrollments	51
Participants Received Training or Supportive Service	51
Participants Entered Employment at Exit	32
Median Annual Wage	\$49,920

Career NDWG exits to employment by occupation group



Opioid recovery. To provide services to our community members impacted by the opioid epidemic, WSW and our local WorkSource centers partnered with recovery, reentry and health organizations. Through these partnerships, individuals received assistance with career advising, training and support services to help them seek and gain permanent employment. As a result, 57 participants returned to work with an average annual wage at employment of \$53,358. Fifteen participants received training in fields that can have a positive impact on the opioid crisis. Eighty-three participants received supportive services such as auto repair, Department of Transportation physical, gas, work-related licensing fees, practice tests, study materials, work clothing and more.

Opioid recovery performance outcomes

Outcome	Realized
Participants Receiving Career Services	224
Participants Receiving Training Services	51
Participants Receiving Supportive Services	83
Participants Entered Employment at Exit	57

Youth investments. Young adults ages 16 to 24 can access education, training, career, employment and support services at WSW's youth center called Next. Since opening in the fall of 2018, Next has served more than 1,000 young adults.

Next's clients are diverse. Of PY23 enrollments, nearly 38% had not earned a high school diploma; 17% identified as Hispanic or Latino; nearly 12% identified as Asian, and almost 8% identified as two or more races.

Next shines in its ability to focus on each youth as an individual. Career Coaches work one-on-one to help participants create an individualized plan to discover interests and talents and identify and accomplish career and education goals.

Workforce preparation classes on resume and cover letter writing, workplace etiquette, soft-skill development, career path aptitude, and more set young adults up for success in future employment.

On-site educational resources help participants prepare for and earn their GED through free tutoring and on-site testing. Youth can connect with local colleges and universities to explore higher education options.

For participants ready to enter the workforce, Next offers paid internships and on-the-job training opportunities, aligning with WIOA Youth requirements. The center has built partnerships with industry leaders of in-demand sectors such as health care, technology, and manufacturing, offering access to job training certification courses that support long-term employment. Taking a holistic approach to serving youth, Next makes community partners available in the center to provide a variety of services and assistance. For example, a local credit union teaches about financial management and self-sufficiency.

Under WSW's new strategic plan, Next has reinforced its focus on equitable access to services, aligning workforce development efforts with sector-based strategies. The plan outlines a deeper collaboration with business partners, including alignment of Next's Business Navigators with WorkSource's Business Services team to expand opportunities for youth in priority sectors. Additionally, increased coordination access to the Next Careers Consortium aims to improve service delivery, tracking, and outcomes. This approach benefits individual youth and strengthens the region's workforce by filling gaps in the labor market with skilled, well-prepared young adults.

Systems change

WSW envisions the existence of an accessible and effective workforce system to advance equity for individuals and to promote the community and economic goals of the region. For this reason, we continually review and refine our internal operations and those of the region's workforce system.

WSW Board of Directors: When openings become available on WSW's Board of Directors, leadership intentionally seeks candidates from diverse communities to ensure a diversity of thoughts, lived experiences and voices are at the table guiding not only WSW but the public workforce system as well.

As a majority private sector board of directors and a business-led nonprofit, it is imperative that the board of directors not only represents our high-growth and in-demand sectors but also represents a diversity of size of business and the myriad identities that individuals hold in our community. This representation allows WSW to gather input from a variety of interested parties and continue to build a competitive and comprehensive system of leaders in our community who can in turn increase belonging and inclusion across our region.

Equity Impact Assessment: An equity impact assessment is a transformative quality improvement tool that helps ensure we are deliberately inclusive in our organizational decision-making, policies, practices, and procedures. At its core, an equity impact assessment is a set of principles, reflective questions, and processes that focus at the individual, institutional, and systemic level on centering equity and disrupting the status quo to generate better solutions.

Through developing and implementing an equity impact assessment, WSW aims to intentionally incorporate a diversity of perspectives to ensure we are addressing systemic barriers and inequities, cultivating a workforce and services that are relevant to and representative of our community, and advancing more equitable outcomes. WSW completed an equity impact assessment in April 2024.

WSW Climate Survey: Engaging with employees and providing opportunities for them to give feedback and recommendations for organizational change is one aspect of being a quality employer. WSW is leading by example and has committed to doing a staff climate survey every two years. On the off year, we focus on staff professional development and implementation of changes.

There is a direct correlation between employee wellness and the health of the organization. Engaging with our team is part of WSW's culture. Regularly surveying our team enables us to gauge how things are, ensure equity of opportunity within the organization, follow the path of the team in our direction as an organization, build a safe and inclusive community, and chart a path forward for our DEI work.

Economic Security for All (EcSA) – House Bill Passed: Washington's 12 local workforce development boards partner with the state's Employment Security Department and more than 160 local community service providers to ensure customers receive all the services for which they are eligible, including workforce training, education, certifications and support services.

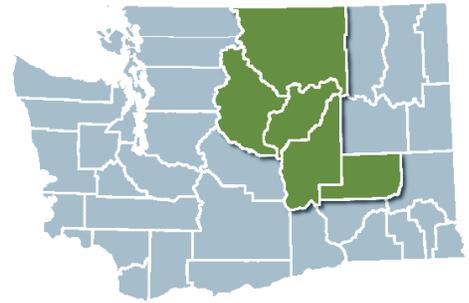
Bipartisan legislation, House Bill 2230, codified EcSA into law this year, ensuring certainty for job seekers experiencing poverty to access funds that help them:

- Reach self-sufficiency through jobs and careers.
- Overcome obstacles to self-sufficiency, with a focus on marginalized and underserved populations.
- Navigate existing poverty reduction programs and regulations to make them easier to access and more effective.

- Access financial help when needed to address gaps between programs, including monetary incentives to help them reach their career and/or educational goals.

Connect with businesses to support the workforce needs that foster industry growth and increase quality employment opportunities through apprenticeships, retraining and certification, and training programs for job seekers.

Over the past year, the SkillSource Regional Workforce Board and the WorkSource partnership in North Central Washington have benefited from a number of new programs and initiatives that are changing the face of workforce development. Modest increases in federal WIOA funding were more than matched by state investments in Economic Security for All (EcSA) and the new Community Reinvestment Grant program through the Department of Commerce. This enabled SkillSource to serve more businesses and career seekers than at any other time since before the COVID-19 pandemic.



Serving Adams, Chelan, Douglas, Grant and Okanogan counties.

Partner, board and staff collaboration

Over the past year, the SkillSource Regional Workforce Board members and staff continued their strategic planning that began at the board retreat in 2022. Input was solicited from board and committee members over several months, as well as from the community at large through online surveys. The staff presented the proposed regional workforce plan to the board and commissioners in spring 2024, and it received approval from the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board in May. This plan sets forth goals and priorities for the workforce development system in North Central over the next four years.



SkillSource Regional Workforce Board members and staff prepare to review the regional workforce plan at their March 2024 board meeting prior to the 2024 Recognition Banquet.

The North Central Workforce Development Area comprises five large rural counties that are organized in three labor markets: Chelan and Douglas counties, Grant and Adams counties, and Okanogan County. Each year, the workforce development partners in each of these three labor market areas convene for Workforce Collaboration Summits, where experienced and new staff alike learn and share about their organizations and the customers they serve. This year, nearly 400 staff participated in the three events, held in March, April and May.

The Grant/Adams summit, held at Big Bend Community College, featured keynote speaker Horacio Sanchez of Resiliency, Inc., who shared a presentation on the impact of poverty, and the ramifications to cognitive, emotional, and social development and health. In Okanogan County, partners convened at the Omak Elks Lodge and WorkSource Okanogan. Keynote speakers Tamar Jackson and Kelly Brickhouse from WorkSource Central asked, “Are we intentionally equipped to serve our community?” The Chelan/Douglas summit was held at Wenatchee Valley College and featured presentations from Dr. Julie Rickard, who spoke on “Creating a Behavioral Health & Trauma Informed Lens in Workforce Development,” and Angela



Speakers and presentations engage WorkSource staff and partners at the 2024 Workforce Collaboration Summits in Wenatchee, Moses Lake and Omak

Prater from Confluence Health, who presented a session titled “Taking Care of Ourselves So We Can Help Others.” Additionally, at lunch the partner guests were treated to a panel of “dream makers” — former workforce investment customers who had gone on to achieve their dreams. Breakout sessions at these summits covered diverse topics such as artificial intelligence and employability, new metrics for gauging economic outlook, hunger and housing resources, diversity in hiring, resources for assistance with utilities and housing, reducing recidivism with pre and post-release support, addressing child care needs, upskilling workers and helping businesses and workers reach their potential, and more.

Building communities, businesses and relationships

In the first half of 2024, SkillSource began planning community and business-focused initiatives throughout North Central Washington under the Community Reinvestment Program. These funds are meant to support Washingtonians most adversely affected by the War on Drugs - Black, Latino, and Tribal residents. SkillSource contracted with two “by-and-for” organizations - community-based organizations that serve a specific community and are controlled by individuals from that community. The Wenatchee Valley Chamber of Commerce was identified to assist with referrals of small businesses owned by Black, Latino, and Tribal community members; CAFÉ (The Community for the Advancement of Family Education) will assist in referring individuals for services throughout the five-county area.

