

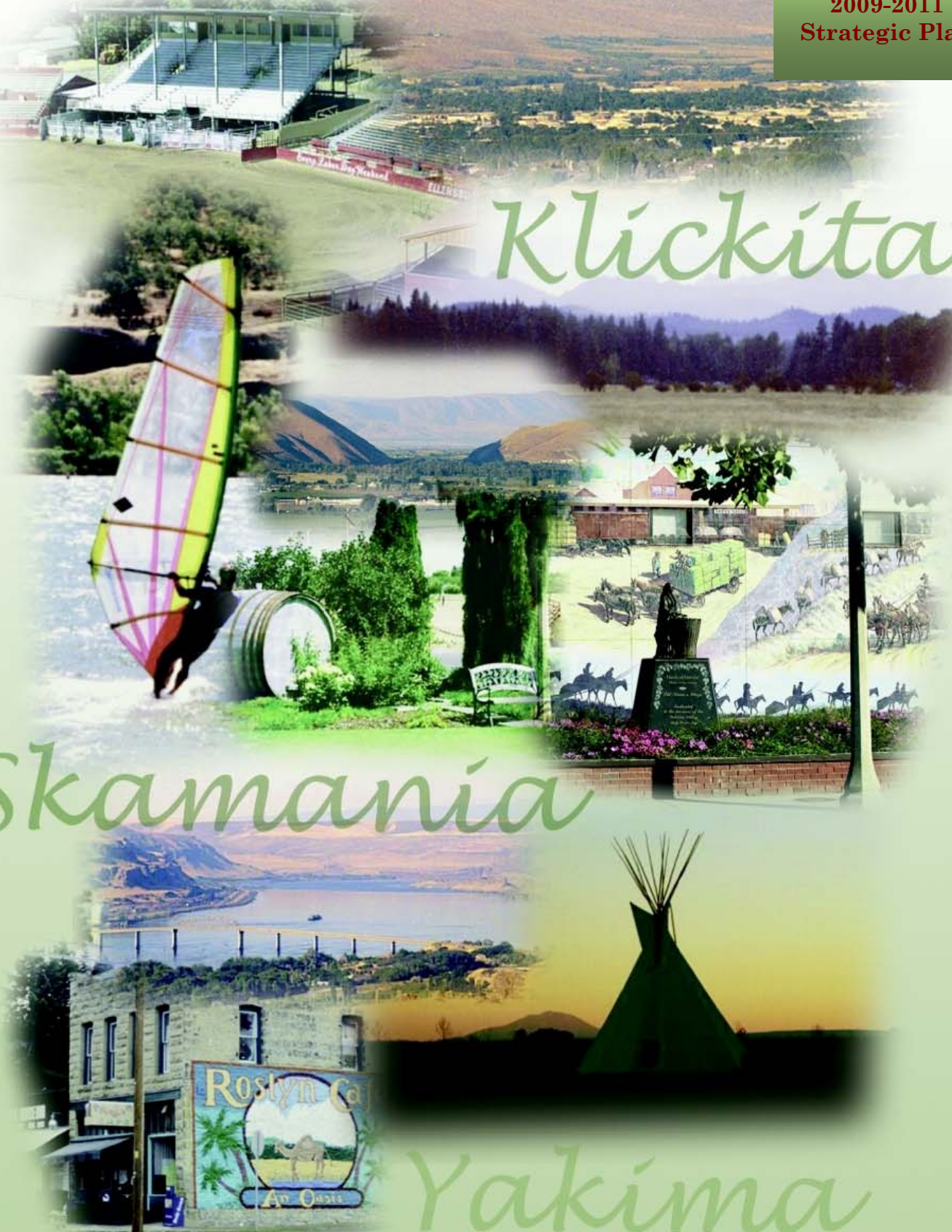
South Central
Workforce
Development
Council
2009-2011
Strategic Plan

Kittitas

Klickitat

Skamania

Yakima



MISSION STATEMENT

Establish, maintain, and improve a customer driven workforce system to increase skills, employment, job retention, and earnings resulting in a quality workforce, enhanced productivity, and profitability of Workforce Area businesses.

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SECTION I OVERVIEW

The South Central Workforce Development Area (Workforce Development Area) covering approximately 8,477 square miles is comprised of Kittitas, Klickitat, Skamania, and Yakima Counties located in the South Central region of Washington State. The dense forest and mountainous terrain of the Cascades form the western boundary, while the timbered covered mountains of Kittitas County make a natural boundary to the north. The eastern perimeter of the region is delineated by the Columbia River which flows along the sagebrush covered flanks of the four counties. The river then moves slowly through a series of dams on its way west to the Pacific Ocean which marks the southern most edge of the region and the state.



Native Americans were the first people to live and prosper in the region. Later, settlers arrived, bringing cattle and fruit trees. The need for timber brought about the formation of the lumber and wood product industry and the foundation of a resource-based economy was then formed. The arrival of the Northern Pacific Railway in 1884, opened the doors to the exports of agricultural and timber products to the world beyond. By 1892, the first major irrigation system was developed which brought a considerable increase in the productivity and diversity of agricultural products that continues today. An ever-increasing demand for labor slowly brought migrant workers to farm areas to help in the harvesting of crops and other activities.

The Cascade mountain range forms a barrier to the moisture-laden clouds from the coast causing rain and snow to be deposited in the mountains depriving the lowlands of most of its moisture. While the region tends to be dry and arid, water originating from five major dams located in Kittitas and Yakima Counties, along with rich volcanic soil provide ideal conditions for farming.

Agriculture primarily fuels the regions economy. The development of the overseas market for agricultural products is a major contributor to the slow but steady growth through the 90s and into the new millennium. However, the largely seasonal nature of the work has been a major factor in the lower than average wages and salaries.

This area is equally rich in the diversity of its residents and their respective cultural heritages. A significant Native American population lives within the borders of the Yakama Indian Reservation in Klickitat and Yakima Counties. The Hispanic population continues to grow significantly in each county and a small but significant number of Asians and Black Americans reside in communities across the service area.

Three major universities, two community colleges, a technical school, and twenty-six school districts serve the region educationally. The high school dropout rate has historically been high and remains one of the highest in the state. The challenges in education that are being faced today have a direct impact on the quality and strength of the future workforce.



The rich ethnic diversity raises contemporary issues of increasing economic diversity, and the full incorporation of all citizens into educational and economic parity in an increasingly technical society. Progress has been made in all these areas, but much remains to be done. In the last decade, public and business leaders have become active in addressing quality of life issues for local residents.

The topic of creating more livable wage jobs has become a central point, and is recognized as a cornerstone necessary for building a strong economy and a healthy community. Local elected officials, the Workforce Council, and the partners of Kittitas, Klickitat, Skamania, and Yakima Counties recognize the unique and important role of workforce programs in the development of economic and social health of its communities.

A strong and sustained effort must be maintained in the development of a local workforce system that responds to community concerns and addresses the needs of its customers -- workers and business. As we enter a new century, the Council is committed to the development of a workforce system that provides opportunities for all residents to receive a quality education and provides avenues for pursuing training that will lead to productive, satisfying, and family wage jobs.

To achieve this end, the scope of the workforce delivery system was expanded to include all public and private organizations that have the common vision of improving the quality of life for local residents. New partnerships have been forged and existing relationships strengthened with schools, post-secondary organizations, economic development agencies, business, labor, state agencies, and public organizations. As our system grows, it will continue to connect these key players in a single network as a way to make efficient use

of public dollars to increase worker readiness for existing and new businesses, and to improve the quality of life for local residents. The South Central Workforce Development Council (Council) Strategic Plan is the blueprint for this system.

SECTION II TOMORROW'S ECONOMY

Agriculture is the largest industry of the regions economy, centered within Yakima County, threading throughout the other counties of the consortium. Slow but steady growth continues in the industry, thanks to the contribution of the development of an overseas market for agricultural products through the 90s and into the new millennium. However lower than average earnings of wages and salaries due to the seasonal nature of work is a major economic factor.

Unemployment Trends - As seen in *Figure #1* the annual average unemployment rate in **Kittitas County** dropped in each of the last three years but remained above the state rate by a small margin. The 2006 rate of 5.3 percent was the second-lowest annual average unemployment figure on record for Kittitas County. The record-setting low unemployment rate for the county was 5.2 percent occurring in calendar years 1998 and 1999. Over the past five years, Kittitas County has enjoyed a fairly productive nonagricultural labor market. In 2006, the county labor market experienced its best year out of the last five, posting an annual average job growth rate of 4.6 percent, considerably more vigorous than the statewide pace of 2.9 percent.

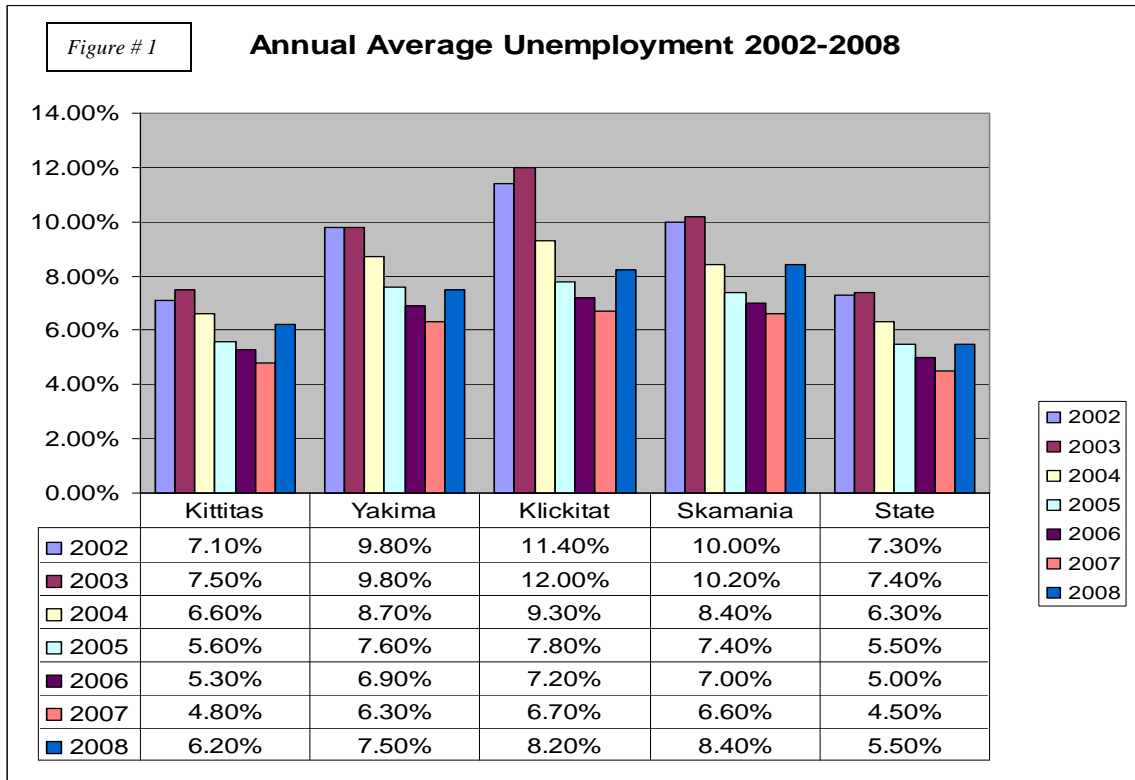
Two different wind energy companies are currently operating wind power turbines in Kittitas County. These two projects combined involved the construction and operation of 215 wind turbines with a potential generating capacity of 320 megawatts of electricity. The Vantage Wind Energy Project will add an additional 60 wind power turbines. This new project represents \$200 - \$300 million dollar investment. The Wild Horse Wind Power Project owned by Puget Sound Energy is expected to expand by 22 turbines. The current robust construction activity and the new wind power generation technology, Wild Horse Wind Farm, the Vantage Wind Energy Project and the Kittitas Valley Project have moved labor issues and the need to develop a skilled workforce to the top of their economic development priorities.

Upper Kittitas County construction projects continued at the Suncadia Resort near Roslyn. State government also fared reasonably well in 2006 as student enrollment set records at Central Washington University and accounted for commensurate increases in faculty, staff, and student hiring at the institution.

The annual average unemployment rate in **Yakima County** also dropped in each of the last three years but remained above the state average rate. While the margin between the Yakima County and the state narrowed over the same period, the difference still exceeded the state average by close to two points in 2006. The 2006 rate of 6.9 percent was the lowest annual average unemployment figure on record for Yakima County in recent economic history - all the way back to 1990.

The nonagricultural labor markets in Yakima County and Washington State grew in each of the last four years from the job losses posted in the recession era of 2002. The county had its best year in 2006 with an annual average job growth rate of 3.0 percent, a little more vigorous than the statewide pace of 2.9 percent. Like Kittitas in the north, construction contributed too much of the growth along with a strong and profitable apple harvest. Directly dependent on agriculture in the Yakima Valley – three local nonagricultural industries -- wholesale trade (fresh fruit packinghouses), non-durable goods manufacturing (food processing), and transportation-warehousing-and utilities, or TWU (trucking) hired substantial numbers of workers in 2006.

Klickitat County had the state’s highest unemployment rate in 2003 hitting 12 percent. While rates have steadily declined the last four years, the 7.2 percent unemployment rate remains the highest for the region, and at the top of the list for the state. The high unemployment rate can be directly traced to the shutdown of the aluminum smelter just south of Goldendale as result of



escalating energy prices. The Klickitat economy began an upward turn in 2004, followed by a sharp annual average increase of 4.4 percent for non-agriculture jobs in 2005, still at 8 percent below the pre-recession employment level. New jobs continued to grow in 2006, at a reduced rate of 2.4 percent.

Klickitat County can be divided into three economic regions. The western third of the county is dependent upon orchards and fruit packing, wood products, windsurfing and kite boarding. The central third includes Goldendale, the seat of county government, and the (closed) aluminum smelter, as well as the Maryhill Museum. The eastern third includes vegetable farming, the Roosevelt Regional Landfill, and a growing number of wineries.

Klickitat enjoyed steady employment growth during much of the 1990s, expanding from 4,800 non-farm jobs in 1992 to over 5,400 in 2000. The manipulation of electricity prices by Enron and other traders took out more than 600 high-wage jobs in the county - most of its manufacturing base, more than 10 percent of total non-farm employment, and an even higher proportion of its payroll.

The wind in the Gorge area has generated jobs in two industries: tourism and Energy. Klickitat County and other areas of the Gorge have seen rapid development of Wind Turbines to generate electricity. The county's agricultural base is stable in the White Salmon area and growing in the eastern part of the county, particularly in vegetable farming and wineries. There is a growing synergy for tourism based on wine tasting, the Maryhill Museum, and the Gorge (including windsurfing and kite boarding). Recently a large housing development, mostly oriented toward vacation homes, was proposed along the Columbia River which if approved should result in additional construction jobs.

