



Governor's Awards
for Best Practices in
Workforce Development
2005

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in Workforce Development 2005
Award Winners and Nominees

Each year, the Governor and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) honor those who excel in the workforce development system. The Best Practices Awards highlight partnerships that demonstrate leadership, creativity and innovation, and opportunities for replication. They recognize the leaders whose initiatives have influenced constructive change in the workforce development system in their communities. These examples are celebrated to encourage excellence in the workforce development system.

This year, the Workforce Board received 22 nominations for Best Practices from its board members and the state's 12 workforce development councils. A committee reviewed the nominations and selected six for recognition at *Workforce Strategies 2005: Partnering for Strong Communities*.



Best Practice

Educational Service District 112 Youth Workforce Program Career Academies: A Team Approach to Occupational Skills Training for Youth

The Youth Workforce Program (YWP), which serves approximately 700 youth in Clark, Cowlitz, Wahkiakum, and Skamania Counties, was experiencing poor completion rates among its participants. Work experiences did not seem to have much educational content, nor did they lead to continuing education or employment in that field. Employers also reported multiple problems and frustrations.

To redress these concerns, YWP staff began by reviewing the program and analyzing data. They worked closely with the Workforce Development Council to identify high-wage potential positions and/or the availability of jobs in the community suitable for youth. In summer 2003, they launched Career Academies in Construction, Health Care, Early Learning, and Environmental Science. Each academy served 10 youth and lasted 8 weeks. One day of each week participants joined their academy team for practical training suitable for their field and toured related businesses. They took classes on developing good interpersonal and workplace skills and also engaged in team building activities such as high ropes challenge courses. YWP staff also worked closely with

businesses to ensure they had adequate support, offered one-on-one training and provided supervisor handbooks and mediation services.

At the conclusion of the first set of academies, YWP had a 95 percent completion rate. Further, each successful youth attained at least three of his/her goals and received a positive employer evaluation.

The program has since expanded into eight different career academies and now includes math, science, and literacy components, as well as classes that help youth understand how to work well with others. Employers now report a 90 percent satisfaction rate with YWP services.

Other Workforce Investment Act youth providers have expressed interest in the academy model; the concept was presented at the 2004 National Association of Workforce Boards conference in Washington DC.

Educational Service District 112 Youth Workforce Program Career Academies Partners

Educational Service District 112
Southwest Washington Workforce
Development Council

For additional information, contact
Lisa Nisenfeld, 360.567.1073.



Best Practice

Literacy Works

While most workers with limited English proficiency want to improve their English so they can move up in their jobs, they have difficulty fitting classes in between work and family. Meanwhile, employers experience difficulty in addressing the language barriers that cause misunderstandings and mistakes.

Literacy Works solves both problems at once. A flexible, intensive, and tailor-made program, Literacy Works began in 2002. The Strategic Planning Committee of the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County recognized an increase in its immigrant and refugee populations and a need to assist these groups to move out of entry-level jobs. The result was a partnership with three faith-based or community-based organizations that developed a program open to all workers with limited English proficiency employed in small- and medium-sized companies.

A Literacy Works partner agency worked closely with the participating employer to develop a class schedule (usually six to eight weeks, two or three times per week) and curriculum. Each employer agreed to provide on-site class space and to match 50 percent of

the cost of the program by providing release time for their employees and other contributions such as materials, bonuses, or free lunches. Since 2002, more than 31 companies and 400 workers have participated.

In just six to eight weeks, companies noted benefits such as an increase in morale and communication and reduced absenteeism. One manufacturing company reported an estimated \$20,000 in increased productivity. Six months after the end of class, eighty-six percent of participants were still employed at their company, and sixty percent had received a pay raise.

Literacy Works Partners

Asian Counseling and Referral Service

Jewish Family Service

Refugee Resettlement Office of the
Episcopal Diocese

Workforce Development Council of
Seattle-King County

For additional information, contact
Margret Graham, 206.448.0474.



Best Practice

Olympic Academic Intervention Project

The Olympic Workforce Development Council identified reducing the high school dropout rate and developing local community-school partnerships as a priority in its strategic plan.