Using Community Reinvestment funds, SkillSource sponsored three significant cultural events in each of its three labor market areas in May 2024. In Othello, SkillSource was a contributing sponsor of the city's

very first Cinco de Mayo celebration, in partnership with the recently formed Hispanic Committee and the Othello Rotary Club. The celebration included a parade, food vendors, informational booths for businesses and local agencies, a car show, and dancing and musical performances.

In Wenatchee, SkillSource was honored to be the Presenting Sponsor of La Terraza de Main Street, a vibrant celebration of Latin American culture in Wenatchee, WA. The Wenatchee Valley Chamber of Commerce's Hispanic Business Council hosted the celebration and street market and highlighted many of the diverse, Hispanic-owned small businesses in the valley, from food vendors to candle makers to gift shops and more. Throughout the day, SkillSource staff and alumni gave presentations from the main stage to share the impact of the work being done and the resources that are available to individuals and businesses in the community. Hundreds of attendees came out to enjoy the family-friendly event.

In Okanogan County, nestled in the foothills just outside of Omak within the boundaries of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation is Paschal Sherman Indian School, a tribally controlled school that serves approximately 150 students from local and neighboring tribes of the Northwest with integrated programs for tribal language and culture. SkillSource was honored to be a contributing sponsor for this year's Sunflower Festival at Paschal Sherman Indian School. This event is an annual celebration of culture and community, with hundreds of families spanning multiple generations attending to gather, play, dance, and celebrate. Local artisans and community agencies were present with resources for individual and family wellness, skills training, cultural programs, and early and ongoing education.

Business engagement imperative

Engaging with business in workforce development is more imperative than ever. With technology advances at staggering rates, new and emerging occupations, a shift in the workplace landscape like never seen before, we must turn up the dial on our private- public collaboration.

The Building the Future Energy Workforce conference at Big Bend Community College on April 11, 2024 brought together industry representatives, workforce experts, educators, and legislators to discuss the current landscape, the potential for individuals and communities, and examined the gaps that need to be filled in order to reach that potential.

Daniel T. Schwartz, Director of the University of Washington's Clean Energy Institute, was the morning's keynote speaker. Schwartz shared survey data that revealed which aspects of the emerging battery industry workforce could be met at various educational institutions. An industry panel comprised of managers from Sila Nanotechnologies and Group14 Technologies, the two leading silicate battery component manufacturers in the Central Basin, described their plan for "coop-etition" — a combined

effort to increase awareness and opportunities in the community, which will strengthen the skilled workforce around emerging energy technologies.

SkillSource CEO, Lisa Romine joined other regional workforce development leaders in a panel discussion which discussed resources and best practices for supporting creative hiring strategies for industry partners. Lisa described how these best practices have created opportunities for success through work-based training options such as Incumbent Worker Training, On-the-Job Training, Internships and Apprenticeships. Dr. Sue Kane of the NCW Tech Alliance noted that as the adoption of scalable clean energy accelerates, there is a need to create programs and certifications to fill identified skill gaps up to and including four-year and post-graduate degrees.

Washington State Representatives Vandana Slatter and Alex Ybarra joined Brant Mayo of the Grant County Economic Development Council for a legislative and economic development panel. Representative Ybarra reflected on the transformation to his hometown of Quincy, which has seen improved access to education, health care, recreation, and overall quality of life since becoming the home to data centers. Where there is irrefutable industry need — such as data centers and clean energy — and when there is thoughtful collaboration amongst community partners, there is the opportunity to strengthen local economies, and make life better for workers and their families.



Workforce development leaders from across North Central Washington present at the Building the Future Energy Workforce summit at Big Bend Community College

Enhancing success

Over 1,350 individuals were educated and trained over the course of the program year. Overall, SkillSource devoted nearly \$1.5 million in direct support of career seekers — including over \$517,000 for vocational education, \$435,000 for work-based learning, nearly \$550,000 in performance incentives and about \$117,000 in wrap-around support services. In addition, SkillSource served 497 local businesses, facilitated 179 learners to obtain credentials, and assisted 193 individuals in obtaining training related employment. Adult career seekers completing training through SkillSource averaged \$9,692 in quarterly wages, while dislocated workers averaged \$12,024 — a 43% wage increase for adults and dislocated workers over the last seven years.

North Central is one of the leading regions facilitating work-based training in Washington. SkillSource assisted 119 incumbent employees at thirteen local employers to upskill and learn valuable new skills to move up the ladder and make their business more competitive. SkillSource also facilitated 50 on-the-job trainings and 177 youth work experiences during the program year.

Leveraging more than 30 years of experience delivering high-quality training and education to youth, SkillSource continues to expand opportunities for young adults throughout the region. In addition to its highly effective and well-regarded Open Doors programs for high school dropout retrieval in Wenatchee and Othello, SkillSource worked with the Okanogan School District and Employment Security Department to convert the alternative learning program at WorkSource Okanogan into a third Open Doors location in North Central. This will allow dropout youth to access accelerated credit recovery for high school completion. Additionally, SkillSource continued its successful collaboration with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation to deliver Pre-Employment Transition Services throughout the five-county area. This program offers work readiness and self-advocacy workshops and work-based learning opportunities to students with disabilities. SkillSource provided these critical services to 180 local youth, nearly 100 of whom went on to participate in paid work experiences in local businesses. Several of these students received job offers from their work experience employers.

SkillSource continued to offer training and education support to individuals with significant obstacles to employment. The Community Reinvestment Fund's Career Accelerator incentives paired with State EcSA to expand monthly performance incentives for participants in training. These incentives often made the difference between retention in a training program, or dropping out due to financial hardship. These stories from the past year portray how these investments are impacting the most vulnerable and in-need individuals in our region, helping them achieve self-sufficiency and income stability, and opening the doors to meaningful new careers.

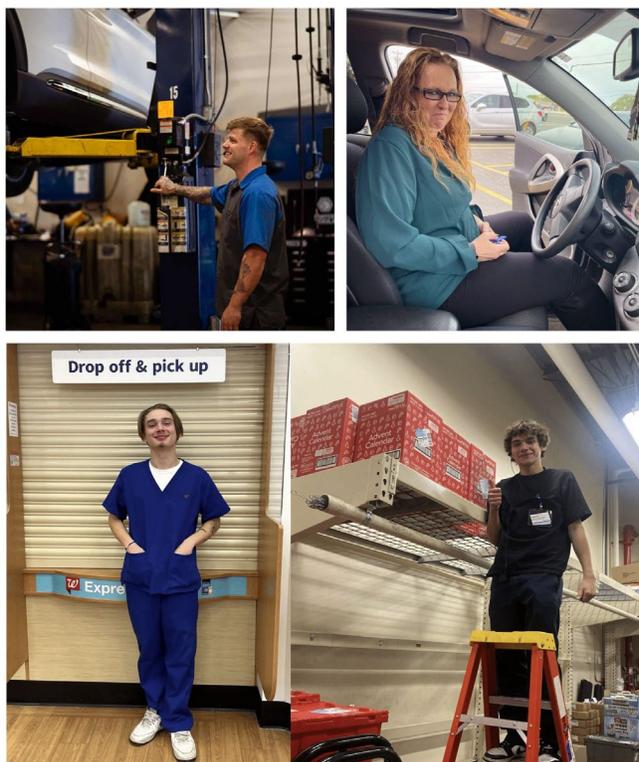
Success in action

James

After serving three years in prison, James was released and motivated to make a better life for himself and his family. He was referred to SkillSource by Wenatchee Valley College for assistance with tuition and other expenses for the Automotive Technology Program. State EcSA incentives and food assistance from Washington State DSHS helped him to stay in class and maintain a 3.69 GPA. James was hired by local employer Pat Armstrong Ford before graduation, and he will complete his associates of technical science degree in fall 2024. "James is very enthusiastic and willing to tackle any task he is assigned. He is punctual, always on time and ready to work. He is dedicated to continual progress — both personal and professional — to advance in his career," said Charley Wyatt, service manager at Pat Armstrong Ford.

Darlene

In February 2024, SkillSource received a donated car from a member of the Wenatchee community. SkillSource used supportive service funds to get the donated car road-ready so it could be passed along to a participant in need of transportation to get to work and training. Single mother Darlene attended a SkillSource job fair and was connected with the hiring manager for Armada Corp, a local collection agency. Shortly thereafter, Darlene was hired to train on the job. SkillSource worked with Armada on a training plan and also provided Darlene with support services, including appropriate work attire and connections to housing and other resources. The SkillSource staff in Moses Lake unanimously recommended Darlene as the deserving recipient of the donated car. The entire Armada team came out to the parking lot to celebrate as SkillSource board member Ken Johnson handed her the keys in front of her new workplace. Darlene now has the means to transport herself to work, to support her children as they grow, and to continue confidently on her road to success.