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Two different wind energy companies are currently operating wind power turbines in Kittitas County. These two projects combined involved the construction and operation of 215 wind turbines with a potential generating

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Klickitat County rates have steadily declined in the last six years; the 8.2 percent unemployment rate remains one of the highest for the region, and at the top of the list for the state. The high unemployment rate can be directly traced to the shutdown of the aluminum smelter just south of Goldendale as result of escalating energy prices. The Klickitat economy began an upward turn in 2004, followed by a sharp annual average increase of 4.4 percent for non-agriculture jobs in 2005, still at 8 percent below the pre-recession employment level. New jobs continued to grow in 2008, at a rate of 3.1 percent.

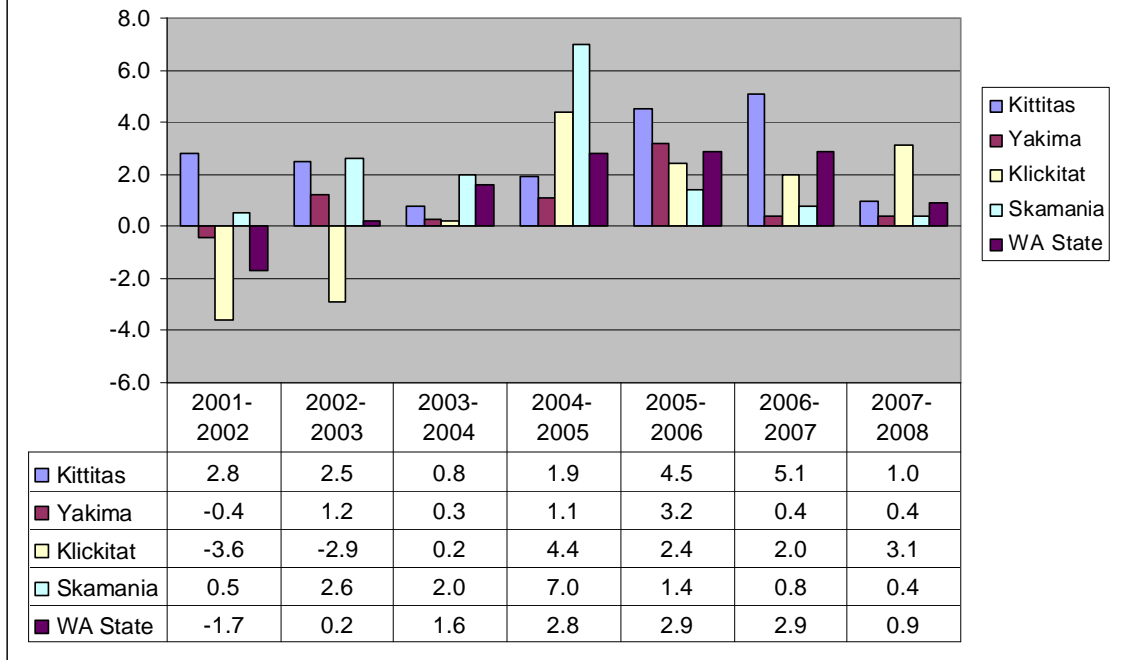
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In 2005, Klickitat saw a surge in employment for two main reasons. One was the expansion of Insitu, a Bingen company that designs and manufactures unmanned drones, primarily for military applications. Construction was also a factor, due in part to the windmill project. In 2006, construction dropped back to normal levels, Insitu kept expanding, some other services expanded as well, but the overall level was less than the previous year.

The county's agricultural base is stable in the White Salmon area and growing in the eastern part of the county, particularly in vegetable farming and wineries. There is a growing synergy for tourism based on wine tasting, the Maryhill Museum, and the Gorge (including windsurfing and kite boarding). Recently a large housing development, mostly oriented toward vacation homes, was proposed along the Columbia River which if approved should result in additional construction jobs.

**SOUTH CENTRAL NON-AG EMPLOYMENT CHANGES DURING
2002-2008**



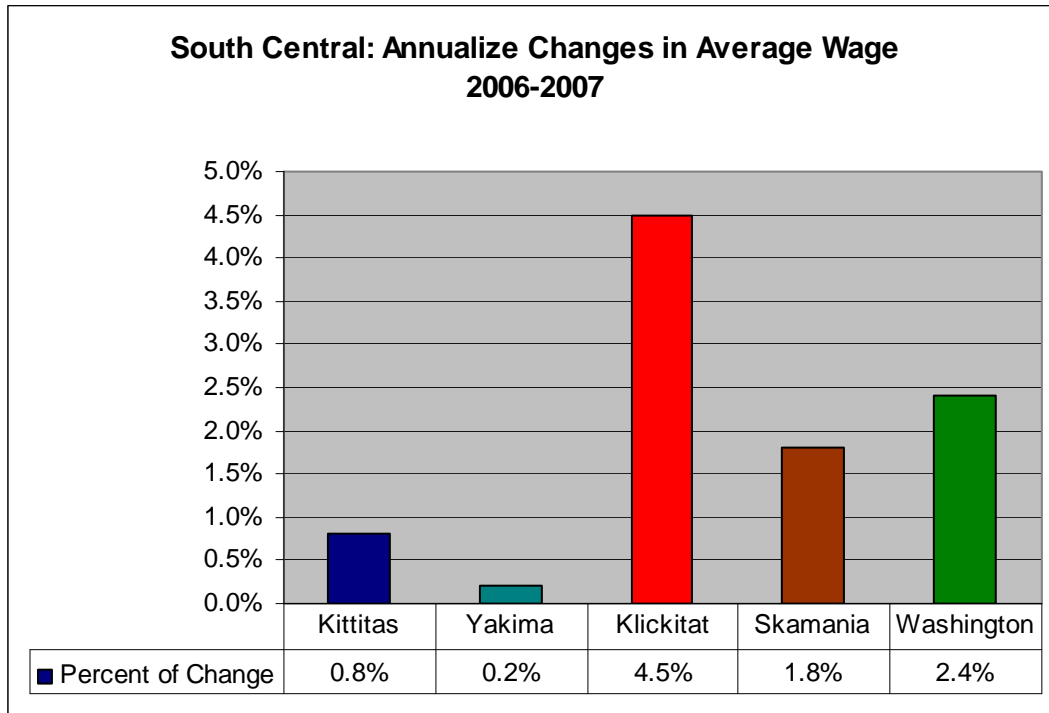
Skamania County unemployment rates have remained traditionally high as well. *Figure #1* reflects the declining unemployment rates from the high of 10.2 percent to 6.6 percent for 2007. For the last five years, the non-agricultural employment growth has been slow but steady with the exception of 2005 where the local economy spiked from up to 7 percent. For 2006, job growth trended back down to an average annual growth rate of 2.9 percent.

Of 60 new jobs generated, 40 were attributable to tourism (specifically accommodations and food services). In spite of the low number of new jobs, the county’s economy is at an all-time high (excluding the levels experienced during construction of Bonneville Dam in 1979-81).

Skamania’s agricultural production is a fairly small part of county economy. According to the 2002 Census of Agriculture, there were 97 farms in the county, employing only 30 farm workers. The main crop in Skamania is trees, and logging employment declined from 90 jobs in 1990 to 30 jobs in 2005. Skamania County had 90 construction jobs in 2005, with a no-growth trend over the past 15 years. In 1990, a quarter of Skamania County’s non-farm jobs (450) were in factories, only 10 percent (220) are in factories today.

Wages - From 2000 to 2007 all counties of Workforce Development Area IX (Workforce Area) experienced growth in average annualized wages compared to Washington State as whole which increased by 2.4 percent. Klickitat

showed the greatest earnings increase in the period at 4.5 percent followed by a brisk rate of 1.8 percent for Skamania County. Both Kittitas and Yakima experienced a steady but slow growth rate for the same period with Kittitas at .80 percent and Yakima at .20 percent.



While the wage gains from 2000 to 2007 is certainly good news for the region, the disparity between the regions annual average earnings and the state is still fairly wide. While the gap narrowed between 2000 to 2005 time periods, earners in Klickitat County earned 62.7 percent, Yakima 67.1 percent, Klickitat 68.3 percent, and Skamania County 67.4 percent of the statewide average.

**SECTION III
SOUTH CENTRAL CURRENT AND FUTURE WORKFORCE**

1. Characteristics of those who live and work in the local area – The population in the four county area is evenly divided between men and women, with the median age of 35 years, and with 12.2 percent of the population at 65 years old or older. Across the four counties, 20.3 percent of the people are minorities, almost 8 percent being foreign-born and the largest minority populace at over 46 percent is in Yakima County. Small numbers of Native American, Asian/Hawaiian Pacific Islanders, and Blacks are represented in the area; Hispanics are clearly the predominant race at 14.6 percent, concentrated in Yakima County at 39.3 percent. 31.8 percent of the minority population speaks a language other than English, with 73 percent of those speaking Spanish and 5.8 percent speaking English less than “very well.”

Characteristics

	Kittitas County	Klickitat County	Skamania County	Yakima County	Washington State
Gender					
Male	49.4%	49.7%	50.1%	50%	49.9%
Female	50.6%	50.3%	49.9%	50%	50.1%
Median Age					
65 or older	11.7%	14.8%	11.1%	11.2%	11.5%
Race	Kittitas County	Klickitat County	Skamania County	Yakima County	Washington State
White	87.8%	86.1%	91.4%	53.5%	77.1%
African American	.9%	.4%	.4%	1.3%	3.5%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1.1%	3.1%	2.1%	5%	1.7%
Asian	3.1%	.7%	.6%	1.2%	6.4%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	.2%	.1%	.1%	.3%	.5%
Hispanic	5.7%	8.5%	4.7%	39.3%	8.8%
Foreign Born	5.3%	6%	3.5%	16.9%	10.4%
Language Other than English	7.7%	10.6%	4.9%	31.8%	14%
Spanish as Other language	58%	72.6%	65.3%	94%	41.4%
Speaks English less than 'very well'	2.3%	4.3%	.9%	15.5%	2.8%

2. Education and Literacy - Perhaps no place in the state is the skills gap more clearly seen than in the Workforce Area. Despite what appears to be a more than adequate labor supply, businesses continue to have difficulty finding qualified people to hire. The ability to read, write, and perform basic math are established prerequisites for any skilled, and most entry-level positions. Yet local businesses across the region are reporting, more and more, that hundreds of jobs are left unfilled due to a lack of workers with sound basic educational skills.

Since the achievement of a high school diploma is viewed as an indicator of the acquisition of basic educational skills, the profile of educational attainment in the Workforce Area is revealing. The following statistics from the Census Bureau for 2005 indicate that more than 29 percent of the Yakima County population has not graduated from high school. While lower than 2000's figure of 31 percent, it is still significantly higher than the state average. Kittitas County statistics are on par with the state showing almost 10 percent without a high school diploma, while Klickitat and Skamania Counties are slightly higher at 14.6 percent and 14.2 percent, respectively.

Education

Educational Attainment (Population 25 Yrs & over)	Kittitas County %		Klickitat County %		Skamania County %		Yakima County %		State %	
	2000	2007	2000	2007	2000	2007	2000	2007	2000	2007
Education less than 9th grade	3.9%	3.3%	6.7%	5.0%	4.1%	5.0%	17.1%	16.5%	4.3%	5.2%
Education between 9th and 12th grades	8.9%	7.1%	11.6%	9.6%	10.1%	10.0%	14.3%	13.1%	8.6%	10.7%
High School Diploma or equivalent	31.0%	28.7%	34.3%	38.2%	33.4%	32.0%	27.4%	28.9%	24.9%	25.6%
Received some college - no degree	24.3%	23.3%	24.8%	20.1%	29.1%	28.0%	20.8%	20.1%	26.4%	24.0%
Received Associates Degree	5.7%	7.2%	6.2%	9.9%	6.5%	5.0%	5.2%	5.7%	8.0%	9.5%
Received Bachelors Degree	16.9%	18.6%	11.1%	10.2%	11.7%	13.0%	9.8%	10.0%	18.4%	19.5%
Attended Graduate School	9.3%	11.8%	5.3%	7.0%	5.1%	6.0%	5.5%	5.7%	9.3%	10.0%

Literacy among the adult population remains a continuing concern. In Yakima County, 52 percent of adults read below the 6th grade level, 23 percent read below the 2nd grade level, and 19 percent do not speak English. In Kittitas County, 36 percent of the adult population reads below the 6th grade level and 14 percent read below the 2nd grade level. Of the adults in

Klickitat County 49 percent, have reading skill levels below the 6th grade and 21 percent below the 2nd grade, and in Skamania County 44 percent read at a level below 6th grade and 15 percent read below 2nd grade level.

When businesses continually express difficulty in locating job applicants with adequate basic skills, it is fair to conclude, in light of the above statistics, that there is significant incidence of job seekers who do not possess the necessary skills and cannot, therefore, be considered job ready.

3. Demographic Changes - Between 2004 and 2008, the population in Klickitat and Yakima Counties grew more slowly than the state average, while Skamania and Kittitas County population rates increased at a faster rate. The following chart shows actual population growth by county since 2004.

Population Levels

County	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Kittitas	35,800	36,600	37,400	38,300	39,400
Klickitat	19,300	19,300	19,800	19,900	20,100
Skamania	10,100	10,300	10,600	10,700	10,700
Yakima	227,500	229,300	231,800	234,200	235,900

The City of Yakima in Yakima County is the largest metropolitan area, with a population of 84,300 residents and is the 10th largest city in the state. Scattered throughout the remainder of the geographic region are small to medium size cities and towns. The City of Ellensburg, with a population of 17,330 is the largest Kittitas County municipality and Goldendale, where 3,725 people live, is the largest city in Klickitat County. The largest town in Skamania County, Stevenson, has an estimated 1,440 people. The combined population of the four counties is 306,100 according to the June 2008 report from the Office of Financial Management.

The latest projections by the Washington State Labor Market & Economic Analysis predict a steady, even population growth rate in Yakima and Skamania Counties, a slightly faster growth rate in Kittitas County, and a somewhat slower rate of growth for Klickitat County, over the next 10 years.

The South Central WDA accommodates some of the highest proportions of minority populations in the state, primarily in Yakima County. With the largest percentage of Hispanics of any county in the state, and the largest increase of Hispanics over the last ten years. Statewide, the Hispanic population is expected to increase by nearly 30 percent by 2010. Most of that growth will take place in Yakima County.

Historically, the major proportion of new entrants into the labor force falls in the 16 through 24-year age bracket, and this group is projected to be decreasing in all four counties until the year 2020. Notably in Klickitat and Skamania Counties, although the number of people under the age of twenty is comparable to the state and national numbers, there are far fewer people between the ages of 20 and 29 than there are in Washington State and nationwide. This is largely due to young adult residents leaving the area to access higher education and better employment opportunities.