The region had five school districts that were not meeting the 73 percent high school graduation rate required of them to be making “adequate yearly progress” under the provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act. How could they change that? They built partnerships between Workforce Investment Act (WIA) youth providers and educational institutions. They also established the Olympic Academic Intervention Project that not only expanded the capacity of existing dropout programs (by improving communication and student retrieval), but also offered disadvantaged youth services they would not normally receive.

Acting as a liaison among school staff, the student and his/her family or guardian, and the WIA youth counselors in the area, trained Academic Intervention Specialists established relationships with the students. They assisted students in reconnecting with school in the traditional setting, an alternative school, or the local community college. Working closely with students and the school, the Specialist assessed the students’ current academic standing, the number of credits needed to graduate, and the options available to help them do so. The

Specialist then assisted the youth in making the necessary contacts to accomplish this goal and maintained contact on a regular basis with all concerned to monitor progress.

The partners expected the close collaboration among students, Specialists, and school staff to work. They did not anticipate these results! Between October 2004 and March 2005, the project retrieved 15 dropouts; 5 more than expected. Students earned 92 credits exceeding the 20 projected. A total of 47 students were on track to receive their diplomas on time—3 times the target!

Olympic Academic Intervention Project Partners

Bremerton School District

Chimacum School District

Northwest Services Council

Olympic Educational Service District 114

Olympic Workforce Development Council

Olympic Workforce Development Youth Council

Port Angeles School District

Quillayute Valley School District

South Kitsap School District

For additional information, contact Steve Frazier, 360.337.7187, ext 3526.



Best Practice

Rural Nurse Training

It is not a secret that rural health care employers have greater difficulty recruiting nurses than those in urban settings. The easiest and most compelling solution to this problem is to train local residents, but this is hard to do if the community lacks a nursing program. The Eastern Washington Partnership Health Care Skill Panel changed that by developing a nursing program through the Community Colleges of Spokane's Institute for Extended Learning Center in Colville.

In January 2004, the Skill Panel identified the necessary steps to start the program. They located funds to outfit an anatomy and physiology lab at the college. With the help of employers on the Skill Panel, they matched the Workforce Development Council's contribution to provide the college with the \$45,000 needed to purchase lab equipment. By mid-May, the Skill Panel had "buy-in" from Spokane Community College to bring its licensed practical nursing (LPN) program to Colville that fall. Meanwhile, the Institute for Extended Learning received a rural development grant from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to fund an LPN program in Colville.

The first anatomy and physiology courses started at the Colville Center in September 2004, and the LPN program began in April of this year. Eighteen students are now in their third quarter of the program.

The LPN training in Colville answered both a community as well as a participant need. Students no longer have to commute 70 miles to Spokane or move out of the area to enroll in nurse training. Employers are encouraged by the prospect of having an expanded pool of skilled employees.

Rural Nurse Training Partners

Community Colleges of Spokane Institute for Extended Learning

Eastern Washington Partnership

Ferry County Public Hospital District #1

Mount Carmel Hospital

Pinewood Terrace Nursing Center

Spokane Community College

Tri-County Economic Development District

United Food and Commercial Workers, Local 1001

For additional information, contact Tom O'Brien, 509.685.6129.



Best Practice

Everett Community College EAGER Program

Last year, 33 percent of the TANF population in North Snohomish County (900 out of 2,700 participants) lacked either a high school diploma or a GED. How would they ever move into higher paying jobs? Clearly the workforce community needed a new approach, a different way of looking at an old problem.

Working together, the North Snohomish office of the Department of Social and Health Services, as well as WorkFirst offices at the Department of Employment Security and Everett Community College developed the Entry, Assessment, GED, Employment, and Retention Program or EAGER for short. Its goal was to improve employment opportunities for TANF clients without a high school diploma by offering intensive GED preparation. If the employment outcomes could be positively affected by getting the GED, this strategy could be incorporated into college WorkFirst programs on an on-going basis.

Authorized to divert WorkFirst funds for a one-year pilot program, the partners developed a curriculum and found teachers and classrooms. Then they identified a group of 110 TANF recipients who needed a GED to find a better job or gain access to further education. When the pilot ended this June, 75 participants had received their

GED, which represented a 68 percent success rate, and 55 percent had found employment one quarter after completing their program.