Clockwise from upper left: James, Darlene, Estephan and Antonio, successful SkillSource alumni at work in their community.

Antonio and Estephan

When Antonio came to SkillSource, he wasn't working, and was experiencing homelessness. Despite financial, family, and health obstacles, Antonio set goals to earn his high school equivalency and then worked diligently to successfully complete pre-employment training workshops and two work experiences with SkillSource. In October 2022, Antonio earned his high school equivalency, and was ready to pursue a career path in pharmacy education. Antonio was offered a customer service position at Walgreens where he could also train to become a pharmacy technician. After completing in-house training and certification as a technician assistant, Antonio went on to enroll in the pharmacy assistant program and is on track to complete it by the end of the year. Antonio's success served as an inspiration to his younger brother, Estephan. At 16 years old Estephan entered SkillSource's youth program, attended pre-employment workshops, and successfully finished work experience. After completing high school, he was offered a customer service position at Walgreens and now works alongside his brother.



Strategic planning at the forefront

We play a pivotal role in the economic vitality of South Central Washington serving both job seekers and businesses alike. During PY23, South Central Workforce employment and training programs served 1,135 individuals.

We held a strategic planning retreat in September 2023. Outside consultant, PointNorth, helped the board and staff develop a draft work plan. This was reviewed and refined through the winter; the final strategic plan was approved by the Board of Directors in February 2024, and approved by the governor in June 2024.



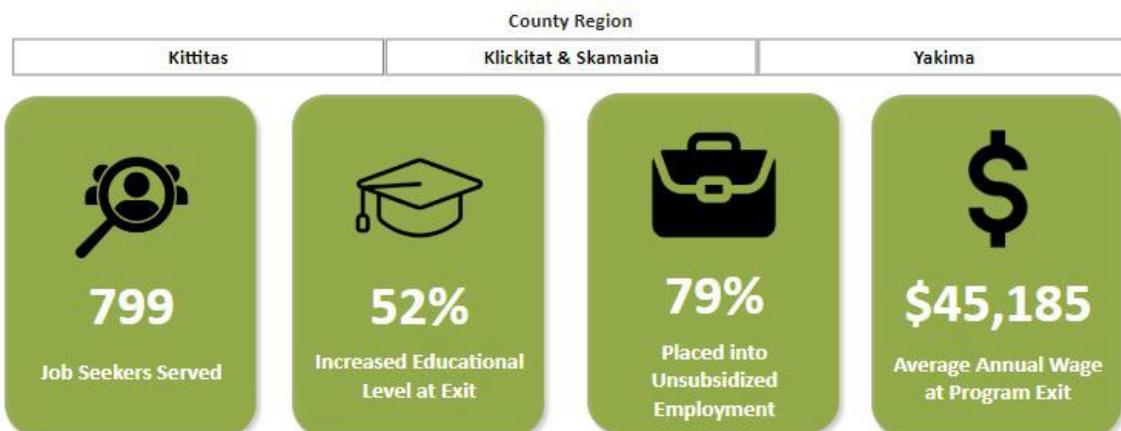
Serving Kittitas, Klickitat, Skamania and Yakima counties

Data analytics

To better communicate what we do, Data Integrity Manager Ariana Cordova developed new performance dashboards. As shown below, these clearly and concisely illustrate how we provide opportunities for economic mobility and prosperity in South Central Washington. Visitors to our website, scworkforce.org, can quickly explore performance data by program thanks to the incorporation of Microsoft Power BI.

WIOA TITLE I-B & DISCRETIONARY GRANTS PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

Performance Summary for Program Year 2023: July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024



EcSA changes signed into law

Over 30 partners from the Washington Workforce Association traveled to Olympia in January to “Climb the Hill” to support Economic Security for All (EcSA). Championed by Employment Security, all 12 local workforce development boards, and 160 community partners, the poverty reduction program helps low-income individuals reach self-sufficiency through supportive services, workforce training, and education.

[House Bill 2230](#) was signed into law on March 14, 2024, ensuring consistent and predictable funding. A child of poverty, and a longtime member of the statewide poverty reduction group, CEO Amy Martinez attended the signing ceremony in Olympia.

EcSA has been a life-changing program for many in our region. The average participant comes into the program facing four to six barriers. About 25% are homeless, and 30% are justice-involved and/or single parents.



South Central Workforce CEO Amy Martinez stood next to Gov. Inslee at the EcSA bill signing ceremony

Deylene's story

Deylene, a determined single mother, was struggling to make ends meet while living with her parents when she came to our subcontractor for help. Despite the challenges she faced, she had a dream — to become a substance abuse counselor and help others break free from addiction. With a history of justice involvement due to substance abuse, she knew firsthand the obstacles that could stand in the way of her success.

She shared her aspirations with her Career Development Counselor, Michele. Michele enrolled Deylene in the WIOA Adult and state EcSA Below 200% programs, setting her on a path for a brighter future.

Deylene enrolled at Yakima Valley College, excelling academically, and advocating for those battling addiction. She was even elected president of the campus Wellness Society club!

Thanks to supportive services and the Community Reinvestment Project (CRP) Career Accelerator Incentive, Deylene found the financial stability



With the help of WIOA and EcSA, Daylene graduated from college and became a substance abuse counselor

necessary to provide for her son and attend school. In May, she graduated from YVC and now works full-time as a counselor at Merit Resources, living her dream of helping others overcome addiction.

Omar's story

Omar's journey is a testament to resilience, determination, and the power of opportunity. Omar faced multiple barriers: low income, single parenthood, basic skills deficiency, justice involvement, and a lack of occupational skills. His career development counselor enrolled Omar in the WIOA Adult, state EcSA Below 200%, and federal EcSA programs. Omar enrolled at Perry Technical Institute pursuing an associate degree in information technology and communication systems.

Family issues forced him to pause his studies, but his determination brought him back the following quarter. Although he was working part-time at Panera, he still needed help making ends meet. The CRP Career Accelerator Incentive proved to be a lifeline. It helped Omar cover rent and provide for his daughter. It even allowed him to quit his part-time job in his final quarter and focus fully on his externship.

Omar's commitment paid off! He graduated in June and is now employed full-time as a Network Operations Technician at Zply Fiber Internet.



With the help of WIOA, Omar became a network operations technician

Apprenticeship takes center stage

Apprenticeship is a structured system of hands-on training designed to teach highly technical skills. It combines on-the-job training with classroom instruction to produce highly skilled workers. Unlike other training systems, apprentices earn while they learn so as their skills increase, so do their wages. After meeting a minimum number of hours and passing a skills test, an apprentice graduates as a journey-level worker with a nationally recognized credential.

Through a partnership with the West Valley School District and AJAC Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeships, South Central Workforce expanded apprenticeships in Yakima, creating the first cohort of adult manufacturing apprenticeships in 2019. Local organizations like Triumph Actuation, Tree Top, and Washington Beef all recognized the value of using apprenticeship to grow their workforce.

Then the pandemic hit, and the world changed. Classes went online and apprentices in the South Central continued working in person because the majority were deemed essential.

In June 2024, families, friends, and industry leaders gathered to celebrate the 2024 AJAC Apprenticeship Graduation at the Museum of Flight in Tukwila. This event was not just a celebration of academic achievements, it was also a testament to the resilience, adaptability, and determination of our local apprentices.

Despite the challenge of online classes, workers employed at Washington Beef and Tree Top in Yakima County persevered! Six of the original 28 graduated as journey-level industrial maintenance technicians completing 8,000 hours of on-the-job training, 50 hours of classroom work, and 60 college credits.

In addition, seven others completed a rigorous 18-month industrial manufacturing technician program. This is particularly noteworthy considering these individuals were told by their employer, Thermoforming Systems, LLC that the company would be relocating to Connecticut. Truly only a determined few would complete an apprenticeship with layoff looming!



Makeba Priester, America Moreno, and Julie Reyes of Thermoforming Systems, LLC proudly show their certificates of completion (left). Overview of the graduation ceremony (upper right). Stevan Conklin of Washington Beef stands with Amy Martinez, CEO of South Central Workforce (bottom right).

Damien's story

After losing his job as a Xerox technician, Damien turned to WorkSource. His Career Development Counselor enrolled him in the QUEST and the Dislocated Worker programs. With few prospects for re-employment, Damien chose a new path enrolling in Perry Technical Institute's Agricultural & Diesel Equipment Technology program to become a Farm Equipment Mechanic.

When classes started in September, Damien's unemployment insurance benefits had run out, and his application for Commissioner Approved Training was denied. As if attending school and making ends meet was not challenging enough, he lived in Sunnyside, which meant a 69-mile commute per day to attend Perry Tech Institute. Fortunately, QUEST helped with transportation costs.

In October, Damien moved to Selah to reduce travel time and expenses. He excelled in school, maintaining an A average. But just a few months later, he found himself homeless. He started living out of his car and started missing school.