Conversely, the population segment age 55-64 years will continue to increase at a disproportionate rate as the largest segment of “Baby Boomers” begins entering retirement age. This increase is projected to continue into the year 2020 and will significantly raise the average age of the workforce, further slowing the growth of the available labor pool. Older workers are already being encouraged, through incentive plans and stricter retirement prerequisites, to remain in the workforce longer. It is reasonable to expect this trend to continue due to the fact that, in addition to augmenting the labor force, the experience and knowledge of older workers often provides continuity and necessary job-specific training for employers.

A. Youth - High School dropouts are a priority population within the South Central area as dropout rates continue to be a top concern for our communities.

According to the 2004-2005 School Dropout Report from OSPI, most of the school districts within the workforce area continue to experience a dropout rate significantly higher than the state average, with Kittitas and Yakima rates among the six highest in the state.

High School Dropout Rates

Counties	Net Enrollment	Total Dropouts	Percent Dropouts
Kittitas	1612	133	8.3%
Klickitat	1106	40	3.6%
Skamania	415	18	4.3%
Yakima	14,406	1,027	7.1%
State	314,331	15,921	5.1%

Youth who do not have a high school education are far more likely to be involved in the criminal justice system, participate in public assistance programs, experience higher rates of unemployment, and receive lower wages than those youth who successfully complete high school.

The basic skills of reading, writing, problem solving, and communication are essential for successful employment, and equipping youth with these essential skills is a crucial element of workforce preparation. In addition to securing our future workforce, it can reasonably be argued that adequately preparing our young people for employment incorporates the instillation of those characteristics that are beneficial to the community in general – appropriate behaviors, a strong work ethic, a well-defined value system, integrity, and respect, among others.

2005-2006 Student Count and Student Ethnicity by County, OSPI

Area	Student Enrollment	Hispanic	Native American or Alaskan Native	African American	Asian	Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White
Kittitas	4,884	11%	1%	1%	2%	0	85%
Klickitat	3,365	15%	5%	1%	1%	0	78%
Skamania	1,257	4%	5%	1%	1%	1%	88%
Yakima	50,833	52%	6%	1%	1%	1%	39%
WDA	60,339	46%	5%	1%	1.5%	.5%	46%
State	1,098,998	11%	3%	6%	8%	1%	71%

The ethnic make-up of the K-12 population mirrors that of the workforce in the South Central area. The school ethnicity data shows a significantly high proportion of minority populations in the Workforce Area compared to the state population, with the highest concentrations in Yakima County. Generally, minority youth do not migrate out of the area, but tend to stay in close proximity and contribute to the support of their families. Assisting the increasing number of minority youth to successfully participate in the labor force will pay dividends in the future, not only to the youth themselves, but also to local business and the community as a whole.

B. Dislocated Workers – There are an estimated 12,000-15,000 Dislocated Workers in the region, 80 percent residing in Yakima County. Of the dislocated workers seeking services 66 percent are between 30 and 54 years of age, 15 percent of dislocated workers are 55 years old and older. A considerable number of dislocated workers in the region are military veterans with few, if any, civilian job skills. A predominant trend over the last few years, and expected to continue, is the increase of older male workers with little advanced training among the dislocated worker population.

Like other manufacturing plants in the United States, several local plants have closed their doors, some have moved away and others are forced to lay off large portions of their workforce.

To compound the surge in worker dislocations, many of the workers do not have transferable skills and will need retraining at a time when the region's training institutions are at full capacity.

C. Public Assistance Recipients - Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) is public assistance offered to families living in impoverished conditions. According to Department of Social Health Services data, in September 2006 the TANF population in the Workforce Area numbered 3,411, representing 9.5 percent of the total cases in Washington State. This ratio of public assistance recipients to the total population is over twice the ratio experienced by the state.

The following table shows that in 2006, 26.6 percent of the population in Kittitas County accessed services from the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). Klickitat and Skamania Counties show 38.4 percent and 32.4 percent of the population, respectively, used DSHS services, and in Yakima County, with the highest percentage in the state, 52.0 percent of the population used DSHS services. These numbers clearly indicate that the underprivileged population in need of social services is substantially higher in the South Central area than the 33.1 percent experienced statewide.

DSHS Client Services Database July 2006-June 2007

	Population using DSHS Services	% of Total Population using DSHS Services
Kittitas County	10,203	26.6%
Klickitat County	7,641	38.4%
Skamania County	3,469	32.4%
Yakima County	121,692	52.0%
Washington State	2,150,534	33.1%

D. Disadvantaged Adults - High levels of poverty continue to plague the region. Many of those who live below poverty level do not receive any form of assistance and are usually marginally employed. Others may work full-time but do not earn a wage high enough to allow them to support their families. The Northwest Area Foundation report indicates that in 2004 Yakima County had one of the highest populations of disadvantaged people living in poverty - 43,225 or 19 percent of the total population - of any county in the

state. Klickitat County had a poverty rate of 15 percent, while Kittitas County had a rate of 14 percent followed by Skamania at 12 percent. The state rate was 12 percent.

In 2003, 15.3 percent of children under the age of 18, living in Washington State, were living in poverty. The same data demonstrates that in Yakima County over 26 percent of the children under the age of 18 were living in poverty, Klickitat, at 21.4 percent, ranked among the highest as well. The Kittitas rate was 15.3 percent and in Skamania, it was 15.2 percent. According to the Washington State Department of Health, the teen birth rate in 2003 for females between the ages of 15 and 17 in Yakima County was over 42 percent, compared to 16 percent in Washington State and 22 percent nationwide.

Many of those in poverty who seek work or have barriers to employment are being left behind. In addition, a great many of those who are finding entry-level jobs are finding it difficult to earn a wage that will support a family or achieve self-sufficiency.

E. People with Disability - According to the United States Census Bureau *American Community Survey* published in 2003, Yakima County had a population of 44,663 people with a disability. Kittitas and Klickitat showed populations of 5,760 and 3,814 individuals with disability, respectively, and the disability population in Skamania totaled 1,604. The total for the Council was 55,841 or 20 percent of the total population. This rate is almost 25 percent higher than the state at 15.6 percent. Of this group, 34,693 people, or 12 percent of the total population, are between the ages of 21 and 64, which represent a significant segment of working age adults and a largely untapped sector of the workforce. Although many individuals within this population are in need of training and specialized job development, recent advances in adaptive equipment and assistive technology, as well as an increasing interest and willingness by business to work with and hire people with disability, have created an increased level of opportunity for individuals to enter into the mainstream labor force.

F. Incumbent Workers - Rapidly shifting technological practices and globally competitive economy create significant job dislocations and the need to upgrade skills even for those currently employed.

In the healthcare and construction industry sectors, personnel shortages continue to persist throughout the region, as they do state and nationwide. Of great concern is a recent report from the Employment Security Department showing the healthcare industry's current workforce consisting of 43,000 workers over the age of 55 (14 percent of its total workforce), one of five industries to share this distinction.

Skill gaps continue to exist in the food processing and manufacturing industries as these sectors invest in new technology and restructure their workforce in order to remain competitive. With Central Washington uniquely positioned to develop new and renewable energy sources, the local workforce system must be ready to respond with employment and training programs that will prepare existing and new workers with the skills sets needed for the emerging industries.

These five key industry sectors - *healthcare, construction, food processing, manufacturing and energy* - face worker shortages that will be alleviated only by efforts toward retraining workers, restructuring processes, and developing new approaches to meet the challenges within the industry. It is for this reason that the Council maintains Skill Panels for all four industries and has continually allocated funds to support incumbent worker training in each sector.

Resources to support incumbent worker training are extremely limited, which creates a serious gap in workforce systems to meet the needs of business. While there is, limited funding provided through the state for customized training, the Job Skills Program, and through WIA I-B On the Job Training resources, there is far too little to meet the overall need and demand that exists for skills upgrade training for incumbent workers.

G. Apprentices - In recent years, the South Central area has experienced a severe shortage of qualified applicants for available apprenticeship openings. While there is an adequate supply of workers who are interested in accessing apprenticeship opportunities, the vast majority are not able to meet the minimum requirements for entry into such programs, due to low basic skills levels. The local labor organizations all report shortages of available qualified applicants and the only immediate remedy is to raise the skill level of the current labor pool through education and training.

H. Implications of the Demographic Profile of South Central Workforce Area - The changing demographics and needs of the current and future workforce have clearly created new challenges for the education, training, and employment community. Business must have workers who possess good work habits, technical skills, and the ability to change and adapt to new technologies and methods of doing work.

In response, local workforce programs have been restructured and redirected to assist dislocated workers in connecting with job opportunities; to help low skilled adults and older workers overcome barriers to employment; and to assist youth in finishing school and identifying career pathways that will lead to productive employment and rewarding careers. For TANF parents, the Council has managed the Community Job Program that provides individuals real work experiences to develop the soft skills needed for employment.

Lastly, the Council has proactively taken steps to build capacity to effectively serve individuals with disability so business can more easily access these largely untapped labor resources.

The Council with local WorkSource partners has redesigned services and activities to provide effective, efficient, and fully integrated service delivery system for workers and businesses. Given the current economy, demographics, and workforce, the Council continues to pursue the following priorities.

- ◆ Utilization of the areas greatest resource, *people*, to fill the gap of skilled workers in the South Central area. There are significant social/economic advantages of increased utilization by developing the skills of new residents, TANF parents, dislocated workers, disadvantaged adults, individuals with disability, veterans, ex-offenders, and older workers.
- ◆ Early identification of those dislocated from declining industries and occupations to transition these people back into productive jobs. The Council will continue the practice of working closely with business and labor to ease the transition of workers to new jobs in the community. Goals for dislocated worker programs will prioritize recaptured earnings and benefits, and provide for career growth and future earning potential.
- ◆ Continued support and development of strategies that provide for career development and growth for incumbent workers at minimum wage or low paying jobs. The Council recognizes that when given the opportunity, these workers will make use of training that improves their skills, and positions them for higher wage and higher skilled jobs. The success of training low wage, entry-level incumbent workers to higher skills jobs will also increase the availability of entry-level jobs for those who are entering the workforce for the first time.
- ◆ Since the minority populations have a higher than average distribution of youth, improved strategies will be developed to maximize the potential of this worker pool and create pathways for movement to jobs that pay livable wages.
- ◆ The aging of the population, with its increasing needs for healthcare, will provide higher paying professional jobs in the health care industry. Strategies proven effective through the Healthcare Skills Panel will be pursued and replicated where possible, to provide local residents the opportunity for entrance into these high wage occupations.
- ◆ Labor force participation rates will continue to rise for women. Therefore, the Council will provide an increased focus and promote educational

opportunities to help add more women entrance to the workforce achieve higher earnings and prepare them for nontraditional jobs.

- ◆ Workforce programs will continue to improve access and effective service to people with disabilities in order to capitalize on this large and underemployed segment of the labor force. Current practices already in place will be strengthened to enhance accommodation, customized employment, marketing, and job development for individuals with disability.
- ◆ The Council will explore and pilot new strategies that target retention of youth through improved informational services, assessment, career planning, and coordination of youth employment programs with schools. Further, projects such as dropout prevention will be continued, to promote school completion for youth through special programs and partnerships with education and business.

SECTION IV WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA

A. Overview - The South Central Consortium is comprised of Kittitas, Klickitat, Skamania and Yakima Counties in Workforce Development Area IX, pursuant to the Governor's approval dated July 1, 2006, to provide workforce investment activities. The Consortium is organized under the Interlocal Cooperation Act of 1967, Chapter 39.34, RCW, which permits local governmental units to cooperate and to provide services and facilities in a manner which will deal best with the geographic, economic, demographic, and other factors influencing the development of local communities.

In 2006, the Consortium approved a plan for the Council to form a nonprofit and 501(c) (3) for the purpose of administrating WIA programs and to allow the Council to receive tax-exempt funds from sources other than the federal government. The entity is now operational and will assume all full administrative and fiscal function beginning July 1, 2007.

The Council is comprised of a 27 member Board of Directors with a business majority. Individuals appointed to the Board of Directors represent appropriate organizations and institutions specified in the WIA and as prescribed by the Washington State Workforce Investment Board under alternative entity status. An Executive Committee is comprised of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and six (6) members of the Board of Directors. The Executive Committee meets monthly between the quarterly Board of Director's meetings to conduct the regular business of the full Council.

The Council structure includes a Youth Council that is charged with overseeing matters related to youth activities, and facilitates the sharing of information among workforce development programs serving youth in the local area. The Youth Council includes eleven members representing business, education, law enforcement, public housing, Job Corps, parents, and youth.

The following subcommittees of the Council have been developed to ensure that all stakeholders and partners of the local workforce system are afforded the greatest opportunity for participation.

- ◆ *WorkSource Oversight Committee* comprised of all participating partners of the WorkSource system advises the Council on matters relating to system and policy planning and development regarding the local WorkSource system.
- ◆ *Planning Committee* is responsible for overseeing the procurement of service providers, policy development, marketing, special events and activities.
- ◆ *Education, Business, and Industry Committee* is responsible to oversee business services, industry skill panels, and incumbent worker training.

B. Governance - An Interlocal Agreement between the Local Elected Officials in the four counties establishes the Council as a nonprofit corporation and designates the Council as the fiscal and administrative agent for the South Central Consortium.

The four counties acting through the South Central Consortium appoints the board of directors of the Council pursuant to the nomination and appointment process established under WIA and in accordance with the nomination process prescribed by the Council Bylaws, approve the Strategic and Operation plans for Workforce Area IX; and make recommendations on and approve the selection of workforce service providers.

Responsibilities of the Council include the following:

- ◆ The development of the Strategic and Operations Plans for review and concurrence by the Consortium.
- ◆ The development of annual budgets for itself and for the programs as described in the strategic and operations plans and pursuant to the WIA with concurrence from the Consortium.
- ◆ Provide policy guidance and direction on all matters pertaining to the provision of services under the WIA.

- ◆ Select workforce service providers and training providers as appropriate to carry out the purposes of the WIA and according to the procedures set forth in the strategic and operations plans.
- ◆ Monitor and evaluate the training programs operated within the Workforce Development Area.
- ◆ Provide oversight to staff, the annual budget, and will provide guidance and supervision to the Executive Director, who in turn shall employ and set working conditions for the Council staff.
- ◆ Solicit the input and participation of the local business community in the provision of program services to eligible residents of the Workforce Development Area.
- ◆ Solicit and accept grants and donations from sources other than federal funds.

C. Designation of the Council as Fiscal Agent - In accordance with Section 117(d) (3) (B) of the WIA, and in accordance with the Interlocal Cooperation Act of 1967 (Chapter 39.34, Revised Code of Washington) the Consortium has designated the Council as the local grant sub recipient and local fiscal agent. The Council shall perform all of the functions assigned by the WIA to the local grant sub recipient and local fiscal agent. Pursuant to the Governor's approval effective July 1, 2006, this designation shall be in force unless terminated or revised.