The response from TANF recipients was overwhelmingly positive: without the program, they would never have received a GED. In addition, the attention and support they received from their instructors has spurred them on to further success.

Everett Community College EAGER Program Partners

Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development

Employment Security Department

Everett Community College

Everett Community Service Office (DSHS/WorkFirst)

Sky Valley Community Service Office

Smokey Point Community Service Office

Snohomish County Workforce Development Council

Washington State Office of Financial Management

For additional information, contact Marilyn Abrahamson, 425.760.5475.



Best Practice

Welding Rodeo and Boot Camp—Enhancing Recruitment and Expanding Enrollment

Highly qualified, certified welders are critical to Northwest Washington's economic vitality. They form an essential element of the workforce and are required by a cluster of industries such as refineries, power plants, metal fabricators, marine building and repair companies, and heavy construction.

Keeping up with the increasing need for certified welders is a challenge since there are more jobs than colleges can fill, and high schools are discontinuing programs. Faculty, who would like to introduce students to welding, rarely are certified welders and consequently are challenged by the standards of this profession. Added to these challenges is a public that generally does not realize the career opportunities for welders or understand what the profession does and the skills and metallurgy theory required.

Bellingham Technical College came up with two solutions: the Welding Instructors' Boot Camp and the Welding Rodeo. The Boot Camp is part of an overall high school faculty skill upgrade institute. It enables high school faculty to learn industry standards and find out more about career opportunities. It also helps them develop welding curriculum so that high school students can jump start their welding education with college credits through Tech-Prep.

The Welding Rodeo is much like a cattle rodeo. It has competitions, prizes, vendor shows, and offers fun for everyone. The Welding Advisory Committee is a major supporter of the event, and local industry is highly involved as sponsors and participants. This year's rodeo attracted 22 four-member welding teams from state high schools, two-year colleges, and professional welders, as well as a welding faculty team from Denmark! More than 1,500 members of the general public came to watch the competitions, the highlight of which was a sculpture competition (six hours from scrap pile to completed project). These sculptures were later auctioned for scholarships and to support the annual event.

Welding Rodeo and Boot Camp— Enhancing Recruitment and Expanding Enrollment Partners

Bellingham Technical College

BP Cherry Point Refinery

Central Welding Supplies

Northwest Workforce Development Council

For additional information, contact Satpal Sidhu or Patricia McKeown, 360.752.8323.



Best Practice Nominees

Below are brief descriptions of the other 16 nominees for the Governor's Workforce 2005 Best Practices Awards.

Advanced Manufacturing/Machining Pathways Initiative provides 9th–12th graders in the Snohomish School District with expanded educational opportunities, integrating school with job training in a cluster of high-wage careers. Initiated by a local businessman and community leader, the program's focal point is a state-of-the-art computer assisted design and precision machining laboratory at Snohomish High School funded by industry, education, the workforce investment system, and private foundations. For additional information, contact Mary Jane Vujovic, 425.921.3405.

Bridge to Health Careers provides English as a Second Language and Basic Skills classes in a health care environment. Tutoring, peer mentoring, and educational advising are available, as is job shadowing, co-op learning, and internships. For additional information, contact Alex Kosmides, 360.676.3207.

Career Pathways met the challenge of limited career ladders in health care by combining funds from nine separate funding streams to provide career planning, training subsidies, and

additional training to incumbent workers at hospitals throughout King County. WorkSource career specialists, stationed in six participating hospitals, offer career options and training subsidy information to all interested employees. For additional information, contact Margret Graham, 206.448.0474.

Composite Fabrication Upgrade Training for Janicki Industries provided a local manufacturer with industry-specific training. Current employees (more than 100 at Janicki Industries), as well as future workers the company expects to hire as a result of an increase in global contract work, received training in technology and safety. Since a quarter of Janicki's workforce is Hispanic, Skagit Valley College also includes classes in English as a Second Language. For additional information, contact Michele Koci, 360.416.7729.