His career development counselor researched local homeless resources, but Damien's situation wasn't desperate enough to qualify him for most community programs. QUEST funds provided emergency rental support.

After a year of challenges, Damien graduated in March and now works as a diesel mechanic at Mercer Ranch earning \$21 per hour, a self-sufficient wage.

Cheyenne's story

In her third year as an elementary education major at Central Washington University, Cheyenne spent her time studying, student teaching, or parenting her three-year-old. Her financial aid package was stretched thin between tuition, the cost of textbooks, and required state testing. A single mother, she relied on food benefits to feed her family.

During an on-campus presentation, Cheyenne heard about the WIOA Youth program. Intrigued, she contacted WorkSource Ellensburg where she met with a career development counselor. Together, the two determined that she met the program requirements.

Through the WIOA Youth Program, Cheyenne received financial assistance with tuition, textbooks, state testing, and even professional clothing. Her counselor also arranged for a paid internship.

Cheyenne had been successful in school, but she felt alone, stressed out, and struggled emotionally. Her counselor offered more than money; she was the proverbial shoulder to lean on. Cheyenne graduated from CWU and returned to Wenatchee, where she works as a substitute teacher.

Casey's story

After serving in the Navy, Casey worked as a referral coordinator at Yakima Valley Memorial. When the hospital was sold in 2022, he lost his job due to restructuring. After exhausting his unemployment



The WIOA Youth program helped Cheyenne with expenses while she finished college

insurance benefits, he reached out to the veterans team at WorkSource Union Gap for help. They introduced him to Nancy, a career development counselor.

Casey came to the Dislocated Worker program facing multiple barriers. A mature worker with outdated job search skills, and only a high school diploma, Casey's career prospects seemed limited. "I was feeling very discouraged about my prospects," said Casey. "It was fantastic luck of the draw that Nancy ended up as my counselor! From the beginning, she was supportive, open-minded, and open-hearted, too."

Nancy helped Casey learn how to write a marketable resume and cover letter, develop behavioral interviewing skills, gain confidence, and talk about his transferable skills.

Today, Casey works as a Program Support Clerk at Fort Simcoe Job Corps, with hopes of becoming a full-time federal employee.



Casey with Career Development Counselor Nancy Orris (left), and Veteran Service Representative Otto Cruz (right).

WorkSource connects job seekers with local industry

Over 680 job seekers of all ages and 29 businesses participated in the Jobs Are in the Air job fair held on Feb. 6, 2024, at the Yakima Convention Center. The event was organized in partnership with WorkSource Union Gap and featured on local [CBS](#) and [ABC](#) affiliates.

South Central Workforce helped WorkSource Union Gap organize and manage the second annual Job Fest/Chamba Fest on May 1, 2024. Yakama Nation elder, Tony Washines opened the event with a ceremonial invocation, and South Central Workforce COO Travis Platz offered a tribal land acknowledgment.



More than 740 people attended the Job Fest/Chamba Fest at WorkSource Union Gap

Held outside WorkSource in the parking lot, 27 businesses, eight community resources partners, and three food vendors participated.

South Central Workforce helps expand child care in Yakima County

Statewide, the [Department of Children, Youth & Families](#) estimates that only about 27% of the children aged birth to 5 are served by licensed child care, preschool, and/or subsidized child care. In Washington, the [average cost](#) of center-based child care for a toddler is reported to be \$14,355 per year, 25% more than the \$11,524 annual cost of attendance for a first-year undergraduate at the [University of Washington](#).

The pandemic intensified this issue in South Central Washington. Child care issues caused 4,000 workers to drop out of the workforce, costing businesses in Yakima County an estimated \$92 million annually. Thanks to U.S. Senator Patty Murray, South Central Workforce received a \$1.5 million grant to address this critical issue for working families.

We developed a new partnership with the Yakima County Development Association and the Yakima Valley Community Foundation to help existing child care businesses and open more spots for families in need. Yakima County Development Association delivered a Child Care Business Accelerator program helping 60 local businesses. They taught 81 workshops designed for both in-home daycare and child care centers. All classes were available free of charge in English and Spanish and discussed digital and financial literacy. To date, 10 child care jobs have been created or retained, and 50 new spots will soon be open for families seeking child care.

Community Reinvestment Project welcomed in South Central region

The Washington Department of Commerce's Community Reinvestment Project (CRP) is a community-led initiative designed to provide resources to communities disproportionately affected by the war on drugs — Black, Latine, and tribal populations across Washington. The funding aims to improve economic security through direct support services, grants, training, wage subsidies, and more.

Business support

To reach the local Latine population, South Central Workforce sponsored Yakima Taco Fest, the annual community event organized by the Central Washington Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. The food truck rally is a one-day celebration of food and culture.

After hearing from several Hispanic small business owners that they feel ignored by local chambers of commerce and economic development organizations, Employment Engagement Manager Susy Moran started Chismecito y Cafecito. The monthly Gossip and Coffee gathering is a new networking event in

Yakima County providing a platform for Latine owners and managers to discuss their unique business needs. Fifteen businesses attended the first meeting and attendance continues to grow.

Based on the group's feedback, we organized an introduction to employment law training in Spanish. South Central Workforce also brought in Business Impact NW to provide coaching for businesses facing growing pains. We are currently working with Yakima SHRM, the local Society for Human Resource Management chapter to develop employer operations manuals in Spanish.

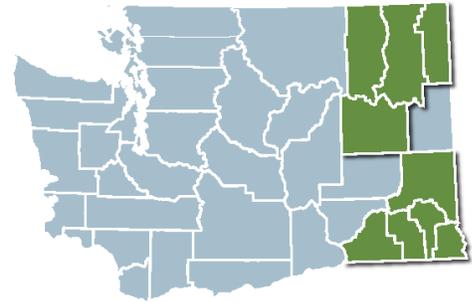


Assisting individuals

The Community Reinvestment Project Career Accelerator Incentive has been a lifeline for 102 state EcSA participants in our region. From December 2023 to June 2024, 463 incentive payments were issued totaling \$463,000. Almost 60% of those participants reported using the \$1,000 to make rental payments.

Highlights for program year 2023

The Eastern Washington Partnership (EWP) workforce development area (WDA) is comprised of nine counties in Washington, including Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Garfield, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Stevens, Walla Walla and Whitman. These counties are located on the extreme eastern border of the state, reaching from Canada to Oregon along the Idaho border. The area is over 14,000 square miles in size, approximately 21% of the state, yet only 3% of the state's population resides there.



Serving Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Garfield, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Stevens, Walla Walla and Whitman counties

The EWP's diversity, in terms of geography, resources and demographics, make it unique among other workforce areas in the country. Within the area, there are sub-regions with distinctly individual identities, different natural resources and singular economies. Each sub-region has some of its own key industries with discrete workforce training needs. Labor markets vary within the area and are determined by resources unique to each region. Natural resources such as timber production and mining historically have been drivers of the economy in the northern counties. Wheat, grain and specialty agricultural crops, along with wind generation farms, highly contribute to the economic base in the south. Intellectual capital has contributed to the prosperity of the central region.

While recognizing internal differences, the nine counties and sub-regions also share many industry and labor features. Common across nine counties and emerging as an economic driver are industries that manufacture an array of goods, including food processing equipment, aluminum boats and high-tech electronic instruments. The process of turning agricultural crops into foodstuffs is also considered part of the manufacturing sector. All counties export goods or services to a greater or lesser degree and are reliant on a strong warehousing and transportation sector. With multiple hospitals, numerous clinics, nursing home facilities and the need for home health care, a wide spectrum of workers are needed in the health care sector. Over the last year, all these industries have been adjusting to the post pandemic economy and are encountering challenges from supply chain issues to staffing shortages.

Here are some highlights of efforts to meet the workforce needs of the region during the last year.

System delivery response

WIOA system partners from the Employment Security Department, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Blue Mountain Action Council, Rural Resources Community Action, Community Colleges of Spokane and

Walla Walla Community College continued to offer a hybrid of in-person and virtual service delivery. Demand for in-person service delivery increased throughout the year and all locations are experiencing higher levels of foot traffic than in recent years.

In-person service delivery continues to expand with resume preparation, work search, technology access and unemployment insurance assistance being the most requested services. Various workshops are returning to a regular rotation at most locations. Challenges still exist with customer capacity, ability, and resources to fully benefit from services virtually. Digital literacy resources have been identified and are available to support customers. During the year WorkSource facilities in Walla Walla and Colville hosted an AmeriCorps Volunteer with a focus of providing digital literacy assistance to system customers. Partnerships with library systems throughout the nine-county area have been instrumental in providing support for customers with technology use challenges.

Employment Security staff are actively outreaching to unemployment claimants, starting with those that have exhausted or have been filing for unemployment the longest. This year they are also focusing on reaching those who have recently began receiving UI assistance in an effort to introduce them to re-employment services offered at WorkSource. Distribution of newsletters through email provides information and links to job opportunities and information from WorkSource system and other community partners. Coordination between Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) and the WIOA Dislocated Worker program has been key to assisting the claimant customer.