The Council is organized as a nonprofit corporation by the Boards of County Commissioners of Kittitas, Klickitat, Skamania, and Yakima Counties, Washington; as provided for in Section 117 of Public Law 105-220--Aug. 7, 1998 Workforce Investment Act (WIA), to implement the WIA in the Workforce Area. The Council is organized exclusively for educational, charitable, religious, scientific, and/or literary purposes, within the meaning of Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended from time to time.

SECTION V THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM

A. Description of the WorkSource System - The Council has developed a service delivery model consistent with the goals and objectives of the Washington State WorkSource system. Operationally, systems are structured to improve the quality of education, training, and employment services through out the region. Labor exchange programs have gone through continued refinement to respond to the ebb and flow of business demands in a timely and efficient manner. On the other hand, one time, and cost-effective training programs have been developed that respond to industry workforce needs now and in the future.

The Council is committed to the development of a seamless one-stop system that provides quality programs and services, and recognizes the distinct economics and demographics of the communities served within the region. WorkSource sites are located throughout the workforce area that allows reasonable access regardless of whether a person lives in a larger city or a small rural community.

In ***Kittitas County***, a full WorkSource Career Development Center is currently and temporarily located in downtown Ellensburg. The site is staffed by People for People (the one-stop operator), OIC of Washington, and the state of Washington Employment Security Department, while a new facility is currently under construction in Southeast Ellensburg. The new facility will be located within a block area of Yakima Valley Community College and the state of DSHS, creating a campus style one-stop system, providing integrated access to adult basic education, rehabilitation, and WorkFirst programs.

For upper Kittitas County residents, WorkSource self services are available at the OIC of Washington facility in Cle Elum. While OIC predominantly provides WIA I-B Youth and dropout prevention services, staff is available to provide limited information and referral services to local social service providers. Computers are available to provide electronic access to workforce programs and People for People staff travel to the Cle Elum area to provide WIA I-B Adult and Dislocated Workers services as needed.

Of the four counties, ***Yakima County*** has the largest population share within Workforce Development Area IX with fully certified career development centers in the City of Yakima and Sunnyside. The state of Washington Employment Security Department is the one-stop operator for the centers and delivers labor exchange, migrant seasonal worker, veterans, and WorkFirst services. The remainders of all required services are available on site by community partners that include People for People, OIC of Washington, Yakima Valley Farm Workers, Washington State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Yakima Valley Community College, Provident Horizon Group, Fort Simcoe Job Corps, and WorkFirst.

For mid Yakima County residents, Yakima Valley Farm Workers - Northwest Community Action Center (NCAC) provides an affiliate site for WorkSource services. People for People, State of Washington Department of Employment Security, and NCAC are the basic partners located in the center. A state of the art computer lab provides electronic access to the full range of WorkSource services while Energy Assistance, Rental Assistance, and Community Jobs augment programs for low-income individuals.

Columbia Gorge Employment Security serves as the lead entity for one-stop services in ***Klickitat and Skamania Counties***. Local residents are able to access the full array of services through the full career development site located in White Salmon or the affiliate sites in Goldendale and Stevenson. For all locations, the State of Washington Employment Security Department anchors the services with WIA I-B Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker services as well as the full compliment of Veterans, Wagner-Peyser, MSFW, and WorkFirst programs.

While the small population base and large geographic area of these two counties presents a challenge for the delivery of services, it has also created an environment for innovative partnerships to serve local residents. Adult Basic Education programs are provided in Goldendale by Yakima Valley Community College while Clark College provides service in the White Salmon and Stevenson Communities. The Washington State University Learning Center co-located in the Goldendale affiliate site provides opportunity to access college level classes through distance learning programs. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation provides services in White Salmon and Job Corp services are integrated through electronic connection with Americorps staff located in the community of Trout Lake.

B. A Focus on Business - The WorkSource Centers in the workforce area, under the leadership of the Council and the WorkSource Oversight Committee, has clearly defined how business services will be packaged, marketed, and provided to the business community in a manner that is professional and consistent by all WorkSource partners in the region.

The purpose of the Business Services Plan is to direct a focus toward the improvement and effectiveness of the services offered to businesses in our region. A key component of this improvement is the coordination of the many programs and partners that enable business to get assistance from us, not only to find workers, but for a variety of other services.

The following goals have been established for Business Services in our region:

Services to businesses will be offered as a system. All business service representatives will represent themselves and WorkSource business services, using the same WorkSource identity, materials, and selling *WorkSource services* rather than *individual agency services*.

Business services that are available are clearly defined. Available services have been clearly defined, entities have been designated to provide the services, and all (partner) staff are trained to understand the *menu of services*, able to describe and facilitate them for the business customer.

There are established levels / tiers of service, including at least basic core service available to all businesses; and premium services offered only to certain business customers.

Key performance measures will be developed and adopted to demonstrate the success of our business service program. The state provides performance information through the Government Management Accountability and Performance (GMAP) tool. This provides a great deal of information about basic core services available within the centers; such as job listings, fill rates, time-to-fill rates, wage rates, etc. Data regarding customer satisfaction are under development.

Improve and coordinate our marketing to business. Businesses shall receive a clear message about our *menu of services*. Marketing materials vary from office to office, and from partner to partner. The state has recently developed a package of attractive and consistent materials. These may or may not clearly represent what we have available in each local office. Materials have been developed that speak in clear language, understandable by employers, and speak to the benefits and value of using the system.

Staff the new, coordinated WorkSource Business Services Program. Resources are at a premium. Across four counties and seven WorkSource offices, fewer than three full time employees are allocated to provide services to business. A proactive and effective delivery of services to business in our region will require additional staff dedicated to the task. WorkSource partners continue to consider reallocation of resources to meet the business service challenges to ensure coordination of efforts, to streamline existing work and reduce duplication. The Workforce Council will continue to seek additional funding and develop fee-for-service activities to augment and partially support business services.

Employers shall have a convenient and comfortable place to avail themselves of tangible business resources. Each WorkSource Center will have a business resource area (which may or may not be physically located at the WorkSource Centers) providing access to LMEA, tax information, hiring information, job descriptions, and a space for interviewing and for industry specific training.

C. WorkSource System Partners – Historically, in the Workforce Development Area, it is imperative that state and local agencies work together to provide services to both the business community and to job seekers. WIA provides an opportunity for local agencies to work in partnership and to develop new strategies to meet the demands of the new emerging workforce and the business community.

The South Central WorkSource system includes, but is not limited to the following partners:

Employment Security (ES), whose mission it is to help people succeed throughout their working lives. ES carries this out by supporting workers during times of unemployment, by connecting job seekers with businesses who have jobs to fill and by providing business and individuals with information they need to adapt to a changing economy.

Individuals to be served: General Public, Youth, Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Veterans

Services to be provided:

1. WorkSource Operator, in Klickitat, Skamania, and Yakima Counties
1. Wagner-Peyser activities under WIA Title III
2. Trade Act Adjustment Assistance
3. Veterans Services
4. Services for Agricultural workers and employers
5. WorkFirst Employment Services
6. WorkFirst Work Program in Klickitat and Skamania Counties
7. WIA I-B Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker services in Klickitat and Skamania Counties
8. Claimant Placement Program
9. Unemployment Benefit Assistance

Department of Social & Health Services(DSHS), whose mission is to improve the quality of life for individuals and families in need, and help in achieving safe, self sufficient, healthy, and secure lives.

Individuals to be served: Adults, Youth, and Children in need.

Services to be provided:

1. WorkFirst services include core, intensive, and training services for adults who are receiving public assistance
2. Referrals to WorkFirst Programs
3. Cash Assistance provides temporary cash assistance to families in need
4. Food Stamps provide food assistance to families in need
5. Medicaid provides medical coverage to eligible families and individuals

Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) provides a subsidized child care program for individuals who are 200 percent of poverty level, are working and/or participating in a WorkFirst program.

K-12 Educational System who are preparing students to be successful through mastering the skills outlined in Washington State's Educational Reform Initiative and preparing students to transition into full-time employment, the military, post-secondary training, and/or baccalaureate education while becoming responsible citizens.

Individuals to be served: Youth and Families

Services to be provided:

1. General Education
2. Activities funded by Carl D. Perkins Vocational-Technical Education Act of 1998 for secondary vocational education activity.

Yakima Valley Community College and Clark Community College as learning-centered institutions serve a diverse community, assisting students in acquiring the knowledge in basic literacy, academic, professional, and technical programs and skills for life-long learning.

Individuals to be served: In-School Youth, At-Risk Youth, Dislocated Workers, Adults in Kittitas, Klickitat, Skamania, and Yakima Counties.

Services to be provided:

1. Intensive and Training Services to WIA IB Youth, Adults, and Dislocated Workers
2. Employer sponsored training
3. WorkFirst Services
4. Programs funded under Carl D. Perkins Vocational-Technical Education Act of 1998.
5. Work related adult basic education and literacy programs funded under the federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (WIA Title II)
6. English as a Second Language

Perry Technical Institute provides industry with well-trained people who are motivated to work as team members in our rapidly evolving technological world.

Individuals to be served: Youth and Adults who have a High School Diploma or GED.

Services to be provided:

1. Established technical training and customized training for employers in Kittitas, Klickitat, Skamania, and Yakima Counties.

Washington State University, Central Washington University, and Heritage University, These four-year institutions provide opportunities for individuals to gain the credentials or degrees beyond those offered by the K-12 system, Community College, and/or Technical Schools.

Individuals to be served: Youth, Adults, and Dislocated Workers

Services to be provided:

1. Post-Secondary Baccalaureate education.

Washington State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's mission is to enable individuals with disabilities to obtain and keep employment. Participants must have a disability that makes it difficult to get or keep a job and that requires services provided by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in order to work.

Individuals to be served: Individuals with Disabilities

Services to be provided:

1. Core and Intensive Services and other supportive services.

Department of Services for the Blind promotes the economic and social well-being of people who are blind and other individuals with significant visual disabilities by encouraging and assisting them to become economically and socially independent and to stimulate their integration into society.

Individual to be served: Individuals who are Sight Impaired

Services to be provided:

1. Core and Intensive Services to WIA I-B Youth - transitional students, as well as out-of school students and adults in Kittitas, Klickitat, Skamania, and Yakima Counties.

Fort Simcoe Job Corps, funded by the Workforce Investment Act, is designed to increase the employability of severely disadvantaged, out-of-school young people ages 16-24. Fort Simcoe offers a wide array of vocational skills and addresses other needs that affect student employability.

Individuals to be served: Disadvantaged, out-of-school, and dropout youth between the ages of 16-24.

Services to be provided:

1. Core, intensive, and training services for economically disadvantaged youth meeting program eligibility requirements.

People for People whose mission is to strengthen the community by providing quality human services.

Individuals to be served: Adults, older workers, TANF recipients, and Dislocated Workers

Services to be provided:

1. WorkSource Operator in Kittitas County
2. Core intensive and training to WIA I-B Adults in Kittitas and Yakima Counties
3. Core intensive, and training services to WIA I-B Dislocated Workers in Kittitas County
4. Transportation services for the special needs population
5. WorkFirst Work Programs in Kittitas and Yakima Counties
6. 211 Operator for the Greater Columbia Region

Opportunities Industrialization Center of Washington's (OIC) mission is to help in the elimination of unemployment, poverty, and illiteracy so that people of all colors and creeds can lead their lives with greater human dignity.

Individuals to be served: Youth who are in school and at risk, out of school, school dropouts, and adults

Services to be provided:

1. Core, intensive and training services under WIA I-B for Youth in upper Kittitas and Yakima Counties
2. WIA Programs to serve migrant and seasonal farm workers statewide
3. Americorp programs including construction, Washington Ready Corps, Early learning mentoring for children of incarcerated parents
4. Community Development Block Grant and Community Services Block Grant services
5. Weatherization, energy assistance and lead abatement evaluations
6. Regional distribution of food bank

Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic / Northwest Community Action Center's (NCAC), mission is to create measurable change that will empower at-risk and economically disadvantaged individuals and families to achieve a greater level of self-sufficiency by engaging the local communities and business through advocacy and coordination of financial material, and human resources.

Individuals to be served: Economically disadvantaged families, disadvantaged families, in school at risk youth and adults on public assistance in Yakima County

Services to be provided:

1. Core, intensive and training services youth under WIA-I-B
2. Readiness to Learn Grant providing case-management services in K-12 system
3. GEAR Up Grant Partnership with University of Washington elementary schools, parents and students
4. Connex Program providing youth with an exposure and connection to the various health care fields
5. Seasonal Childcare Referral Services for seasonal and migrant workers
6. WorkFirst Work Programs in Yakima County
7. 21st Century Community Learning Centers provide after school educational opportunities for students and parents in Lower Valley Schools.
8. Community Development Block Grant and Community Services Block Grant services
9. Medical and Dental Clinics for farm workers and other low-income individuals.

The Hope Source mission is to build a community where all people can live a life of hope, dignity, and self-reliance.

Individuals to be served: Low-income youth, adults, and families in Kittitas County

Services to be provided:

1. Community Development Block Grant and Community Services Block Grant services
2. Weatherization
3. Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Victim Service
4. Transportation assistance
5. Other support services

Washington Gorge Action Program - Their mission is to prevent and alleviate poverty through programs which will build stronger individuals, families, organizations, and community.

Individuals to be served: Low-income youth, adults, and families in Klickitat and Skamania Counties

Services to be provided:

1. Community Development Block Grant and Community Services Block Grant services
2. WorkFirst Programs
3. Other support services

Labor Organizations such as Laborers' International Union Local #614, United Brotherhood of Carpenters, Painters & Allied Trades, Sheet Metal Workers who provide apprenticeship opportunities in their respective trades and are members of the Council's Construction Industry Skill Panel.

Business Organizations such as the Chambers of Commerce will be providing business services as described in WIA through the WorkSource Centers. They will serve as a forum for the development of goals and strategies benefiting the business community, to articulate these goals and strategies to the public and promote support for them.

Economic Development Organizations will provide Business Services as described in WIA through the WorkSource Centers. Their mission is to retain and expand existing businesses in the community and recruit new businesses to the community to provide employment opportunities to diversify the economic base.

