

# GREEN MOUNTAIN COFFEE ROASTERS



WORKFORCE CENTRAL - TACOMA

## CAREER READINESS PROGRAM

*This project fostered economic development while improving the quality of life of Pierce County residents - not only providing a much needed skilled workforce, but a commitment to education and career growth for local residents.*

### THE OPPORTUNITY

In 2009, when Green Mountain Coffee Roasters (GMCR) established a new manufacturing facility in Sumner, Washington, it identified a need for 300 workers to be employed and trained over a three-year period. Although the unemployment rate in Pierce County was over 9.5%, applicants lacked the skills necessary to qualify for positions with GMCR. To meet the company's need for skilled workers and requisite training for potential applicants, WorkForce Central contracted with Tacoma Community College (TCC) to design and implement a career readiness program. Working closely with GMCR's corporate headquarters in Vermont, TCC replicated and implemented a Career Readiness program to train aspiring and incumbent workers at the actual worksite. Under contract with WorkForce Central, TCC provided industry specific curriculum development and training to 60 WIA eligible adults in Pierce County and 75 incumbent workers already employed by Green Mountain Coffee Roasters. The gap between GMCR's need for skilled workers and the supply of prepared workers was addressed while workers gained skills to increase their retention and career progression.

### SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP

The career readiness program encompasses many of the best workforce and economic development practices. First, a private company, a community college and a workforce organization collaborated to provide consistent, high quality, industry-valued training. Second, WorkForce Central focused its resources on an industry sector and company that would have the greatest immediate economic impact on the local area and which had the need to employ over 300 workers. Third, Tacoma Community College replicated an existing proven training program at significant cost savings and tailored to the specific needs of the employer. Finally, GMCR provided their manufacturing facility for the training - the ideal contextual learning environment. These leveraged investments had immediate results (workers for the company and jobs for unemployed jobseekers) and the potential for even greater long-term outcomes as more trained workers enter the workforce and use their newly acquired skills.