Responding to business needs

Business Services teams continue to collaborate to provide resources to our business customers. Teams have formed and serve three sub-regions of the nine-county area. One team serves Walla Walla and Columbia counties, a second team serves Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille and Lincoln counties and a third team serves Asotin, Garfield and Whitman counties. All three teams have members representing WIOA Titles I, II, III and IV providers, community colleges, economic development, libraries, and other community-based organizations.

As employers began to right size from the impacts of the pandemic, and in some cases expanded to meet a resurgence in the economy, the demand for business services shifted from UI-related questions back to recruitment and placement of job seekers into open positions. Demand for recruitment events shifted from primarily virtual to strictly in-person job fairs and hiring events. Previously, demand for large hiring events was minimal and often focused on one employer. That changed significantly this year with multiple events including open air job fairs in downtown Walla Walla, industry, or employer specific events at WorkSource locations in Pullman, Walla Walla and Colville and large-scale events held at Walla Walla Community College and Community Colleges of Spokane locations.

Additionally, Business Services teams collaborate to provide resources to our business customers for challenges beyond the recruitment of skilled talent. Employee expectations, new regulatory requirements and increased technology demands are having an impact on small and medium-sized employers in our area. Local teams are busy creating toolkits for business services that include resources for employers with needs beyond those typically provided by the workforce system. One clear result of the Business Services teams is that demand for on-the-job training has increased and WIOA Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker staff have been successful in providing employment-ready candidates.

Serving specialized populations

EWP has always had a model based on a network of partners and locations throughout the area for service delivery instead of relying on a center-based service delivery model. The model has proven to be successful in serving rural populations.

EWP values our veteran customers and is fortunate to have Consolidated Veterans Services Representatives with a passion to serve. The two individuals located in the area are committed to serving all nine counties and are key members of the Business Services teams. Over the course of this year, they worked with 57 veterans and their families to help them to progress and achieve their economic and employment goals.

Some of the challenges of delivering services in a virtual setting to limited English proficient (LEP) populations were not solved just by moving to an in-person delivery model. Providing services with bilingual staff, when possible, is critical to meeting the needs of the LEP customer. Coordination and collaboration with partner staff from EWP, as well as from Benton-Franklin WDC, helped to provide necessary services to LEP customers seeking assistance with UI and job placement. Coordinated outreach with our partners from Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) of Washington has also improved our services to the LEP population. In the southern part of Walla Walla County at the Valle Lindo, a Farmworkers Housing Community, in addition to weekly collaborative service delivery by WorkSource, Goodwill, and basic financial education providers, specialized workshops for job seekers are offered on-site.

Services to youth have fully recovered from the impacts of the pandemic. With the Curlew Job Corps welcoming students back to the center and Open Doors programs returning to capacity, opportunities to assist youth with education goals have increased. Employers experiencing limited candidates for their openings have been willing to take youth with limited or no work experience and with the support of WIOA staff, train them in their vacant positions.

Services to those experiencing poverty have expanded to include support from the Economic Security for All (EcSA) project. During the year both Federal and State EcSA resources were available to assist

individuals in all nine counties. State EcSA designed to not only serve those in poverty but also those in jeopardy of returning to poverty is a welcome addition to the system. Through this program and our WIOA programs, 314 people designated as low-income were enrolled in programs helping them to move closer to achieving their employment goals.



Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council

Mission

The Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council promotes a prosperous community by providing a progressive workforce system.

Vision

The Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council contributes to our prosperous community by elevating human potential.



Serving Benton and Franklin counties

Customer connectivity and outreach

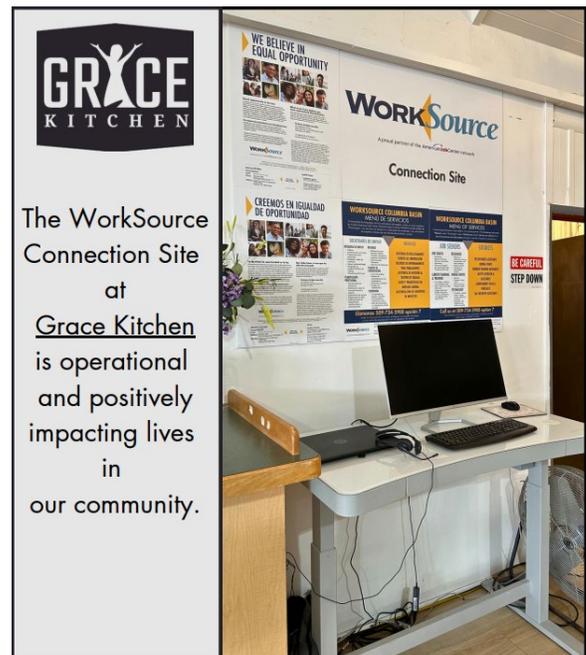
We opened a new WorkSource Columbia Basin (WSCB) Connection site at Grace Kitchen and another one is in the works at Mid-Columbia Library Benton City.

BFWDC staff provided all the technology needed to start the connection site with Grace Kitchen, a nonprofit that offers hope and opportunity for lasting change to women survivors of trafficking, addiction, homelessness, and poverty. They foster a community of grace where women learn job and life skills to gain sustainable employment and a secure future for themselves and their children.

Please visit the Grace Kitchen website to learn more..

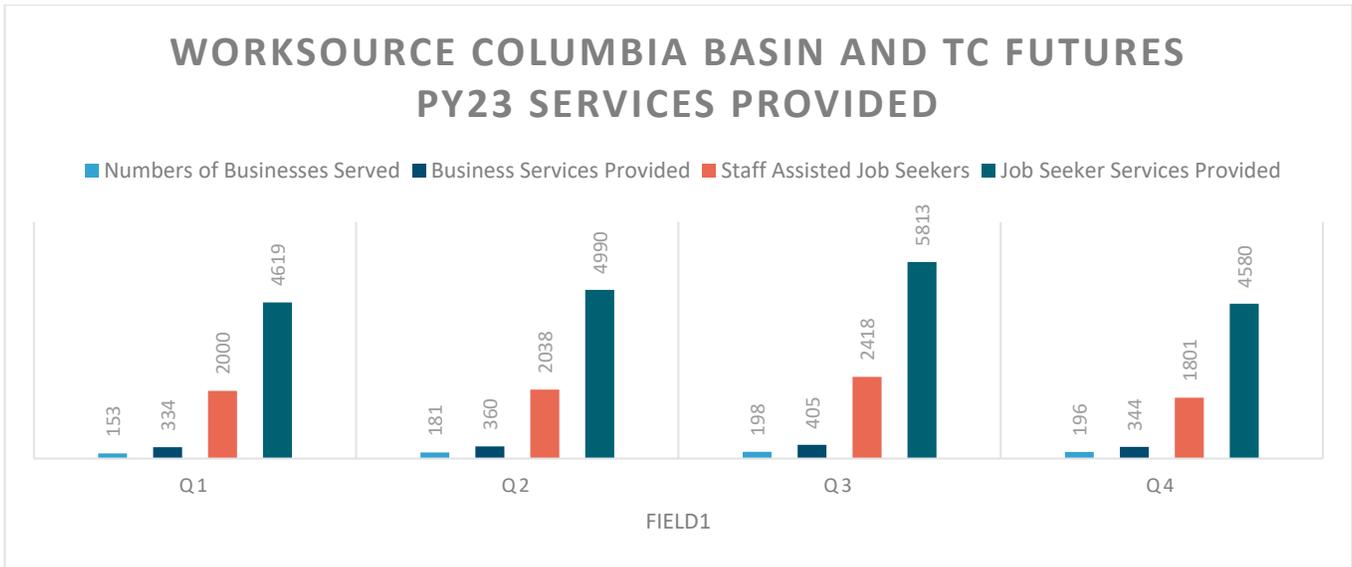
Our collaboration with Grace Kitchen aligns with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) mandates to increase access to employment and training resources for individuals facing barriers to employment.

By partnering with Grace Kitchen, we aim to create a space where customers can access employment and training-related resources and direct them to WSCB.



The WorkSource Connection Site at Grace Kitchen is operational and positively impacting lives in our community.

Services and outreach of the Benton-Franklin workforce system



Quarterly number of businesses and job seekers served, as well as number of services provided.

Expanding employer engagement

The Business Solutions Team (BST) has been conducting outreach to local small businesses to build relationships and identify needs that we can support. Their outreach efforts have connected them to over four dozen businesses. Outreach efforts have included face-to-face conversations by going out into the community and talking with the businesses. Attending community events for business, such as the Small Business Resource event hosted by TRIDEC (Tri City Economic Development Council).

The BST translated the Business Solutions Team flyers into Spanish for distribution to businesses who prefer materials in Spanish. They distributed the flyers in the community and sent an email through the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce to increase awareness of our services and how to connect with us.

Future Fest is an annual event that TC Futured hosts every May. This year it was on May 23 and there were 77 youth in attendance, and 24 vendors representing different pathways to take after high school or GED attainment.