The following are other One-Stop System Partners who are part of the Workforce Development System:

- ◆ AARP/Senior Employment
- ◆ Provident Horizon Group
- ◆ Catholic Family Services/Child Care Resource and Referral
- ◆ Central Washington Comprehensive Mental Health
- ◆ Goodwill Industries
- ◆ Providence Health Systems
- ◆ Rural Enterprise Community
- ◆ Women and Minorities Enterprise Program
- ◆ Yakima County Aging and Long Term Care
- ◆ Yakima County Coalition for the Homeless
- ◆ Washington State Migrant Council
- ◆ Yakama Nation
- ◆ Division of Child Support
- ◆ Elmview
- ◆ And other organizations

D. Commitment to Special Populations -The Council is committed to the concept of equal opportunity and access to equitable services for all segments of the local population. After considering all available and current

demographic data, appropriate and specific target group levels are set by the Council in order to insure that no segment of the population is disregarded. Specific groups targeted for service include females, people with disability, veterans, ex-offenders, TANF recipients, school dropouts, people 55 years and older, Hispanics, Blacks, Native Americans and Asians. Emphasis continues to be placed on marketing and outreach to target populations with the priority being fair and equal access to and benefit from services.

1. Youth - Youth services are designed to support the Washington Performance-Based Education Act of 1992 and the Washington State Education Reform Act of 1993, specifically Goal number 4 of the Washington State Essential Academic Learning Requirements, whereby school-based learning will be connected with work-based learning to develop the cognitive connection between what is learned in the classroom with needs in the workplace. Emphasis is placed on the development of portfolios and selections of career majors with an awareness of nontraditional occupations. Services are constructed around activities that will lead to entrance or further training for high-skilled and high wage jobs. Consistent with education reform, the Council will assist local districts with Washington Academic Student Learning assessment efforts.

As a primary initiative, the Council will strive toward a single regional partnership that will link the range of employment, training and post-secondary programs for youth.

2. Adults in Transition - Programs for adults in transition will emphasize training in high-skill, high-wage occupations that provide the skills necessary to achieve self-sufficiency and opportunity for career and economic growth. The Council will link WorkFirst programs, WIA I-B Adult and Dislocated Worker services, programs for People with Disabilities, financial aide programs and other services to provide a pool of resources that will support skill development of adults in the Workforce Area.

Given the rural and agricultural nature of the service area, the Council recognizes the need for service to migrant and seasonal farm workers in the Workforce Area. In order to assure access, participation, and employment for this segment of the population, the Council will provide basic education, English as a Second Language, and skill training that allows migrant and seasonal farm workers to acquire the basic and technical skills required of local business.

3. Incumbent Workers – The Council has identified incumbent worker training as a key workforce development strategy. The incumbent worker training has been identified, developed, and supported by the established members of skill panels in the five key industry sectors in the Workforce Area, *Healthcare, Construction, Agriculture-Food Processing, Manufacturing*

and Energy. These industries have been targeted as the strong economic drivers of the local and state economy, and provide opportunities for workers to achieve livable wages and career advancement. Over the years, the Incumbent Worker Training provided by the Council has helped those workers in maintaining jobs, averting layoffs, increasing earnings, achieving promotions, which in turn has helped the local industries stay healthy and competitive.

4. Dislocated Workers - The workforce development system provides rapid response services to those workers who become unemployed through dislocation or layoff, by quickly mobilizing staff to meet with affected workers prior to dislocation, to assist with unemployment services, possible re-training opportunities, or other WorkSource system services.

When the system becomes aware of a substantial layoff or a WARN (Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification), the following steps are taken:

- ◆ WorkSource partners will be mobilized, partners include Unemployment Insurance staff, Dislocated Worker staff, Community College representatives and where appropriate, organized labor.
- ◆ Early contact is made with employer and employee representatives to determine layoff schedules, labor negotiation status, worker skills, promoting and coordinating the establishment of labor/management cooperation.
- ◆ Information is disseminated and exchanged about the Dislocated Worker Program, Unemployment Insurance, WorkSource resources, business assistance, and appropriate rapid response resources to assure that the business, organized labor, and employees not represented by unions are aware of the services available.
- ◆ Strategies are developed to meet the unique needs of workers
- ◆ As part of a Rapid Response Team, conduct business site orientation to services for employers/employees
- ◆ Coordinate with labor and economic development organizations to prevent layoffs
- ◆ Coordinate activities with the statewide Rapid Response Program utilizing the services of the State Dislocated Worker Unit.
- ◆ Conduct Rapid Response Services in accordance with Washington's Statewide Rapid Response Policy.

The Workforce Area will meet the intent of the Trade Reform Act by providing Rapid Response activities to trade impacted workers. WIA core and intensive services will also be provided and, where applicable, the individual will be co-enrolled in WIA and Trade Act.

5. People with Disabilities - The Council has implemented a formal WorkSource Accommodations Policy to insure that customers who need special accommodations have access and benefit from the available WorkSource. All WorkSource Center staff in the South Central area received customer service training focused on serving customers with disabilities. Adaptive equipment has been installed at the WorkSource Centers, staff are to use it, and in techniques to train customers to use the equipment. A marketing package has been developed which attempts to reach people with disabilities, to inform them of the available service and how to access services at WorkSource Centers.

The Council established a workgroup, the *WorkSource Integration Committee*, a bona fide subcommittee of the WorkSource Oversight Committee, whose purpose is to insure that all our WorkSource Centers are fully integrated and that services to customers with disabilities are as effective and meaningful as services to all other populations. This group has the task of performing regular accessibility reviews, assessing the level and quality of services delivered to customers with disabilities, and developing new policies and practices that insure a consistent level of high quality, meaningful and effective, fully integrated services for people with disabilities.

6. Apprenticeships – The Council has identified the construction industry as a key industry in the Workforce Development Area. The industry in South Central area has experienced a tremendous shortage of available skilled workers. The Council received funding from the Statewide Apprenticeship Training Project (SAT) to increase apprenticeship opportunities and provide incumbent worker training to apprentices and journeymen to address the skill shortage for the industry. The Council’s Construction Skills Panel provided oversight to ensure that the training offered met the needs of the Industry. This SAT called TAPIT (Tri-County Apprenticeship Program and Incumbent Worker Training) prepared the hard-to-serve unemployed WIA eligible participants for apprenticeship opportunities in the building trades, provided training, job placement, retention services, and wage progression assistance to incumbent apprentices and journeymen.



E. Public and Private Initiatives - Addressing skill gaps by supporting economic development and private-public partnerships are features embedded in the mission of the Council. Businesses are increasingly concerned about educational reforms and the quality of the labor force. Economic growth in the Workforce Area will be increasingly constrained by the lack of a skilled workforce. It is imperative that emphasis is placed on the development of our human capital.

Strong partnerships must be forged with business groups that include local economic development agencies, labor organizations, chambers of commerce, and other business organizations. The spectrum of linkages will take different forms to include:

- ◆ Using business as a primary source for identifying workforce needs and designing training services that will provide workers with the skills and abilities for jobs in the local community.
- ◆ Using skills training as an incentive for economic development initiatives that will attract new businesses to the area and assist existing businesses to remain in the community, including training programs for incumbent workers to facilitate career growth and economic earnings.
- ◆ Development of innovative programs that will train youth and adult workers for skills that match emerging job opportunities that provide livable wages and opportunity for career growth.
- ◆ Development of industry specific training that responds to urgent and specific needs of business.

The development of a new idea or initiative is usually born out of growing arena of need, typically identified through private sector participation in workforce partnership activities such as skill panels or industry forums. Such partnerships serve to bring to light both short term and anticipated long-term issues that the industry is experiencing or posturing to address.

Sector Approach - The South Central Workforce Council was one of the first local areas in the state and nation to begin focusing on industry sectors as strategy for addressing workforce issues. Through Department of Labor Skills Gap grant awarded in 2000 the council with partners targeted the agriculture-food processing industry to address the impending need for new skilled workers and to update the skills of current employees to address industry needs brought on by changing technology and global competition. The already formed Agriculture-Food Processing committee was formalized and joined by additional representatives from local councils, education, labor, and begin the first formal industry skill panel in Washington State.

The South Central Workforce Council continues to utilize the sector approach as a means to address local workforce issues and to deploy workforce training resources through out the region. The sector approach has been adapted from the work of Michael Porter which focuses on the competitiveness of business in national and regional economies. The sector approach for the South Central region is based on industries that are important to the local economy, that provide current and future growth for jobs and careers at livable wages with benefits and that provide for career growth. The approach focuses on developing a qualified workforce both new entrants and current

workers to ensure the industry and the cluster of business that support the industry remain competitive and healthy in a global economy.

To stay focused on the sector strategy, the Council has formulated the Business Industry and Education Committee (BIEC). The committee provides oversight of project monies for four industry sector or cluster projects and decides on allocation of funds to sector projects where discretionary money is available. The Council and the BIEC understands it is imperative that we strengthen our current workforce upgrading skills of our current workers and preparing new workers with the skill sets needed in a global economy.

The Council has a wide scope of responsibility and a very proactive Business Industry and Education Committee (BIEC). That translates to oversight of project monies for four industries identified as most critical to the economic stability of the region. The BIEC oversight includes guidance of projects to determine goals, shaping of activities and evaluate whether match requirements are needed.

Agriculture/Food Processing: The award-winning Eastern Washington Agriculture and Food Processing Partnership helped to transform a traditional labor market into an industry prepared for the future. This innovative public/private partnership was created to meet the needs of employers and to upgrade the skills of incumbent workers in two of Washington's largest and most labor-intensive industries - food processing and farming.

Based on the sector approach, the Agriculture/Food Processing Skill Panel is one of the first in Washington State and in the nation. Launched through a federal Department of Labor grant the initiative brought together six state agencies, organized labor, four Workforce Development Councils, five Eastern Washington community colleges, the U.S. Department of Labor, community based organizations, and many Eastern Washington employers who worked together to find solutions to closing a widening skills gap problem.

The Northwest Food Processors Association (NWFPA) and the Washington Growers League set the foundation for the partnership by identifying jobs common to both industries, and by setting skill standards associated with these jobs. An existing labor-management committee provided leadership and project oversight. The Council provided administrative guidance. This customer-driven sector initiative has shown tremendous results. It created 26 customized training courses offering certification and opportunities for specific career advancement, delivered training events for more than 32 companies at 70 work sites with over 1,000 workers trained.

Since its inception, this partnership has flourished and grown into a multi-state initiative. From 2005 to present, NWFPA, Key Links, Inc., and the Council have directed Washington's first statewide skill panel to conduct workforce development research for hourly workers, leaders, and on-line systems. Current activities include breaking new ground to grow leadership talent pools for the industry focusing on women, Hispanics, and other minorities with leadership potential. While these are only a few examples of past and current initiative, they are illustrative of the power of public/private partnerships.

Healthcare: The Healthcare Industry Sector and skills panel that was established in 2003. They have adopted the mission statement: *To develop a 'grow your own' workforce strategy in the South Central region through an effective partnership with employers, education/training programs, and workforce programs to fill needs of high demand and critical health care occupations.*

The panel has made great strides in developing a strong strategic plan and building on relationships among members. They have identified both short and long-term strategies to improve career awareness, increase the number of students and adults who are prepared to enter healthcare fields, increase capacity and affordability in local education and training programs, and enhance regional ability to recruit and retain specialty occupations. In 2003, the panel leveraged over \$610,000 from public sources to support their activities and developed marketing tools to launch their work and mission.

The Healthcare Skills Panel has benefited from two Council grants to fund skills training for employees of local health organizations; 157 employees from 28 health care organizations received skills training. It should be noted that for every dollar invested for incumbent worker training, health organizations have matched two dollars towards the cost of training. Training for incumbent workers continues to be a valued and important focus for the healthcare industry.

The South Central Healthcare Skills Panel and the Center of Excellence for Allied Health through Yakima Valley Community College have been active partners in addressing critical health care worker shortages in the South Central area. These two entities have taken a leadership role in galvanizing a partnership of business representatives, education organizations and WorkSource providers to identify health workforce priorities, develop local solutions, and leverage resources to support implementation. This has resulted in the development of new Allied Health Program at Yakima Valley Community College, and scholarship programs for minorities and women in entry-level occupations seeking wage and career advancement. The Health Skills panel will be working with partners such as the Hospital Association's

Health Workforce Institute, to spread the use of advanced processes such as LEAN for healthcare to help organizations remove inefficiencies and expand service delivery.

Construction: The Council Construction Industry Sector and skills panel was established in 2004. The skill panel was awarded the highly successful Statewide Apprenticeship Training Project (SAT) locally referred to as the Tri-County Apprenticeship, Pre-Apprenticeship & Incumbent Training Project (TAPIT). They have provided guidance and oversight in the development of career ladders, curricula for customized training for incumbent workers, as well as new entrants into the industry, and identifying training needs, recommendations for the selection of training providers and evaluation of the work accomplished.

In the fall of 2005, the Construction Skill Panel established their priorities for the upcoming years. Like other local area panels, there is consensus to *grow our own* workforce. Therefore, a major priority is linking the industry with the K-12 system to create awareness, provide resources and understanding of the various opportunities within the industry. Second priority is to provide incumbent worker training to meet new federal, state, and local certification requirements.

To date, over 540 certificates and/or certifications recognized by the industry have been earned by the incumbent workers, 81 percent of the 52 unemployed workers have either entered employment or an apprenticeship programs, 100 percent earned certificates and/or certifications recognized by the industry.

The Skills Panel partnered with the Renton Construction Center of Excellence and the Associated General Contractors Education Foundation in the successful grant application for the K-12 Transitional Construction Math Project. This curriculum is aligned with the WASL which is a priority for many local school districts. WDC staff and panel members serve on the Construction Center of Excellence Steering Committee in Renton working on statewide projects for the Industry.

A new partnership was established between the Yakama Nation and the Council through their membership on the Skills Panel. An outcome of the TAPIT project was a Native American lead mentoring program for the construction industry which has been touted as a promising practice. The panel also served as a springboard for the development of the Building Apprenticeship Training program at the Yakama Nation Housing Authority.

In 2006 at the 2nd Annual Washington State Construction Workforce Conference, the Construction Skill Panel was awarded ***Partnership of the Year Award 2006*** from the Renton Construction Center of Excellence.

Manufacturing: The Manufacturing Industry Sector and skills panel was established in 2000 and similar to the other panels, their objectives are to determine industry skills gaps, establish focus groups to review, critique and develop new curriculum to meet current and future industry needs to avert layoffs and provide opportunities for wage progression and promotion.

Over the past six years this skills panel has been successful in acquiring WIA incentive dollars for incumbent worker training, operated Industries of the Future Skills Training (IFST), delivered a Manufacturing Skills Upgrade Project, offered Incumbent Worker Basic Skills training, and managed to produce 100 percent in private sector match for each program of activity.

Over the past several years, the Council has partnered with the Yakima County Development Association New Visions, the local economic development organization, to train the manufacturing community owners, managers, supervisors, and production employees in *Lean Manufacturing*. This training has assisted companies in techniques to assess their efficiency, output, minimize waste, maximize customer value, etc, all with an eye for continuous improvement. In addition to companies from across the area and the workers, the business outreach liaisons from each WorkSource Center and affiliate sites throughout the South Central region were trained as well. Next steps for this skills panel include updating and re-determining the service delivery direction within the industry.

