



STATE OF WASHINGTON

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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Media Advisory

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Driving Washington's Prosperity – A Strategy for Job Creation and Competitiveness **Job Growth Plan Released by Washington Economic Development Commission**

Washington State can accelerate job growth and become the leading innovation hotspot of the world. So concludes the Washington Economic Development Commission's final report, ***Driving Washington's Prosperity -- A Strategy for Job Creation and Competitiveness***.

In accepting the commission's report, Governor Inslee observed: "This is a new era for economic development, an era where embracing innovation, inclusiveness and accountability brings out the best in us." He added, "I appreciate the Commission's efforts to set this foundation for our state's future economic opportunity, jobs and quality of life."

In short, the plan offers a roadmap for the state to differentiate itself, attract new investment and help grow family wage jobs. According to Commission chairman Roger Woodworth, "Growth is stronger when resources are leveraged for impact and aligned with a cohesive policy framework. A focus on fundamentals, coupled with leadership and a long view, will yield a more resilient economy for our state," he said.

Among the Commission's findings, the state's substantial economic development efforts have tended to be short-term, narrowly focused, and rarely coordinated across agencies. Commission Executive Director, Egils Milbergs observed that, "Rigorous evaluation of economic development programs is infrequent, limiting the evidence policy makers and taxpayers need to judge performance. We can and must do better if we're to unleash creativity, accelerate job growth, and secure our technological leadership over foreign competitors."

The Commission's report advances a strategy to overcome this fragmented approach to economic development, identifying five key drivers for ensuring job creation and competitiveness:

- ***Make talent a top priority***
- ***Invest in entrepreneurship***
- ***Connect through reliable infrastructure***
- ***Regulate in the smartest ways***
- ***Expand international business***

The report includes an analysis of the State's competitive strengths (such as in research and development, patent production, technology jobs growth, venture capital investment, manufacturing and exports) and weaknesses (such as in the rate of jobs recovery particularly in rural regions, in-state production of scientists and engineers, workforce skills, household income, investment in transportation infrastructure and foreign direct investment).

The Commission prepares the legislatively authorized report every other year. This year's plan is the result of multi-stakeholder dialogue among leaders in business, education, labor, economic development, and government. More than 650 stakeholders participated at 15 regional strategy forums.

Below are links to the strategy report and the series of evaluation reports to inform the plan and economic development mission of the State.

Driving Washington's Prosperity: A Strategy for Job Creation and Competitiveness

<http://www.wedc.wa.gov/Download%20files/2013StrategicPlan.pdf>

Economic Development Programs and Investments: Review of Evaluation Practices in Washington State

http://www.wedc.wa.gov/Download%20files/Evaluation_Practices.pdf

Vital Signs for Economic Development

http://www.wedc.wa.gov/Download%20files/Vital_Signs_for_Economic_Development.pdf

Innovation Sources, Practices, and Economic Development Programs Serving the Needs of Businesses: A Survey of Businesses and Recommendations

http://www.wedc.wa.gov/Download%20files/WEDC_SURVEY_OF_BUSINESSES.pdf

About the Commission

The Washington Economic Development Commission (WEDC) is an independent, non-partisan commission established to assist the governor and legislature by providing leadership, direction, and guidance on a long-term and systematic approach to economic development that will result in enduring global competitiveness, prosperity and economic opportunity for all the state's citizens. For more information on the state's economic development strategy, policy reports, meeting schedules and status of recommendations visit Washington Economic Development Commission at www.WEDC.wa.gov.

Talent & Workforce

Fueling the Future



- Create jobs for Washingtonians and address industry needs by expanding the capacity of community and technical colleges and four-year universities to achieve a post-secondary education attainment rate to at least 60 percent by the year 2025.
- Increase the pool of qualified workers by giving greater emphasis to STEM proficiencies and career and technical education at the high school level.
- Fill critical skills gaps and grow new enterprises by attracting and retaining the world's best and brightest minds and entrepreneurs through fact-based visa related reform and funding education in high demand occupations.
- Upgrade skills of the unemployed through expanded flexibility of unemployment programs to support training in fields where job vacancies exist.

Investment & Entrepreneurship

Adding Horsepower



- Target improvements to regulatory and tax policy to foster growth of start-ups and job creating business clusters.
- Invest in world class research talent, assist new enterprise formation and connect the state's research base to industry, entrepreneurs and investors.
- Leverage the job creating potential of the Washington innovation ecosystem through large scale collaboration and competing aggressively for federal, foundation and private investment support.

Infrastructure

Paving the Way



- Implement alternative financing mechanisms for transportation infrastructure to preserve basic assets, freight mobility and investment in critical economic corridors to ensure jobs, supply chain productivity and trade expansion.
- Prioritize the most critical infrastructure challenges and lead globally in such areas as energy efficiency, clean-water solutions, advanced manufacturing, cyber-security sustainable in urban design and broadband deployment.
- Require the use of economic development and long term job creation criteria in the capital budgeting process

Smarter Regulations

Running Lean



- Initiate systematic sector-by-sector review of state regulations for their cost-effectiveness and determine overlaps, excessive costs, obsolescence, redundancy and solutions.
- Expand agency use of lean process improvements to lower the cost of regulatory compliance and reduce time delays.
- Create "navigator service" for industry to manage their interaction with the regulatory system, including a comprehensive, user-friendly, online portal for regulatory compliance as recommended by State Auditor's Office Regulatory Reform report.

Washington Economic Development Commission

Driving Washington's Prosperity



International Business

Firing on all cylinders



- Intensify innovation collaboration in the Pacific Northwest economic region and support cross-border projects that can lead to economic diversification, expanded trade opportunities and jobs.
- Drive job creation through a coordinated system of trade services between the programs of Washington State and regional and federal programs.
- Strengthen export assistance services and re-establish overseas representation to augment Washington's international competitiveness and realize the state's export goals.
- Double the number of state-led, new-to-market, cluster-based trade missions (including services) to increase the number of new-to-market exporting firms.

Commissioners

Roger Woodworth, Chair, Spokane
Avista Corporation

Steve Van Ausdle, Ph.D., Vice Chair,
Walla Walla, Walla Walla Community College

Constance (Connie) Bacon, Tacoma
Port of Tacoma

Brian Bonlender, Olympia
Washington Department of Commerce

Sen. John Braun, Centralia
Chair, WA Senate, Trade and Economic
Development Committee

John (Jack) Breese, Mercer Island
Washington Advisory Group
Formerly Microsoft Research

Sen. Maralyn Chase, Shoreline
Ranking Member, WA Senate Trade
and Economic Development Committee

Randy Gardiner, Seattle
Red Dot Corporation

Paula Hammond, Olympia
Washington Department of Transportation

Mark Harris, Tukwila
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Bruce Kendall, Tacoma
Economic Development Board for
Tacoma-Pierce County

Rep. Jeff Morris, Guemes Island
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Development Committee

Christina Lomasney, Seattle
Modumetal Corporation

Dan Newhouse, Olympia
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Eleni Papadakis, Olympia
Workforce Training and Education
Coordinating Board

Dale Peinecke, Olympia
Washington Employment
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Mike Schwenk, Richland
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Rep. Norma Smith, Clinton
Ranking Member, House Community and Economic
Development and Housing Committee

Stan Sorscher, Tukwila
SPEEA, Labor Representative

William Stafford, Seattle
Trade Development Alliance

Beth Thew, Spokane
AFL-CIO Labor Council

Egils Milbergs, Olympia
WEDC Executive Director