Staff and attendees at Future Fest

GED graduation

TC Futures hosted the Winter Graduation, the largest graduation to date, with 22 graduates and nearly 180 guests. TC Futures staff has decided to host two annual graduations, one in the spring and one in the fall, to accommodate the guests and increasing number of graduates each year. The TC Futures Director, Melanie Olson, spoke at the graduation and ended her remarks with these inspiring words, "Earning a high school equivalency (GED) is truly a starting point and the ticket that helps you earn entrance into another realm of opportunity."



Winter graduation hosted by TC Futures

Collegiate collaboration

WIOA Title IB program staff participate in Columbia Basin Colleges (CBC) Workforce Education Center Committee. This committee meets to review the funding applications of students who are attending the college. They meet twice weekly to discuss the hardship each student is facing and see who amongst the committee can serve the student best. This has led to consistent referrals to WIOA Title IB programs. The collaboration and willingness to serve students in long term training has significantly improved the relationship between the college and WIOA Title IB programs.

In partnership with CBC, GED, High School, and and English language acquisition courses were offered onsite and WorkSource Columbia Basin every quarter except for summer quarter. These courses will continue to be offered as long as there is a need.

Strategic partnerships

Making every dollar count is so important! WIOA Title IB programs leveraged funding by partnering with Columbia Basin College, Opportunities Industrial Center of Washington, state and federal EcSA programs, and several more. Co-enrollment allows for participants to get the most services, and to stretch the services of each program.

WIOA Title IB program staff were invited to an orientation at Columbia Basin College to assist customers interested in commercial driver's license training tuition assistance. Columbia Basin College and a local CDL training provider T Enterprises partnered on a grant that gave students \$4,000 towards a Class A CDL license. WIOA staff attended to talk with those individuals who would need additional dollars to pay

the remaining cost of tuition. This strategic partnership allowed for students to complete their training at no cost, and allowed funds to be leveraged, which left room for more people to earn certifications towards careers that lead to living wages.

Another strategic partnership was with our WIOA Title IB Youth program and Educational Service District 123. Together these partners make up TC (Tri Cities) Futures, our local youth re-engagement center. ESD123 has a GED-plus program, Open Doors. Together these programs assist opportunity youth in credit retrieval, GED completion, post-secondary opportunities, training and employment. Beyond that they teach life skills and job readiness skills. This summer they hosted a summer program called LEAD, where youth were able to participate in soft skill and life skill building, CDL training, hospitality career introduction through industry tours and career exploration, and a leadership academy.



Story of Impact – Lee

Lee is a 19-year-old who dropped out of high school. Lee needed their GED, employment services and post-secondary education guidance. Lee co-enrolled in the Open Doors program and obtained their GED while enrolled in both Open Doors and Out-of-School Youth. Lee was assisted with career guidance, labor market information, GED services and post-secondary schooling explorations. Lee obtained part time employment as a janitor for Pacific Clinic, making \$16 per hour. Although this job is only part time, this is exactly the supplemental income and employment they needed to pursue their main goal of attending post-secondary education at CBC. Lee has a passion for films and would like to pursue a degree in film editing. Lee was able to participate in a paid Internship with Stevens Media Group (SMG), a radio company, where they learned filming, video editing, and voice over methods. Lee gleaned much from their experience at SMG and plans to participate in an internship there while in college. Lee made such an amazing impression on the team at SMG, the staff reached out to their case manager with high praise feedback.



Lee wrote the SMG a thank you letter, which showed their gratefulness and professional maturity. Lee is enrolled at CBC taking classes towards an Associate of Arts degree and film classes. They plan to finish up 1-2 years at CBC, then move onto Central Washington University. During their time of enrollment at TC Futures, Lee was able to obtain their GED, gain employment, and enroll in post-secondary education. They are well on their way in their personal, educational, and professional journey and we could not be prouder of them.

Story of Impact – Alexander

Alexander is a 21-year-old enrolled in the Out-of-School Youth program, and needs his GED, training, and employment opportunities. Upon enrollment, Alexander faced multiple employment barriers, including an education barrier, disability, being homeless, being justice-impacted, and low income. While enrolled in the program, Alexander was provided labor market information services, financial literacy, support services, and GED, attended job fairs and other workshops, attended driver's ed, learned about post-secondary ed requirements, and attended occupational skills training. Alexander completed his GED quickly after only 11 days of studying and tested in all subjects in one day. Alexander was originally interested in becoming a cook, but after attending Future Fest, he became interested in construction.

Alexander soon entered training and completed his flagger certification card, which led to him finding full-time unsubsidized employment with Palouse Power as a flagger after only five weeks in the program. Alexander could also move back in with his family and overcome his homelessness barrier after he and his family successfully lobbied the courts to drop restraining orders due to his success and commitment to change.

Alexander soon faced his background barrier again after being hired by Palouse Power after his background check returned. Alexander was already a high-performing employee, so his foreman spoke with the owners, who decided to keep him employed. Flagger work can be seasonal, so Alexander has already talked with his employer about becoming a lineman with support from Palouse Power. Alexander also believes in giving back to his community and doing whatever he can to keep others from making the same mistakes that he did. Alexander has started volunteering for the Tri-Cities chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI Tri-Cities) as a presenter for their Ending the Silence program designed to educate middle to high school-aged students, school staff, and families about mental illness and drug addiction with a focus on awareness, prevention, and reducing the stigmas associated with them. Alexander successfully exited the program earning \$25 per hour.



Introduction

During PY23, the Spokane Workforce Council (SWC) continued its innovative oversight of the Spokane County Public Workforce System by driving integration, collaboration, and productivity to enhance a robust, qualified, and skilled workforce that meets the needs of local business. The WorkSource Spokane Campus (consisting of WorkSource Spokane, Talent Solutions by WorkSource, and Next Generation Zone) is the heart of our local system and benefits job seekers, students, and employers in the community.



Serving Spokane County

PY23 performance achievements within Workforce Development Area 12 (Spokane County) included:

- WorkSource Spokane served 3,774 job seekers with WIOA funded services.
 - 7,811 total staff-assisted services were provided
 - 93 customers received ITA or classroom training which led to an industry recognized credential/certification
- The Next Generation Zone served 267 young adults with WIOA-funded services.
 - 171 students earned their GEDs or high school equivalency
 - 45 participants completed a work-based-learning program
 - 17 young adults earned an industry recognized credential
 - 65 participants achieved positive outcomes through employment or post-secondary education
- Consultants at Talent Solutions by WorkSource Spokane served 1,579 unique businesses.
 - 9,393 total services were provided to businesses in Spokane County
 - 91 targeted or multi-sector hiring events were hosted, including two large-scale community job fairs.

Resource Center of Spokane County (RCSC) restructured within WorkSource Spokane

In 2019 the SWC in partnership with the city of Spokane and Spokane County created the Resource Center of Spokane County (RCSC) to provide much needed human/social services to individuals in the

community. During this program year, the decision was made to restructure the RCSC and its key services within WorkSource Spokane, making it a one-of-a-kind American Job and Resource Center.

This restructure enabled individuals to truly engage with a one-stop center which can seamlessly integrate human services, pre-employment, employment, training, and educational services. This restructure brought two new key partners, Pioneer Human Services (PHS) and CHAS Health, into the WorkSource Center. PHS now plays a dual role out of the center, significantly boosting the engagement to both justice-impacted individuals and community members significantly impacted by the opioid epidemic.

PHS served 108 justice-impacted participants through their Roadmap to Success Program. This training program helps people who are impacted by the criminal legal system overcome barriers to find and retain employment. Specifically, PHS provides customized training, case management, post-graduation case management, and employment placement.

PHS leverages already existing resources at WorkSource Spokane and Talent Solutions by WorkSource Spokane to ensure effectiveness of their program. Sixty-seven percent of all Roadmap to Success participants gained employment six weeks post-graduation with an average wage of \$19.79 per hour. When WIOA funded services such as OJTs and WEXs were utilized, the average wage jumped to \$29.50 per hour.

CHAS Health, as an in-house WorkSource Spokane partner, provides assistance in accessing and signing up for federal/state funded health care plans. In addition, they provide access to free tele-health consultations and provider referrals. Over 100 WorkSource Spokane customers have worked with CHAS Health staff at WorkSource Spokane from April-June 2024. A large majority of these customers self-identify as underserved or minority populations in Spokane County. The significant impact of PHS and CHAS Health as new partners at WorkSource Spokane has allowed the center to expand its services to accommodate the needs of the community.

Washington Jobs Initiative- Good Jobs Challenge Grant

This bi-regional approach to Good Jobs, between the SWC, WorkForce Central, and Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW) in both the health care and construction industries, is intended to create long-term cultural change that values living wage careers and career pathways through work-based learning



opportunities, internships, and additional high-quality career connected learning experiences. The direct impact of the project will increase the number of individuals possessing the necessary basic education and foundational job specific skills needed to move seamlessly into training or directly into employment in these vital sectors.