Energy (Renewable and Alternative): The South Central Energy Sector Initiative emerged from the need to expand alternative and renewable energy sources and the vital role Central Washington can play. As a result of a grant from the State of Washington Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, the Council will identify workforce needs for occupations in wind, solar and bio mass clusters guided by and industry skills panel. The project will identify middle skills jobs and training programs in the emerging renewable energy cluster in South Central Washington State. The project will culminate in a regional plan that will identify key companies within the sector and the clusters and sub clusters associated with the sector; evaluate the demand for jobs now and in the future as well as the skill sets needed for workers and assess the availability of training programs to address the industry worker needs.

Other Sectors: Sectors are evaluated by the Council periodically. Additional sectors maybe supported where new or existing industries emerge, while others may be deemphasized where employment and training needs are not

an issue. Further, the Council may support other sector or cluster efforts carried out by local business partners such as local economic development organizations.

In 2008 the Yakima County Development Association conducted a cluster analysis as part of their planning process and intended to enhance the development of external marketing and internal product improvement initiatives. The methodology of the AngelouEconomics study calculated location factors (or quotients) for each cluster to assess the strength of the cluster in the local economy. Further, the “factors were calculated by comparing the cluster’s share of total local employment to the cluster’s national share. This location quotient will yield a value generally between 0 and 2, where a result of 1 demonstrates that the cluster commands an average (expected) share of the local economy. Cluster location factors greater than 1.5 indicate a strong cluster agglomeration, while those less than 0.5 indicate weak clusters” (Report Inspiring Economic Excellence: A Blueprint for Yakima County, 2008). The AngleouEconocmics study identified six clusters that include Logic and Distribution, Agriculture, Medical Industry, Industrial Supplies Aerospace and Business and Professional.

From Regional to Interstate - The Columbia River serves as the border between Washington and Oregon States and marks the most southern edge of the Klickitat and Skamania Counties. The collection of communities on or near the riverbed in these two counties of Washington and those in the Oregon Counties of Multnomah, Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, and Gilliam are often referred to as the Gorge Area. While the term certainly depicts the chiseled terrain of the Columbia River region, it is also used to reflect the connecting, shared, and at times overlapping economies. It is an everyday occurrence for workers to traverse the border for work, retail, and services in the Gorge area.

Like regions within the state faced with maintaining public services in a time of diminishing resources, Washington-Oregon Chambers of Commerce, economic development and other organizations serving the public interest have begun to explore new partnerships to achieve efficiencies and maintain quality levels of service to the residents of the area. The Council with their Oregon counterpart the Oregon Consortium/Alliance, have also began to jointly explore ways that WorkSource Centers and programs in their regions can work cooperatively to support workforce efforts and improve services to business and workers. It is the intent of these discussions to produce an interstate partnership that provides for:

- ◆ Coordination of available services to address the needs of new and expanding business in the local area.
- ◆ Regular and ongoing joint meetings among workforce organizations, economic development agencies, the Chambers of Commerce, and other

social service organizations to develop relationships and strategies for services to residents of the Gorge area.

- ◆ To identify where service areas may be insufficient and explore ways where workforce resources can be used jointly to enhance services to residents of both state communities.
- ◆ To develop a comprehensive regional plan that will link and support both the strategic and operations plans for each local area.

F. Economic Development and Workforce Linkages - A mutual reciprocity must exist between the workforce development system and the economic development community. A well-prepared workforce is required for businesses to be productive, competitive in developing superior products and services, competitive in pricing, to be profitable and endure. Economic development is essential if local opportunities are required to provide the economic opportunities for a livable wage and to retain the area's population, especially the youth.

New businesses consistently say that the single greatest factor influencing their decision to locate in a community is the availability of a skilled workforce. This being the case, it is apparent that economic and workforce development go hand in hand. Workforce and economic development agencies must build a consensus that businesses need a well-prepared workforce for maintaining and expanding their current business, as well as attracting new businesses to the area.

At the onset of WIA implementation, the Council aggressively moved to connect and support economic development goals, objectives, and strategies on both the county and community levels. Recognizing the vital link between a quality workforce and business success the workforce system has aligned workforce programs with local economic activities to address employer needs. Whether companies are considering new start-ups or expansion in the South Central area, local workforce organizations are poised to work jointly with economic development staff to package and market hiring services, training programs and employer incentives.

Analysis of Strategies- As the workforce-economic development partnership has evolved; strategies have been developed to assist business in finding qualified workers and in providing training that upgrades the skills of incumbent workers to help companies stay competitive. Through participation with local economic development boards, Chambers of Commerce, and dialogue with local industry groups, the Council has gained a clear understanding of skill requirements needed in the workplace. To ensure local workforce programs truly address both the needs of business and workers, the following fundamental principals were used in the development of strategies.

- ◆ Given the diverse nature of business and the ongoing change of the workplace, the strategies adopted by the Council must be flexible, and able to be modified to meet the unique needs of industries.
- ◆ If the local workforce system is to gain confidence of local employers, it is imperative that job referrals be based on quality match and that training programs are effective, providing workers with sound work maturity and job specific skills.
- ◆ To address worker shortages, the local area must focus on current residents, improving basic educational skills and English speaking proficiency.
- ◆ Training programs must stay focused on developing workers with skills for current jobs in the labor market, yet be forward thinking to develop workers for the jobs of tomorrow.
- ◆ Resources must be maximized by wisely using funds from all sources to provide the greatest opportunity to those that need training.
- ◆ Services must be integrated in a fashion that reduces unnecessary duplication and simplifies the process for business customers seeking workforce services and support.
- ◆ Programs must be flexible and innovative as business expansions, start-ups, or closures can occur quickly with little advanced warning.
- ◆ The workforce system must be positioned to assist in screening, recruiting, and hiring to fill a few or many positions.
- ◆ Training institutions and programs must be ready to develop new curricula or adapt existing programs to develop worker skills in the shortest time possible.
- ◆ Local workforce systems must forge new partnerships with education to solidify the connection between the classroom and workplace for students thus promoting a future supply of workers.

Linking Workforce with Economic Development- Economic development has become a high priority for South Central Washington counties, municipal and tribal organizations. While county economic development organizations have formulated broad plans for the larger geographical region, local cities and towns have developed plans that build on the strength of their communities.

Economic development and workforce leadership agree that a prepared workforce is a critical element to area economic future, and it is critical that the workforce development systems prepare workers to meet those demands. A timely and rapid response capability for worker training must exist between workforce partners in order to meet the needs of business expansion or of new business. To ensure that workforce programs connect to economic development efforts at all levels, the Council has reviewed all local plans and found six common goals to be supported by the workforce programs.

- ◆ Retain and build upon existing businesses
- ◆ Recruit new businesses
- ◆ Develop infrastructures to support business
- ◆ Provide technical assistance to business
- ◆ Provide workforce development assistance to existing and new businesses
- ◆ Provide customized incumbent worker skill upgrade training under a cost-sharing arrangement through local skill panels to assist our strategic industries in remaining competitive in the global economy

Governor Christine Gregoire has prioritized workforce and economic development in *The Next Washington*, her blueprint for economic growth. More specifically the document articulates that the alignment of economic development and workforce development at the regional level is a high priority. In support of the governor's plan, the Council will step up coordination and partnership efforts with key regional organizations identified below to support goals and initiatives identified in plans for economic development.

Yakima County - The Yakima County Development Association, also known as New Vision, has the primary responsibility to promote economic development and to diversify the economy in Yakima County. To that end, New Vision developed a five-year economic diversification program that will measurably improve the Yakima County economy. These efforts are being spearheaded by a private-public partnership that focuses on:

- ◆ Growing and retaining our local manufacturers
- ◆ Marketing Yakima County as a destination for new corporate facilities
- ◆ Responding to companies interested in expanding or relocating to Yakima County
- ◆ Providing leadership on key issues that affect our local business climate

While New Vision has developed a number of goals to promote the business climate, there are two goals that are directly supported by the South Central Workforce Programs.

- ◆ Development of public/private partnerships that foster economic growth, new job creation, and increased investment in the community
- ◆ Economic Development/Job Creation legislation

Yakama Nation - The Council has also forged new relationships with the Yakama Nation. Yakama Nation's economic development efforts are well established after 20 years of operation. Each project, such as Yakama Forest Products, Yakama Juice, and Yakama Nation Legends Casino is part of the Tribal Strategic Plan for long-term economic growth based on tribal resources. The Yakama Nation currently has one of the highest unemployment rates in the area, estimated at 58 percent. This reality has placed an importance on increasing the skills of their workforce and at the same time developing tribal employment opportunities for their people.

Kittitas County - The Economic Development Group of Kittitas County located in Ellensburg is the publicly funded economic development association serving all of Kittitas County. Two different wind energy companies are currently operating wind power turbines in Kittitas County. These two projects combined involved the construction and operation of 215 wind turbines with a potential generating capacity of 320 megawatts of electricity. The Vantage Wind Energy Project will add an additional 60 wind power turbines. This new project represents \$200 - \$300 million dollar investment. The Wild Horse Wind Power Project owned by Puget Sound Energy is expected to expand by 22 turbines. The current robust construction activity and the new wind power generation technology, Wild Horse Wind Farm, the Vantage Wind Energy Project and the Kittitas Valley Project have moved labor issues and the need to develop a skilled workforce to the top of their economic development priorities.

The Economic Development goals for Kittitas County follow.

- ◆ Promote business retention and expansion
- ◆ Recruit new business and industry that provide family wage jobs
- ◆ Provide small and new business assistance programs
- ◆ Provide and manage assets that promote economic development
- ◆ Increase name identification and provide benefits and services to members
- ◆ Market products and services countrywide
- ◆ Establish Kittitas County as a leader for the production of "green" energy.

Klickitat County - The Klickitat County Public Economic Development Authority, under county government, has established six economic development goals. Priorities are established based upon their yearly funding. This is particularly true of their efforts to develop utility infrastructures. A major effort is to use 0.09 Sales Tax Revenue to provide match for infrastructure projects in communities and the County. A further

effort is the return of hotel/motel tax revenues to support tourism through their visitor information centers. Objectives include further development of the renewable energy industry; expanded agri-business opportunities and tourism activity. There are currently 976 wind turbines in Klickitat County according to data released by Klickitat County Commissioners. Other objectives include:

- ◆ Provide technical, financial, and organizational support; develop the water and sewer infrastructure serving the key residential, industrial, and commercial areas of the county.
- ◆ Retain and expand the existing Klickitat County business and employment base.
- ◆ Recruit small to medium sized business that diversify the economy and create quality employment opportunities.
- ◆ Increase employment opportunities in agricultural production and processing in Klickitat County by recruiting new businesses and expanding existing businesses.
- ◆ Maintain the Klickitat County Public Economic Development Authority (the EDA) as an organization that fulfills its mission in a professional manner and that is responsive to the needs of the residents and businesses of Klickitat County.
- ◆ Increase tourist spending in Klickitat County.

Skamania County - Skamania County Economic Development Council (SCEDC) is located in Stevenson, WA. The goals are designed to assist in the retention and expansion of existing business and industry, to encourage capital investment for new business development, and to promote public policies to facilitate orderly economic development in Skamania County. One of the important projects on the drawing board for the area is the Broughton Landing project, a proposed world-class outdoor resort. Should the project come to fruition, it is estimated to create 288 construction jobs with a combined payroll of \$30 million, 60 permanent jobs, and an annual influx to the local economy of nearly \$8 million of visitor spending. The goals of the SCEDC are listed below.

- ◆ Provide business counseling and business planning assistance to new and existing businesses.
- ◆ Coordinate community strategic planning and provide assistance with contract and grant applications for economic development, activities and programs.
- ◆ Sponsor and host small business training workshops.
- ◆ Operate a Business Resource Center
- ◆ Manage the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area's Washington Investment Fund (WIF) providing business development and public infrastructure loans.

- ◆ Operate a micro-loan program.
- ◆ Represent the interest of local business by promoting public policies that encourage economic development.
- ◆ Targeted industries for Skamania are Renewable Energy, High-Tech, Healthcare, Aerospace, and Wine.

Targeted Industry Clusters for the South Central Region include the following:

- ◆ Health and Medical Care Industry
- ◆ Industrial Supplies and Machinery
- ◆ Aerospace
- ◆ Logistics and Distribution
- ◆ Agriculture
- ◆ Business and Professional Services
- ◆ Tourism
- ◆ Wind Energy, Solar Energy, Geothermal Energy and Biomass

Connecting to the “Next Washington” - In addition to the regional connections described earlier in this section, the Council’s plan has embraced and adopted those principals outlined in Governor Gregoire’s “Next Washington” by promoting:

- ◆ Opportunities for post-secondary education and training through career counseling with youth, retraining where appropriate with dislocated worker populations, and pursuing cost sharing arrangements, scholarships and grants for those adults interested certificated and degreed programs that support **our Region’s Targeted Industry Cluster**.
- ◆ Opportunities for students who are the first in their family to attend college and especially to those at risk through dropout and school retention projects.
- ◆ Public-private partnerships that encourage academic achievement and skills training in high-demand fields through continued support of local skills panels and sector projects in health, food processing, manufacturing, construction, and Renewable Energy.
- ◆ Apprenticeship pilot projects offer students the opportunity to gain skills leading to family wage jobs in the construction and building trades through projects like K-12 Transitional Construction Math Project. This partnership between Renton Construction Center of Excellence and the Associated General Contractors Education Foundation created curriculum aligned with the WASL which is being made available to every school district in the state. Additionally the Construction Skill Panel oversaw the development of a website for the K-12 system to provide information

on local and statewide apprenticeship opportunities with the Building Trades.

- ◆ Working with Regional EDC's, Commissioners, training institutions and industry to identify training needs associated with Wind Energy, Geothermal Energy, Solar Power and Biomass. We anticipate that training institutions will develop curriculum that will be used to educate workers, both new and dislocated, so that they can quickly gain employment in these industries.

G. Work Readiness Credential - The ability to demonstrate work readiness has been expressed as an important employability skill from employers of the Workforce Area. In response, the Council has responded by facilitating the use of Work Keys in WorkSource Centers in Yakima County which has received favorable reviews by local employers. Additionally, the Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce is considering the use of the State Work Readiness Credential. The Chamber has hosted several meetings to evaluate the product and to determine if there is sufficient interest from partners and employers for Yakima County to serve as a pilot sight. The Council has pledged its support should partners of the area decide to move forward as a project area.

H. Entrepreneurial Training – The Council will work in coordination with the Workforce Training and Education Coordination Board, Small Business Advisory and Microenterprise Centers, and other appropriate state and local partner organizations to develop strategies that will ensure entrepreneurial training opportunities are offered through the WorkSource system.