Destination Health Care is a novel extension of the summer youth health camps. Partners developed three, two and a half day workshops at which high school students work in teams to solve a foreign country's real world health care crisis. Reference materials provide background information, and students work through and learn about various health care occupations as they address their country's problem. For additional information, contact Riva Morgan, 509.682.6847.

Disability Navigator helps customers with disabilities to improve their access to WorkSource and Workforce Investment Act programs. WorkSource staff receives training on assistive technology and how to serve people with disabilities. An array of job placement activities range from resume writing to interviewing techniques. For additional information, contact Pattie Stoneman-Lowe, 206.310.8982 (cell).

Extreme Makeover: Governance to Delivery changed the way the Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council (WDC) and its partners work. The WDC provides strategic directions, policy, and accountability. Its services are competitively bid out, resulting in gains in productivity for the WorkSource Centers in the region. For additional information, contact Lisa Nisenfeld, 360.567.1073.

Linking Second Language Learners With Workforce Training provides English as a Second Language classes in a workforce training environment. Instead of just learning English, students now learn the language in conjunction with a high-demand occupation, thereby increasing their employment prospects. The training program includes an industry-recognized credential. For additional information, contact Paula Norby, 253.566.5132.

Lower Columbia College Nursing and Allied Health Program changed the college's approach to nursing education by optimizing the use of its facilities and

faculty and cooperating with local health care organizations to increase capacity. Initiatives include evening classes for first-year nursing students, online instruction, close collaboration with WorkSource, and nursing assistant courses for Hispanic students. For additional information, contact Helen Kuebel, 360.442.2861.

Nurses for Tomorrow is a collaborative effort to address the health care crisis in central Washington. Partners raised more than \$2.1 million to expand Wenatchee Valley Community College's nursing program capacity by 36 seats every two years, provided funds for a pre-design study of a multiuse building to house a nursing program, purchased new equipment, and provided nursing commitment scholarships for 50 students over the next 10 years. For additional information, contact Marcia Henkle, 509.682.6615.

Olympic Health Care Alliance: A Nontraditional Industry Skill Panel used technology to address member logistics and increase productivity. The health care skill panel has no face-to-face meetings unless necessary; instead they use Interactive Television (average six times annually). There is no chair or officer structure, and communication is primarily by e-mail. The result is a more engaged, productive, and efficient skill panel. For additional information, contact Steve Fraizer, 360.337.7185, ext. 3526.

Pizza, Pop, and Power Tools is a marketing effort to raise awareness of young women in Spokane about the opportunities in the construction trades. A snappy title, brightly colored invitations, people in future careers they can relate to, hands-on experience, a fun and informative film, and food helped make this event a success. For additional information, contact Katherine Proff, 509.533.4716.

Road to Work helps people with disabilities use the services of WorkSource, thereby increasing their opportunities for employment. Working collaboratively, the Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council, five local transit systems, and WorkSource partners developed a multimedia presentation that highlights transit services in their communities. The presentations include PowerPoint slides and videos with photographs and sound tracks plus detailed instructions for taking the bus to visit WorkSource offices. For additional information, contact Lu Jewell, 360.786.5586.

The NET: Alternatives for Education and Training is a program that helps at-risk students stay in school while leveraging Basic Education Act dollars that otherwise would be lost. Patterned after an education clinic model, it offers students and entry-level workers an opportunity to obtain core skills in their chosen career pathway while receiving instruction leading to high school graduation. It also has a very successful online summer school program. For additional information, contact Anne Millane, 509.456.7660.

Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges' Centers of Excellence provide a centralized approach to workforce education and training targeted at specific industries. Centers are an industry "hub" within the community and technical college system with in-depth knowledge of industry trends, best practices, innovative curriculum, and professional development opportunities. For additional information, contact Michelle Andreas, 360.704.4338.

Youth Building Tacoma provides city of Tacoma young adults, ages 18–24, with education, training, and support services to assist them in obtaining high-skill, living-wage careers in the construction trades and emerging technology career fields. The program includes driver's license reinstatement, customized training, and internships or summer employment. For additional information, contact Marcy Longosky, 253.552.2543.

The Best Practices DUD

*highlighting this
year's winners was
produced by students
(past and present) from
the Art Institute
of Seattle.*