The SWC is working directly with three health care industry and four construction industry training providers to develop a pipeline for both accessing training and linkage to employers in need of talent. These partnerships have thus far yielded 32 health care and 38 construction industry training enrollments.

Reconnect2Work Child care

The SWC has prioritized child care and this initiative as a workforce development area of concentration for the past several program years. This work has had two main components: support for families, and support for child care providers. WIOA funding has allowed the SWC to place a child care navigator at WorkSource Spokane, as well as a child care provider industry subject matter expert on Talent Solutions by WorkSource. This combined effort has proven



successful with \$630,899 spent on direct child care tuition assistance for 102 families. This funding has allowed families to maintain safe, stable, and reliable child care so that parents can retain or obtain employment or complete necessary education and training. The Talent Solutions by WorkSource expert has directly engaged with over 250 child care providers in Spokane County, offering them retention and recruitment strategies, as well as resources to help support their existing business. Although the SWC recognizes that the larger child care issue involves different strategies at various levels, our local approach has proven to make a significant impact in the community we serve.

State EcSA and Community Reinvestment Fund

State Economic Security for All (EcSA) funding continues to be a valued fund source to complement both WIOA Title I and other program service offerings. Rather than treating this funding as a stand-alone program offering, the SWC views EcSA as another way to seamlessly integrate services and offer more supportive and training opportunities to customers at WorkSource Spokane and Next Generation Zone.

EcSA evolved in 2024 and added two new services: \$1,000 per month incentive payments for progress on career plans, and automatic eligibility (without completing FAFSA) for the Washington College Grant, which covers the full cost of university, community and technical college, and some apprenticeships and shorter-term training.

EcSA has made a significant impact on addressing services to Spokane County's increasing refugee population, as well as continuing to ensure employment related services are readily available for underserved populations. EcSa has proven to be effective when coupled with other WorkSource Spokane services, such as WIOA Title I, and Basic Food Employment and Training program funding. The SWC has also actualized the intent of the Washington State Department of Commerce's Community Reinvestment Plan, by providing \$181,000 in incentive payments to 82 participants in state EcSA. By leveraging the Community Reinvest Fund (CRF), the SWC was able to establish a Business Investment Grant (BIG) and awarded \$175,000 to 14 Black, Latine, and Native owned small businesses. The BIG is a part of the SWC's commitment to providing targeted workforce supports to historically under resourced groups.

More opportunities like matched savings accounts, incentive payments for employment, and training participation will launch later this year. Finally, the SWC launched a request for proposal called Accelerating Community Connections to contract with up to four by-and-for organizations to support increased access to employment and training services.

Business services

The SWC recognizes that an effective workforce development system is centered around the strategic alignment with local business needs. These needs are specifically addressed by Talent Solutions by WorkSource (TST) and the primary focus during their engagement with employers in Spokane County. TST have worked closely with the SWC's business and industry analyst to develop relevant and actionable data for each industry represented in Spokane County. This data assists businesses in understanding their industry in the overall regional perspective and leads to transformative conversations between TST and local employers.

TST has created an in-depth business needs assessment they conduct during each engagement to accurately understand and diagnose specific talent solutions issues. This assessment assists with problem solving potential retention, recruitment, and other business needs.

TST has developed a monthly live webinar series titled Talent Talk where they facilitate conversations on key topics employers want to learn more about. These range from basic labor market information, advantages in hiring diverse workers (to include BIPOC, veterans, individuals with disabilities, and justice-impacted individuals), retention and recruitment strategies currently working in various

industries, and impacts of the opioid epidemic on business productivity. The TST has provided 12 Talent Talk webinars in PY23, with over 100 businesses participating.

The SWC and the WorkSource Campus centers partnered again this year for two successful large-scale job fairs. The Non-Stop Local News/WorkSource job fair celebrated its 11th annual event, which is the region's largest hiring event. This year the job fair saw its largest job seeker turnout since 2019, with over 1,000 attendees making meaningful connections with 120 local employers. Once again, this year, the job fair included a no-cost drop-in children's activity room to allow parents in need of child care to attend the event. A new feature which was developed based on past attendee feedback was providing on-the-spot career coaching and advising at the event. Career coaches from WorkSource Spokane and Next Generation Zone assisted 130 of the 1,000 attendees on job fair specific strategies to ensure they made the most of their interactions with the employers.

Youth and young adult services

The Next Generation Zone's Open Doors Program, a GED/HSE partnership between the SWC and Northeast Washington Education Service District 101, served over 300 enrollees and graduated 171 students. This graduation number is the largest since the partnership began in 2007. Based on feedback from both students and staff, the SWC sponsored a full day of graduation events which included games, fellowship, food, and interaction between graduating students and their families and local businesses who support young adult employment.



Next Generation Zone partnered with Spokane Public Schools to have a nutritional food vending machine placed within the center. This vending machine provides participants with healthy meal alternatives at no-cost as long as they are currently enrolled in educational or career services. The access to nutritional food while young adults participate in the wrap-around educational and career services at the center has increased engagement and allowed them to stay in the center during lunch/break periods. This innovative approach to addressing young adult needs demonstrates the adaptive approach by Next Generation Zone to mitigate potential barriers to success with those they serve.

Appendix 4: Title III – Wagner Peyser Act Program (Employment Services)

Wagner-Peyser services are delivered free of charge to job seekers and employers through a network of WorkSource centers, Affiliate and Connection sites across the state. In addition, outreach to Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFW) that do not access services through the WorkSource centers is also required.

During the last 20 years, Wagner-Peyser funding allocated to support statewide workforce services in Washington has remained stagnant and when adjusting for inflation, the buying power of this funding has decreased by nearly 50%. This dramatic decrease negatively impacts Employment Security's ability to serve customers furthest from opportunity, as staffing levels have also decreased in proportion to available funding. Additionally, the cost of living, including salaries and benefits, have far exceeded the federal funding levels allocated to Washington. Lastly, Wagner-Peyser funding supports all customers, and the population of Washington has increased 35% from 5,911,439 in 2000 to nearly 8,000,000 in 2024.

It is important to shed light on these facts given the wide-ranging service delivery expectations of the Wagner-Peyser Act, particularly at a time when unemployment is on the rise, labor force participation has decreased, and our state is focusing on equity and providing enhanced services to populations with barriers.

Individuals with barriers to employment are greatly impacted by the reduced staffing levels supported by Wagner-Peyser funding. It is challenging to meet the ever-growing needs of customers coming into WorkSource offices, let alone provide outreach to communities so that individuals facing transportation, digital and other inequities can receive needed services where they live.

Focus on reentry

Despite resourcing issues, great strides have been made in serving justice-impacted individuals within the WorkSource system. This work is critically important in making a difference for individuals as they transition into work and society. Over the past four years, an average of 9,000 individuals per year, self-identifying as justice-impacted, have received access to vital resources, job search guidance and support through WorkSource. The actual number of justice-impacted individuals served through WorkSource is likely much higher, but this data reflects those individuals who voluntarily declared their status when registering for services.

To reduce the rate of recidivism, there are efforts underway in multiple Department of Correction facilities and local jails, to connect with individuals preparing for release.

Department of Corrections

- **WA Correction Center, Shelton:** Staff visit the facility monthly to inform residents about WorkSource services they can access upon release.
- **WA Corrections Center for Women, Gig Harbor:** Customized workshops are offered monthly for residents of the facility.
- **Coyote Ridge Correctional Facility, Connell:** One-on-one employment services are offered to veterans in addition to monthly Zoom reentry classes and onsite workshops to assist residents for release.

Jails

- **Lewis County Jail, Chehalis:** Regular WorkSource presentations
- **South Correctional Entity (SCORE): Des Moines –** Customized workshops
- **Lynnwood Jail, Lynnwood:** Employment services in jail

In addition to these efforts by local WorkSource staff, a strong partnership is being formed between Employment Security, Department of Corrections and the Statewide Reentry Council, largely due to the efforts of Employment Security's recently hired reentry manager whose focus has been to evaluate the system as a whole and seek improvements in services to this population. Employment Security will:

- Work collaboratively with the state Department of Corrections to support employment and training services for individuals. We'll do this by connecting them with WorkSource services.
- Serve as a conduit for individuals to engage with WorkSource for employment and training services.
- Engage in and establish relationships with Washington employers to tell them about the benefits of hiring justice-involved people.

This work ties closely to Employment Security's core values of access and equity, as well as to our mission to provide people equitable access to resources that improve economic security.

While challenges remain, WorkSource has many success stories as well. Customer Gary served 15 years in prison and after his release in 2012, had great difficulty finding work. He struggled to maintain living wage employment and decided to seek help from his local WorkSource office. Gary met with a Wagner-Peyser Employment Specialist and was then connected to the WIOA Adult program where he was able

to access funding to complete CDL training. This eventually led Gary to employment with the Washington State Department of Transportation and he has since moved on to another organization where he is earning more than \$30 per hour. In a letter to his employment specialist, Gary stated that working with WorkSource and "... obtaining my CDL has given me hope, encouragement, and most importantly, a purpose and direction in life."