SECTION VI PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

A. South Central WDA Performance System - The Council and WorkSource partners are dedicated to the delivery of quality services in Kittitas, Klickitat, Skamania, and Yakima Counties. To achieve high levels of performance the Council recognizes the need for clearly defined measures that identify the system's progress, and areas needing improvement. In development of local accountability measures, care was taken to consider the unique characteristics of the local area that directly influence performance outcomes.

The South Central Workforce System understands the importance of focusing on customers of the system, both job seekers, and the business community. In oversight of the local WorkSource system, the WorkSource Operators use continuous quality improvement models such as Simply Better to obtain customer feedback for improving core, intensive and training services,

identifying service gaps, and developing strategies to eliminate or resolve issues.

B. Data Collection and Reporting - To track local performance indicators the Council employs automated tracking systems and reports information that is consistent with federal and state requirements. Services, Knowledge, Information, Exchange System (SKIES) which is a comprehensive database system that interfaces with many other state agency data sources, provides as timely and accurate information as possible about the services and needs of our customers. SKIES supports the delivery of services across multiple programs by providing universal access to employment and training services in a WorkSource location. The WIA programs and other WorkSource partners enter core, intensive, training, and follow up services into SKIES according to state and local policy. The primary functions of SKIES are management information, performance information, labor exchange activities, and case management (plan and track customer services and needs).

WorkSource Centers provide customers with a *one-stop shopping experience* to find employment and training services and resources. Many WorkSource partners offer intensive and training services, but the overwhelming majority of residents who visit the WorkSource centers take advantage of the many *self-service* activities made available in our resource rooms and lobbies. While SKIES tracks performance and provides case management tools for customers receiving intensive and training services, our WorkSource system lacked a means to track the activities of these self-service customers. Recognizing this gap in reporting, in early 2001, the Council developed the WorkSource Membership System (WMS, originally called WorkSource Tracking System).

The WorkSource Membership System, which is an internet-based system, provides information about the self-service activities of our WorkSource customers, as they sign in, using their magnetically encoded membership card, and voluntarily reporting their activities. Other workforce areas in the state have since adopted the WMS system and now utilize this information to track core service activity; Council supports the integration of this tool with the SKIES system for more comprehensive data collection.

The Council firmly believes that good performance is a primary cornerstone to a credible system. To ensure the local workforce system is achieving acceptable levels the Council, at a minimum, requires contractors and WorkSource Operators to provide performance reports on a quarterly basis. Reports cover both those core indicators required, and as made available by the state as well as specific goals and performance outcomes tracked locally by the Council and WIA I-B contractors.

As the Council deems necessary, local, or state evaluative data such as employer or participant surveys are used as a supplement to evaluate the local workforce system. On going performance, reviews include the use of GMAP, WMS, and SKIES, tools to examine system effectiveness and progress toward goals. The Council, along with the other eleven Workforce areas in the state, is working to develop real time reporting information to achieve the common measure goals set by the Department of Labor.

C. Provider Eligibility - Procuring quality providers to deliver services is key to meet and/or exceed performance goals. The Council contracts with community based organizations and other entities to deliver the majority of WIA I-B services. The selection of service providers is based on a procurement procedure that complies with federal, state, and local procurement processes. The criteria for selection include:

- ◆ Business and organizational experience
- ◆ Fiscal accountability
- ◆ Price and reasonableness of cost
- ◆ Outcomes and program design
- ◆ Experience and qualifications of staff
- ◆ Technology capability
- ◆ Past performance
- ◆ Audit and monitoring reports
- ◆ Characteristics of participants
- ◆ Quality of training

The South Central geographical area is large with many small communities located throughout the region and distanced from major population centers. For residents of rural communities such as ours, technical schools, trade schools, four-year colleges and community college programs are not readily available and accessible. In a time when the work place is frequently changing and jobs require new skills, employers often require specialized training programs that are not available through local training institutions.

When a provider of training develops programs to address these needs and seeks WIA funding or the use of WIA Individualized Training Accounts, the training provider is required to make application to the Council for review and approval. Once approved, the Council will provide the state Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board in Olympia with the application. That application process must be completed for each program a training provider is petitioning to have approved for the Washington State Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). The state notifies the training provider and the local workforce Council, as well as lists all newly approved programs on the state website for access. The Workforce Training and Education

Coordinating Board reviews the ETPL annually. The criteria for approval include:

- ◆ Review of course content for appropriateness of skills needed in the local labor market.
- ◆ Review of instructional staff to ensure instructors are qualified to deliver the training.
- ◆ Review of tuition and fees to ensure that costs are reasonable.
- ◆ Review of the organization's past performance.
- ◆ Other criteria required by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.

D. Performance and Interventions - Performance information is utilized for ongoing review and adjustment of the system, as well as for strategic planning and program design. Current system requirements measure performance through the use of Common Measure Standards as defined by TEGE 17-05. Additional system performance measurements are set by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, the Employment Security Department, and the local Council.

Much of the data that is required to measure performance is delayed in the gathering, and not timely for use in continuous quality improvement, but is better used for final analysis of overall system effectiveness. Real time data is difficult to acquire, challenging local offices to create proxy measurements in order to gauge system effectiveness. The Council is able to utilize data from a wide variety of information systems, and uses all of this data to analyze the effectiveness of the system. The Council does collaborate with the Employment Security Department in the active review of GMAP reports that are focused on improving the results of the state agency outcomes.

In the delivery of WIA IB services through subcontracts, the Council reviews performance to monitor progress against federal and state core measures as well as those individual measures proposed and negotiated with the bidder. For each contract, the Council sets monthly benchmarks and a range for benchmark performance. In the event a contractor falls below the tolerances set by the Council, administrative staff will review the performance deficiencies to determine the appropriate action necessary for correction. If the findings are non-significant in nature, staff will inform the organization of the problem in writing and request a written response that details the actions that will be taken and timelines for correcting deficiencies. Should problems continue to exist or where the issues identified are substantial and significant, the Council, at its discretion, shall institute any one or a combination of the following actions:

1. Sanctions
2. Contract suspension
3. De-obligation of funds
4. Contract termination

The Council has historically recognized good performance of service providers in the system and will continue this practice. Incentives are made available to sub recipients when the Council has reached performance benchmarks set by the state that result in incentives to the local area, and when the sub recipient performance has, at the end of their contract period, met or exceeded the goals of their contract. Incentive funds are pro-rated to contractors of the system based on the proportionate share of services provided through their subcontract.

Being part of the larger state WIA, performance-based interventions are consistent and comply with the Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board Plan and subsequent policy.

E. Federal and State Performance Measures - The Department of Labor implemented a performance accountability system called Common Measures. The Common Measures create a single comprehensive system approach to promote service integration, establish uniform performance accountability, enhance program effectiveness, and measure success of the workforce development system. The Department sets the parameters as to what cohort, records, timeframes, and other information will be used in the calculation of performance under the Common Measures for WIA, Wagner Peyser, Veterans Employment and Training Service, Trade Adjustment Assistance, and WorkFirst Employment Services programs. The Council will continue to adhere to and support all federal and state policy as it relates to the Common Measures.

WIA Federal Performance: The following sections describe the methodologies and targets for federal performance for the WIA IB Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker Programs.

Participant and Employer Satisfaction Measure for Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker Programs: WIA I-B participants who have exited either from the Youth, Adult, Dislocated Worker programs are eligible to be selected for inclusion in a random-sample. Participants are asked three questions regarding their overall satisfaction with the services that they have received.

Employers who have received a substantial service are eligible to be selected for inclusion in the random sample. Employers are asked three questions regarding overall satisfaction with the services that they have received.

Federal Satisfaction Targets for WIA Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker Programs:

*The weighted average ratings on each of the 3 questions regarding overall satisfaction reported on a 0-100 scale.

	Employer Satisfaction*	Participant Satisfaction*
Year 7	69.5%	75.5%

Common Measures for Youth - The methodology for calculating the Common Measures for the Youth program is as follows:

Placement in Employment or Education: Of those who are not in post-secondary education, employment, military at the date of participation: The number of participants who are employed, in the military, enrolled in post-secondary education, and/or advanced training/occupational skills training in the first quarter after exit divided by the number of participants who exit during the quarter.

Attainment of a Degree or Certificate: Of those enrolled in education (at the date of participation or at any point during the program) - the number of participants who attain a diploma, GED, or certificate by the end of the third quarter, after the exit quarter, divided by the number of participants who exit during the quarter.

Literacy and Numeracy Gains: Of those out-of-school youth who are basic skills deficient - the number of participants who increase one or more educational functioning levels, divided by the number of participants who have completed a year in the program (i.e., one year from the date of first youth program service), plus the number of participants who exit before completing a year in the youth program.

Federal Measures for WIA Youth Programs until WIA Reauthorization

Youth Federal Definitions - Older Youth Entered Employment: Of those who are not employed at registration (excluding those who are not employed in the first quarter after exit, but are enrolled in post-secondary education or advanced training in the first quarter after exit): Number of older youth who have entered employment by the end of the first quarter after exit divided by the number of older youth who exit during the quarter.

Older Youth Employment Retention - Of those who are employed in the first quarter after exit (excluding those who are not employed in the third quarter after exit, but are enrolled in post-secondary education or advanced training in the third quarter after exit): (regardless of status at registration) Number

of older youth who are employed in the third quarter after exit divided by the number of older youth who exit during the quarter.

Older Youth Average Earnings Change - Of those who are employed in the first quarter after exit (excluding those who are not employed in the third quarter after exit, but who are enrolled in post-secondary education or advanced training in the third quarter after exit) - total post-program earnings (quarter 2 plus quarter 3 after exit), minus pre-program earnings (quarter 2 plus quarter 3 prior to registration), divided by the number of older youth who exit during the quarter.

Older Youth Credential/Certificate - Number of older youth participants who are either employed, in post-secondary education, in advanced training, or in occupational skills training in the first quarter, after the exit quarter and received a credential/certificate by the end of the third quarter, after the exit quarter divided, by the number of older youth participants who exit during the quarter.

The use of the definition of *certificate* is applicable for participants who begin receiving services on or after July 1, 2006. Older youth participants who received services prior to July 1, 2006 are covered under the previous requirements.

The use of the definition of *advanced training/occupational skills training* is effective on July 1, 2006. Youth participants who received services prior to July 1, 2006 are covered under the previous requirements.

Younger Youth Skill Gains - Of all in-school youth and any out-of-school youth assessed to be in need of basic skills, work readiness skills, and/or occupational skills - total of number attained basic skills goals, plus number attained work readiness skills goals, plus number attained occupational skills goals, divided by total number of basic skills goals, plus number of work readiness skills goals, plus number of occupational skills goals.

Younger Youth Diploma or Equivalent Attainment - Of those who register without a diploma or equivalent - The number of younger youth who attained secondary school diploma or equivalent by the end of the first quarter after exit, divided by the number of younger youth who exit during the quarter (except those still in secondary school at exit).

Younger Youth Retention: The number of younger youth found in one of the following in the 3rd quarter after exit (post-secondary education, advanced training, employment, military service, qualified apprenticeships), divided by the number of younger youth who exit during the quarter (exclude those still in secondary school at exit).

Youth Federal Targets for Performance Year 7

	Older Youth Entered Employment	Older Youth Retention	Older Youth Earnings	Older Youth Credential	Younger Youth Skill Gains	Younger Youth Diploma	Younger Youth Retention
Year 7	77.6%	83.7%	\$2,737	64.2%	87.0%	61.8%	72.2%

Common Measures for Adult and Dislocated Worker - The methodology for calculating the Common Measures for the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs are as follows:

- ◆ *Entered Employment* - Of those who are not employed at the date of participation - the number of adult performance participants who are employed in the first quarter, after the exit quarter, divided by the number of adult performance participants who exit during the quarter.
- ◆ *Employment Retention* - Of those who are employed in the first quarter after exit - the number of adult program performance participants who are employed in both the second and third quarters, after the exit quarter, divided by the number of adult performance participants who exit during the quarter. This measure includes only those Adults and Dislocated Workers who were not are employed in the first quarter after the exit quarter (regardless of their employment status at participation).
- ◆ *Average Earnings* - of those adult program performance participants who are employed in the first, second, and third quarters after the exit quarter: Total earnings in the second quarter, plus total earnings in the third quarters after the exit quarter, divided by the number of adult program performance participants who exit during the quarter. Customers not employed in the first quarter after exit, are excluded from this measure.
- ◆ *Credentials* - Credentials have been redefined with the Common Measures. The new definition does not include On the Job Training (OJT) for the federal performance measure. It is important to note, however, that the change in definition will apply to WIA participants who enroll in training service on or after July 1, 2006. Any participant whose training began prior to July 1, 2006 would still operate until the Credential definition prior to the Common Measures. When WIA is reauthorized, the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs will no longer be held to the federal credential performance measure.

- ◆ *Credential for training prior to July 1, 2006* – Credential of Adults or Dislocated Workers who received training services: The number of Adult or Dislocated Worker program performance participants who were employed in the first quarter after exit and received a credential by the end of the third quarter after exit, divided by the number of adult and dislocated worker program performance participants who exited during the quarter.
- ◆ *Credential for training on or after July 1, 2006 - Attainment of a Degree or Certificate* - Of those enrolled in education (at the date of participation or at any point during the program) - The number of Adults or Dislocated Workers who attain a diploma, GED, or certificate by the end of the third quarter after exit, divided by the number of participants who exit during the quarter.

Adult Federal Targets for Performance Year 7

	Adult Entered Employment	Adult Retention	Adult Earnings	Adult Credential
Year 7	79.7%	80.9%	\$9,685	69.8%

Dislocated Worker Federal Targets for Performance Year 7

	DW Entered Employment	DW Retention	DW Earnings	DW Credential
Year 7	82.3%	88.9%	\$15,310	72.4%

WIA State Performance Measures - The following sections describe the methodologies and targets for state performance for the WIA IB Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker Programs.

Youth State Definitions - Participant Satisfaction: Of those youth who exited and responded to the survey in the 3rd quarter after exit, divided by the number of respondents very satisfied or somewhat satisfied, divided by number of respondents.

Education Attainment - All youth age 17 or older (at exit) who exit the program and received a credential within three quarters after exit, divided by all youth age 17 or older (at exit) who exit the program.

Employment or Further Education - All youth who are employed in quarter 3 after exit, in post secondary education in the 3rd quarter after exit, or in secondary school at exit divided by all youth who exit the program.

Median Earnings - Determine the median quarterly wage of all participants exited with earnings in the 3rd quarter after exit. Annualize the quarterly median wage by multiplying times 4. Include all youth who exit the program and have earnings in the 3rd quarter after exit (except those in post secondary school with earnings).

Youth State Targets for Performance Year 7 -	Participant Satisfaction	Educational Attainment	Employment or Further Education	Median Earnings
Year 7	95.0%	73.3%	76.6%	\$11,145

Adult State Definitions - Participant Satisfaction - Satisfaction rate is based on State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board phone survey using a sample drawn from all adults who exit the program. The following two questions are asked, 1.) To what extent did you meet your educational objectives as a result of your enrollment? 2.) Overall, would you say you were *very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied* with the training program?

