



Workforce Training and
Education Coordinating Board

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August 19, 2009

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Governor applauds innovative education savings tool at area companies *Workers connect to education faster with Lifelong Learning Accounts*

OLYMPIA, Wash. – Gov. Chris Gregoire has recognized three Western Washington employers as among the first in the country to offer a new program that helps employees connect with college, explore educational opportunities and build careers.

Julianne Hanner, a McDonald’s franchise owner with restaurants in Grays Harbor and Pacific counties, HaloSource, a clean water and antimicrobial technology company with a facility in Raymond, and Vaughn Company, a Montesano pump manufacturer, are now offering Lifelong Learning Accounts (LiLAs) to their employees.

LiLAs are educational savings accounts, where employees make regular contributions matched by their employer, similar to a 401(k). For example, an employee who saves \$20 per month, paired with a \$20 employer match, can have \$240 sitting in an account in six months. When combined with a LiLA launch scholarship, that’s enough to enroll in a community college course.

“Washington and its businesses are leading the nation in engaging our workforce in lifelong learning,” said Gov. Chris Gregoire in honoring the three employers and their employees. “LiLA gives workers a powerful new tool to save for their education and achieve their goals quickly, while rewarding employers with a more energized and talented workforce.”

Although employers and employees contribute equally to LiLA, employees direct those dollars into educational programs they choose—whether it’s a foreign language class, a welding workshop or an accounting course. By lowering financial barriers and focusing on employees’ interests, LiLA can spark an interest in education that leads to professional and personal growth.

“LiLA has the potential to get adult workers excited about learning new things and moving forward with their education, in part because they’re able to steer their savings into areas they’re genuinely interested in. Most employer-supported training programs don’t provide that same kind of personal flexibility—or fun,” said Hanner, a long-time workforce advocate.

LiLA is overseen by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board), which promotes education and training needed by workers for family-wage careers. LiLAs have launched successfully in other parts of the country in partnership with the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning. In Washington, LiLA is being marketed as a pilot project to the five-county area of Thurston, Mason, Lewis, Grays Harbor and Pacific counties, with the eventual goal of taking the program statewide. Learn more at: <http://www.lila.wa.gov>.

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The Workforce Board's core partners in promoting LiLAs include:

- Office of the Governor
- Association of Washington Business
- Washington State Labor Council
- Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council
- State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
- Higher Education Coordinating Board
- Department of Commerce
- Northwest Career Schools Federation
- Health Workforce Institute



The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board is a partnership of labor, business and government, dedicated to helping Washington state residents obtain and succeed in family-wage jobs, while meeting employers' needs for skilled workers.

The State of Washington



Proclamation

WHEREAS, Washington's economic well-being relies on the productivity, talent and innovation of its workforce and business community; and

WHEREAS, Washington's workforce development strategy identifies lifelong learning as enabling workers to fully realize their talents and abilities, lifting their standard of living and adding value to the industries who employ them; and

WHEREAS, Washington is widely recognized as a national leader in workforce development, developing innovative practices such as Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) that blend job skills with basic skills; and

WHEREAS, Washington has been selected to pioneer a statewide rollout of Lifelong Learning Accounts (LiLAs), a new employee benefit that promotes continued education among working adults through an employer-matched savings program, and

WHEREAS, three forward-thinking Washington employers have agreed to be the first in the state to participate in this shared savings program, and

WHEREAS, the Washington LiLA program is designed to eventually expand statewide and be an example to other states and Congress for how our country can foster lifelong learning among adult workers;

NOW THEREFORE, I, Christine O. Gregoire, Governor of the state of Washington do hereby proclaim August 2009 as

Lifelong Learning Month

in Washington State, and I urge all citizens to join me in this special observance.

Signed this 11th day of August, 2009

Christine Gregoire
Governor Christine O. Gregoire