Other Wagner-Peyser success stories

WorkSource helps highly skilled professional

Meet Phong, a dedicated father of two. He recently dropped his daughter off at the University of Washington for her freshman year and is preparing his son, Max, for high school. Originally from California, Phong relocated to Camas, Washington, in the early 2000s. With a rich background in technology, spanning engineering and product/program management, Phong first engaged with WorkSource in 2002. At that time, he didn't interact much with our team due to outplacement services provided by his former employer.

Fast forward to this past year, Phong faced another layoff, this time from HP. Despite being offered outplacement services again, he chose to reconnect with WorkSource after receiving a letter to meet with our Vancouver team. He had been applying for jobs with little success until he met Pam at WorkSource.

From their first interaction, Phong was impressed by Pam's experience as a recruiter and her genuine desire to help. He decided to fully embrace her feedback, transforming his "two-page life-journey" resume into a concise "one-page get-a-job resume." Within just two days of making these changes, Phong's job search took a remarkable turn. He received three offers to interview, including one from Intel. Ultimately, he secured a position with a 60% increase in pay from his previous job at HP. Phong attributes this success to Pam's expert resume advice and subsequent interview coaching.

Phong also shared how impressed he was with the Vancouver office. He noted that every time he visited, the staff were incredibly helpful. On one occasion while working with Pam, she stepped away to assist another client who was struggling. Phong observed how Pam patiently met the customer where they were, offering reassurance without judgment. Phong was very grateful for Pam's support.

UI claimant happily returns to work

John visited WorkSource Clarkston after he and 25 other employees were permanently laid off from a local boat manufacturer where he had worked as a welder for 25 years. Staff assisted John in filing his

unemployment insurance claim, created a first draft of his resume, found a welding position with another boat manufacturer in the Clarkston area, and assisted him in completing the online application.

Within a week, John was called for an interview and offered a position to start two weeks later. While John took a pay reduction to start, he was thankful to be unemployed only a short period of time and was content with his new workplace. Due to his vast experience welding aluminum boats, he was able to hit the ground running with virtually no learning curve.

Appendix 5: Veterans and military families

The Veterans and Military Families Program provides a variety of services to help eligible veterans, spouses, transitioning service members, and additional populations move forward toward employment.

Priority of Service

Veterans with at least one day of active duty served in any military branch (without a dishonorable discharge), and eligible spouses (including widows and widowers) are eligible for priority of service. Priority of service means veterans and eligible spouses are entitled, by law, to precedence over non-covered persons for services, including those offered through WIOA. Of the approximate 97,206 job seekers served by WorkSource centers and affiliates, 6,403 (6.6%) were eligible for priority of service.

YesVets

[YesVets](#) is a partnership comprised of [Washington State SHRM](#), the [Washington Department of Veterans Affairs](#), the [Department of Commerce](#), the Employment Security Department, and the [Washington State Military Transition Council](#). The YesVets partnership continues to collaborate with the [Seattle Seahawks](#) and [Taskforce12](#); partnering again this program year for the annual statewide virtual hiring event centered around the Seahawks Salute to Service November game, which is where we announce the small, medium, and large Hire-A-Vet Employer of the Year winners. The statewide Local Veteran Employment Representative, a key member of Employment Security's virtual services team, led the planning for this event and three additional YesVets related hiring events this program



Beth Cram, WSDOT and co-chair of the Washington State Veteran Employee Resource Group, speaks to a veteran job seeker about the benefits of working for Washington state.



Employment Security Commissioner Cami Feek, Workforce Services Director Ismailia Maidadi and other Employment Security teammates who helped with the Mt. Tahoma YesVets and Seahawks combined job fair

year. Collectively these four events hosted 380 employer representatives and veteran resource organizations, resulting in 634 veteran registrations and a 66% attendance rate. To date, 1,862 statewide Washington employers are signed up with YesVets and 7,296 hires have been documented since its 2016 inception. In this program year alone, 483 hires were reported from YesVets employers.

Transition assistance

WorkSource centers, aligned with Washington's five primary military installations — Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM), Fairchild Airforce Base, and Naval bases Everett, Whidbey Island, and Kitsap — have all resumed varying levels of on-site support for transitioning service members. JBLM supports with 4.0 FTE labor exchange and Fairchild AFB has a 0.5 FTE Disabled Veteran Outreach Program and 0.5 FTE labor exchange. Each of the offices supporting the three Navy bases provides regular support at the Transition Assistance Programs and/or Capstone and other activities. All locations support military family members with a system of warm handoffs that connect service members and their families with the American Job Center closest to their future home location, regardless of whether the service member or family originates in Washington state.

The JBLM "inside-the-gate" WorkSource center continues to be a trendsetter in providing upstream career services to service members and military families. During this year, WorkSource JBLM was recognized by the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) with the annual Mark

Sanders award. The Mark Sanders award is given to the nation's top American Job Center based on how they serve the veteran population. This was WorkSource JBLM's second time winning this prestigious award.

WorkSource JBLM implements a fully integrated partnership strategy that spans all phases of military transition and serves the entire military family, whether the focus is on a spouse transitioning during a military move to JBLM or a service member completing their military career. One of the strengths of the WorkSource JBLM partnership is its innovative outreach process. This strategy includes an ambassador program, revamped in 2023, that focuses on community connections by reaching transitioning families and service members through their own peer groups and community organizations. The cornerstone is a network of ambassadors that include customers, community partners, and service organizations who are "deputized" to promote the work and resources available through the WorkSource partnership. Each ambassador is provided a packet that contains basic information on WorkSource services, various flyers, and other items needed to promote WorkSource programs. Top ambassadors often include senior military leaders who have introduced their units, proving that the satisfied customer is the best salesperson.

Another unique marketing initiative is WorkSource JBLM's social media strategy, which includes owner-granted posting rights to eight military-specific Facebook groups plus its own site. This avenue allows the team to leverage technology to disseminate information to over 23,000 members across sites that target many population segments, including veterans, military spouses, and active-duty service members. Through targeted and proactive content management WorkSource JBLM boosted fellowship on its site alone by 26% in 2023. These innovative ambassador and social media programs have been force-multipliers, effectively reaching thousands of transitioning military families and service members without stepping outside the office.

Individualized case management

The Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) case management model used in Washington primarily relies on veterans and spouses to be screened at the various entry points in a WorkSource location, to determine eligibility for an appropriate referral to a DVOP or Consolidated Veteran Service Representative (CVSR). Of the 6,403 priority of service-eligible customers served, 3,712 (58%) met at least one criterion for DVOP or CVSR eligibility. In PY 2023, DVOP and CVSR case managers provided individualized services to 1,324 eligible customers. A total of 881 were enrolled on a DVOP or CVSR caseload (66.5%), including customers referred through the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs Veteran Readiness and Employment program (145 referrals, 11%) and those carried-in from the previous program year. Additionally, 78 (8.9%) were co-enrolled, allowing DVOPs and CVSRs the ability to leverage the resources through all WIOA-funded programs. Of all the 881 DVOP case-managed customers, 620 (70%) were employed within their first quarter after exit.

WorkSource changes veteran's life

In the heart of Ellensburg, Austin faced the hardship of being out of work. Determined to find a job, he turned to WorkSource Ellensburg for help. What followed was an incredible journey filled with useful resources and support.

At his first appointment, Austin met Karla, who introduced him to the WorkSource system, including Veteran Representative Kevin Sullivan from WorkSource Yakima. Austin and Kevin met to review Austin's resume and discuss his career goals. Austin sent the following email about how WorkSource changed his life.

"My name is Austin, and I would like to share my experience with WorkSource Ellensburg. Unfortunately, I found myself unemployed. I applied for unemployment during that period and decided to use WorkSource. I met Karla at my first appointment. That is when I was introduced to Kevin Sullivan.

"Kevin and I set up an appointment. During our appointment, we went over my current resume and discussed what I was interested in doing for work or if school was an avenue that I wanted to take instead. Kevin was knowledgeable about resources for trade or traditional higher education. I declined furthering my education and wanted to jump straight back into employment. Kevin had a list of jobs ready to go. Kevin gave me a lot of suggestions to make my resume better, and to really present myself for a higher chance of employment. After adjusting my resume, we got the job applications out.

"I started getting phone calls for interviews. Spending time with Kevin and applying suggestions to my resume was paying off. Over the course of a couple weeks, I had numerous interviews. Kevin continued to follow up with me on a weekly basis, which was excellent and unexpected. Kevin did not let me fall through the cracks and continued to be a positive driving force. I ended up accepting a position with the Bureau of Reclamation. After spending a couple weeks in the new position, I could not be happier.

"If it wasn't for Karla pointing me towards resources for veterans, I would have never met Kevin. I just want to say thank you. I have a job that has great benefits, hours, and incredible people. I could not be happier with my experience."

Austin's story highlights the valuable resources at WorkSource. Whether you're a veteran looking for help finding a job, considering education, or wanting to change your career, WorkSource has experts and tools to assist you. Kevin Sullivan is a prime example of the dedication and expertise you can find there.