Employment - All adults who exit the program, regardless of their employment status at participation, and are not enrolled in school in the third quarter after exit, divided by all adults who exit the program.

Earnings - Rank earnings for those people who exit the program who have earnings in the third quarter after exit, rank earnings from highest to lowest, and determine median quarterly earnings. Annualize the quarterly median wage by multiplying times four.

Credential - All adults who exit the program, divided by the number who attained a credential within three quarters after exit.

Adult State Targets for Performance Year 7

	Participant Satisfaction	Adult Employment	Adult Earnings	Adult Credential
Year 7	90.0%	75.8%	\$16,118	63.4%

Dislocated Worker State Definitions - Participant Satisfaction - Satisfaction rate is based on a State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board phone survey, using a sample drawn from all adults who exit the

program. The following two questions are asked, 1.) To what extent did you meet your educational objectives as a result of your enrollment? 2.) Overall, would you say you were *very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied* with the training program?

Employment - the percent of adults employed third quarter after exit - All adults who exit the program regardless of their employment status at registration, and are not enrolled in school in the third quarter after exit, divided by all adults who exit the program.

Earnings - Rank earnings for those people who exit the program, who have earnings in the third quarter after exit - rank earnings from highest to lowest and determine median quarterly earnings. Annualize the quarterly median wage by multiplying times 4.

Credential - All adults who exit the program, divided by the number who attained a credential within three quarters after exit. Credentials are identified by administrative records and cross-matches with community & technical college records, high school, private career school data, and approved apprenticeship programs.

Dislocated Worker State Targets for Performance Year 7

	DW Participant Satisfaction	DW Employment	DW Earnings	DW Credential
Year 7	89.5%	81.0%	\$25,882	68.5%

Performance Years 8 and 9 - At this time, performance targets for WIA IB Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker programs for Performance Years 8 and 9 have not been negotiated between the state and the local area. Once targets have been negotiated, they will be included as part of this Strategic Plan.

**SECTION VII
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES**

MISSION STATEMENT - Establish, maintain, and improve a customer driven workforce system to increase skills, employment, job retention, and earnings resulting in a quality workforce, enhanced productivity, and profitability of Workforce Area businesses.

A. Planning Process - The Council’s Strategic and Operations plans were developed under the supervision of the Council. The Council meets annually in a retreat setting to discuss each years focus and to review the current plan

goals for updating and validation. Extra effort has been made to ensure the community, workforce partners and other stakeholders were provided opportunity to review, provide input and comment on the plan.

The Council also recognized that while many community comments have been valuable and relevant to the positive development of the workforce system, some community recommendations fell outside the purview of the policy body, others were more characteristic of the philosophies that need to be maintained to create an equitable system and one that supports other systems connecting to workforce development. All comments and recommendations have been considered important and have been incorporated as operating standards and principles for the system.

- ◆ The local workforce system must value, support, and work cooperatively with the K-12 education system.
- ◆ The Council and the partners of the workforce system must work cooperatively with, encourage, and support schools in the development or modification of curricula that teaches workplace skills and in the development of individual career plans for all youth. Further, the Council will support state education reform through the four essential learning goals and development of a certificate of mastery.
- ◆ The Council must value the pursuit of vocational and/or technical training in high schools. The Council also supports students seeking immediate entrance to the labor market to pursue vocational or technical studies, and training through technical schools and apprenticeship training programs.
- ◆ The Council must maintain a strong priority and commitment to post secondary training and communicate to local schools the need for challenging and demanding courses that will prepare them for entrance into post secondary programs.
- ◆ The Council supports efficiencies in the use of public dollars and time investments of students. The Council will support programs, such as Running Start, Two = Two academic degrees, and other community college courses for the double efficiency they offer in completing high school graduation credits and college credits concurrently. This also includes efficiencies in education for all students by encouraging workforce organizations and education to coordinate among schools, adult basic education, and English as a second language programs.
- ◆ Services to young people need to be holistic. Assessments should consider the needs of students and families. When providing services, system staff

needs to recognize the changing family life styles such as job relocation and the demands placed on seasonal work and farm worker families and support communities in their efforts to address childcare needs and parenting skills.

- ◆ The Council must be proactive in making positive change at a local and on a state level. This will take the form of direct communication with the state legislature to encourage support of local funding for economic development, education and other programs.
- ◆ The Council will operate in a manner that seeks and promotes full participation from community groups, including the disenfranchised, community-based organizations, the faith-based community, labor, employees, and employers through on-going and as-needed focus groups. Council members on a regular basis will meet with respective constituencies and report on workforce activities.
- ◆ The Council will develop a close alliance with economic development agencies to promote a diverse economic base that provides vertical (value-added) and horizontal integration. The Council will continue to encourage and provide support in the development and promotion of customer service training to the local workforce system including training in serving target populations.
- ◆ The Council celebrates the diversity of our communities and encourages the Workforce Council and the WorkSource system to reflect the diversity of the community.

B. Workforce Priorities - The following workforce priorities established for the Workforce Area have been identified by the Council and other leaders from business, K-12 and post-secondary education, labor, economic development agencies, community based organizations, and local government. These priorities include, but are not limited to the following:

- ◆ Develop and implement services that improve worker productivity and employer satisfaction.
- ◆ Develop and implement programs that target development of challenging jobs that provide workers with opportunity for career and economic growth.
- ◆ Connect and work in partnership with the K-12 education system. Emphasis should be placed on supporting the Washington State four essential learning goals and the development of skills that are applicable to the workplace. Additional emphasis should be placed on connecting the

work of the skill panels to the K-12 system for development of pathways and curriculum to provide prerequisites for the various pathways.

- ◆ Be inclusive, recognizing the rich diversity of the region and creating non-traditional employment opportunities for people of color, under-represented genders, and people with disabilities.
- ◆ Be proactive in efforts to retain businesses including designing a program around the common needs identified by the South Central Skill Panels (Manufacturing, Healthcare, Ag/Food Processing, Construction Industry) for both short-term benefits and long-term positioning that improve efficiency through incumbent worker skill upgrades.
- ◆ Continue implementing the strategy of training incumbent workers since that practice upgrades worker skills, averts layoffs, increases earnings, achieves promotions, and allows for cross-industry recognized credentials—all aspects helping industry to stay healthy.

C. Goals of the South Central Workforce Development Area - Annually the Workforce Council examines the worker and business needs of the local area and establishes the priorities of the local workforce system. The Council carefully considers comments received through the community planning process as well as the priorities set forth in the governor's executive order and those articulated by the State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. In most cases, they found all shared a common theme. That is, workforce programs needed to:

- ◆ Build a strong partnerships with education - K-12, post-secondary, technical colleges and other workforce organizations
- ◆ Strengthen worker readiness through education, work maturity, and job skills
- ◆ Include full participation of all residents of the area
- ◆ Focus on significant worker populations (youth, adults in transition, dislocated workers, public assistance recipients and incumbent workers)
- ◆ Connect workforce training with economic development to retain and promote economic growth

To achieve the aforementioned, the Council has set forth the following goals and objectives:

Goal 1: Improve the quality of education in all local area school districts through collaboration with business to prepare youth for entry into the workforce.

Objective A - Strengthen the connection between school and the workplace.

Strategies:

1. Establish a clearinghouse of workforce learning materials available to the South Central region to support education.
2. Recruit and maintain a pool of employers (business people) who can serve as resource speakers and instructors for job readiness classes.
3. Develop labor-business advisory committees to serve as a resource to local educators in the development of curricula, classes, and programs that utilize contextual, applied, and work-based learning opportunities.
4. Develop a database of employers who will provide first hand work based learning experience to youth through internships, work experience, and job shadowing.
5. Establish teacher internships to keep educators abreast of the skills needed in the workplace.

Objective B - Develop programs that will help all students, including dropouts and students at risk, succeed.

Strategies:

1. Develop programs and organize efforts to assist dropout students with school reentry to achieve a high school diploma or access alternative education opportunities for GED completion including effective after hour school and summer programs.
2. Develop programs that focus on development of basic education skills for high mobility students, migrant students and students of farm families.
3. Develop tutoring programs that will assist students in mastering reading, writing, and math skills.
4. Develop employer mentoring/counseling programs to help dropout youth understand their employment potential.

5. Link *second-chance* programs for youth who are out-of school with the *first-chance* system for youth who are in school.

Goal 2: Prepare adults in transition (TANF, disadvantaged adults, dislocated workers, and older workers) for successful participation in the workforce.

Objective A - Prepare TANF parents (including non-custodial parents) with the skills needed for entrance to the labor market, and the ability to find and retain employment to achieve self-sufficiency.

Strategies:

1. Provide the full range of services to TANF parents through the WorkSource (One-Stop) system with WorkFirst employment services joining the WorkSource system as a full partner described in local Resource Sharing Agreements and Memorandum of Understandings.
2. Increase capacity and access to services in rural WorkSource Centers through the use of technology.
3. For those seeking self-sufficiency, expand access to and provide the necessary intensive services as appropriate, to include childcare assistance, transportation, substance abuse counseling and other services that will remove barriers to employment.
4. Focus services on retention of jobs and wage progression.
5. Integrate the Kittitas, Klickitat, Skamania and Yakima WorkFirst Local Planning Area strategic plans with the local workforce development system.

Objective B - Prepare disadvantaged adults with the skills needed to find and retain employment to achieve self-sufficiency.

Strategies:

1. Provide the full range of services to disadvantaged adult workers through the WorkSource (One-Stop) system.
2. For those seeking self-sufficiency, expand access to and provide the necessary intensive services as appropriate, to include childcare assistance, transportation, substance abuse counseling, and other services that will remove barriers to employment.
3. Focus services on retention of jobs and wage progression.

4. Increase access and opportunities in basic skills and English as a second language instruction.
5. Offer incentives to employers for hiring and training low-income workers.

Objective C - Prepare workers age 55 years and older with employment and training opportunities to find and retain employment to achieve self-sufficiency.

Strategies:

1. Provide the full range of services to workers age 55 years and older through the WorkSource (One-Stop) system.
2. Provide information to businesses and employers on the advantages of employing mature workers.
3. Offer incentives to employers for hiring and training older workers to increase employment and training opportunities.
4. Provide training programs at times and locations that are accessible and provide mature workers opportunity to learn new skills.

Objective D - Provide services that will assist dislocated workers in finding and retaining employment at a comparable wage prior to dislocation.

Strategies:

1. Provide the full range of services to dislocated workers through the WorkSource (One-Stop) system.
2. Continue exemplary best practices such as rapid response involving partners from public service employment, the community college, and labor.
3. Prioritize return to work at comparable wages in as short a time as possible.

Goal 3: Expand and retain the present economic base and promote future business growth through the development of a well-trained workforce.

Objective A - Provide opportunities for incumbent workers to further their education in job-related skills or education beyond basic levels.

Strategies:

1. Work with business leaders to create career, labor market information, and financial assistance information for incumbent workers to facilitate education, training, and career choices.
2. Work with employers to identify and to provide in-house training that is cost-effective to the employer.
3. Develop incumbent worker training that builds skills for entry-level employees to move to higher skilled jobs within businesses.

Objective B - Create private-public partnerships to enable individuals to move up job and career ladders throughout their lives.

Strategies:

1. Develop and support industry skill cluster panels to assess emerging and declining skill needs for development of training programs to meet those needs.
2. Develop secondary vocational-technical program standards linked to industry skill standards while working with the labor-business and education committees.

Objective C - Implement workforce services and programs that enhance business development, expansion, and retention.

Strategies:

1. Work in partnership with economic development organizations in attracting businesses to the area or assisting in new business start-ups through services and incentives provided by the workforce system.
2. Assist at-risk businesses with employment, training, and education programs that develop the skills of their workers.
3. Support business retention, expansion, and new location by providing comprehensive, worker training support services to meet employer's training needs.

Goal 4: Improve access to and quality of workforce training and employment programs to meet existing and future business needs.

Objective A - Encourage and provide opportunity for all groups to work together, share a common vision, and to be part of policy and decision-making.

Strategies:

1. Conduct extensive recruitment through outreach to organizations representing groups with significant memberships having limited English proficiency, by advertising outreach programs to targeted communities, via newspapers, radio and TV, and Spanish radio for limited English-speaking listeners.
2. Remove physical or artificial barriers and disincentives for people with disability, and other populations with unique obstacles to employment.
3. Develop and implement public informational campaigns that educate the community on the importance of workforce preparation.

Objective B - Increase the capacity of high schools, community and technical colleges, universities and apprenticeship programs to provide high quality workforce education and training programs.

Strategies:

1. Partner with industries to provide facilities, faculty, and equipment in high wage, high demand fields such as healthcare, construction trades, information technology, and communications, working with education and labor-business committees.
2. Expand apprenticeship training to non-traditional fields and expand pre-apprenticeship programs.
3. Seek and replicate best practices in all institutions through vocational and technical education. Provide assistance, if necessary, to educational institutions in the South Central region.

APPENDIX A

Public Input for the 2007-2009 Strategic Plan - The Council strongly believes that workforce system partners and local community members must be an active part of the local workforce system if we are to create a local plan both operationally and strategically that will promote a skilled workforce and support business of the local area. To ensure full participation, the Council and WorkSource Leads conducted the following activities:

Public forums were conducted in all counties of the WDA IX. Public notifications (noting the time and place) of the forums were placed in the primary newspapers of the counties and flyers/notices were sent to WorkSource partner organizations and other community organizations vested in local workforce programs. Additionally, each WorkSource lead has communicated directly with partners and has provided them direct opportunity for input through email or partner meetings held in each WorkSource Center site. The public forums were held at the following locations and sites listed below:

County	Location	Date and Time
Yakima	WorkSource Sunnyside 1925 Morgan Road Sunnyside, Washington	February 15, 2007 2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Yakima	South Central WDC 120 South 3rd Street Yakima, WA 98901	February 15, 2007 4:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.
County	Location	Date and Time
Kittitas	WorkSource Ellensburg 412 North Main Street Ellensburg, Washington 98926	February 16, 2007 4:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.
Klickitat	WorkSource Columbia Gorge 107 West Jewett Blvd. White Salmon, Washington	February 20, 2007 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Skamania	WorkSource Stevenson 704 SW Rock Creek Drive Stevenson, Washington	February 20, 2007 3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

In addition to sending an electronic notification to the Council public mailing list, notices have been placed in local newspapers, encouraging the public to review the draft Strategic Plan during the 30 days public review (April 1, 2007 – April 30, 2007) and provide comments back to the Council.

The South Central Workforce Development Council will attach the Performance Year 10 WIA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth performance targets to the Strategic Plan when they become available during spring 2009.