

Northwest Workforce Council

Serving: Whatcom, Skagit, Island, & San Juan Counties

2013 – 2017

Integrated Workforce Plan

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Whatcom, Skagit, Island, & San Juan Counties

2013 – 2017

Local Integrated Workforce Plan

March 2013

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Northwest Workforce Council (Council) (NWC), in consultation with local elected officials, oversees the WorkSource (one-stop) system programs and WIA Title 1-B employment and training programs, coordinates local area workforce development services, and provides expertise and demand-driven workforce services to employers and job seekers in Whatcom, Skagit, Island, and San Juan Counties. Council members chart an important course to help local businesses, workers and communities realize a more prosperous future.

The plan is a “living” document, particularly so in a time of volatility and uncertainty in the economy. The Council and its workforce system partners consult it often, revise course as necessary, and mark milestones as we work to realize a shared vision for the region’s prosperity.

The Integrated Workforce Plan assesses local industry and business talent needs and sets forth strategies for the region’s workforce development system that remain consistent with the state’s strategic workforce system goals in “*High Skills, High Wages*”. It describes how the Council continues with already initiated work to enhance services and outcomes for customers, creates opportunities for people to support themselves and their families, including the pursuit of alignment and operating efficiencies within the local workforce development system.

Strategic Goals:

A. LEAD THE REGION’S ONE-STOP CAREER CENTER SYSTEM WHICH:

- Aligns education, employment and training services
- Reinforces retraining and retention of the current workforce
- Provides valued services and dependable results for business and the workforce
- Embeds the principles of continuous quality improvement

B. STRENGTHEN THE REGIONAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM WHICH:

- Expands ways in which business is engaged

- Tailors its services and products responsive to business
- Leverages resources and aligns strategies of key partners
- Partners strategically to strengthen regional competitiveness and job creation
- Elevates support of workforce development issues, policies, and initiatives

C. CHAMPION A SYSTEMIC APPROACH TO LIFELONG LEARNING WHICH:

- Is responsive to business and industry needs
- Enables workers to identify opportunities and pathways for career success
- Offers workers opportunities to upgrade their skills in response to changing workforce needs and challenges
- Promotes competency-based education and training programs

D. STRATEGICALLY PARTNER WITH REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

- Identify opportunities to align, education, workforce and economic development
- Leverage resources to achieve common goals

The strategic plan reflects a deep commitment by the Council to the economic vitality of the community and a confidence in the ability to redesign and re-energize the workforce development system to meet evolving talent demands in local and global economies.

Northwest Workforce Council
Whatcom, Skagit, Island & San Juan Counties

The 2013-2017 Local Integrated Workforce Plan

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INTRODUCTION

Northwest Workforce Council is a 27-member policy and oversight entity responsible for overseeing a comprehensive, region-wide response to the challenges of building an available, agile and highly skilled workforce. As defined in the Workforce Investment Act, the Council maintains majority private-sector representation to ensure the voice of local business, as key customers of the system, inform policy-setting and decision making. The Council works as an equal partner with local elected officials.

The establishment of local, business majority-led workforce councils, in partnership with local elected officials, gives Council's an important strategic role and broad systemic responsibility for planning and overseeing the complete range of job training and employment programs referred to as the workforce development system.

Northwest Workforce Council strategically oversees the quality and design of the local workforce development system by state definition there are 16 programs in the workforce; comprised of all of the public and private investments and activities undertaken to ensure individuals are employable and have jobs, and simultaneously to ensure companies can find and develop the skilled workforce they need to be successful in the world marketplace.

Vision

To create a robust, sustainable, regional economy.

Mission

The preparation of a skilled, successful workforce aligned to the needs of business and industry.

The Council and Its Mandate

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) was passed by Congress to provide flexibility in addressing local priorities and customer needs within the workforce development system. It is:

- **Market Based.** Driven by the demands of customers, particularly employer customers, employment and training programs should meet an identified need.
- **Comprehensive.** The system as a whole offers a wide array of services to those in need, whatever their need. It should provide a common assessment strategy, access to relevant labor market information, and individualized service plans.
- **Outcome Focused.** The *system* is driven by the Council's comprehensive plan based on the needs of the local labor market and the *system's* overall performance to meet outcome-based goals. Each component programs' measurement of concrete results contributes to the performance of the workforce *system* but they do not define that *system* in and of themselves.
- **Quality Conscious.** The system provides services of the highest quality. Feedback from customers is measured and acted upon to drive improvements in individual programs. A continuous improvement management system is used throughout.
- **Customer Friendly.** The system (and all its parts) should be easily accessible, easily navigable, flexible, and adaptable to changing demand. It must be well known and "transparent" to all its potential customers.
- **Coordinated.** The system management and oversight is independent of any single program or service provider. A single set of strategic goals, objectives, standards and evaluation criteria apply to all the various component programs. These help keep service providers aware of and focused on *overall* service quality and *overall* customer satisfaction, and working together as an integrated system rather than as a collection of free-standing entities.

The workforce development system is comprised of those programs that use private and/or public funds to prepare workers for employment, upgrade worker skills, retrain workers, or provide employment or retention services for workers or employers. The system includes, but is not limited to:

- Secondary vocational education, including activities funded under the Federal Carl D. Perkins Vocational-Technical Education Act of 1998
- Community and Technical College Vocational Education Programs, including activities funded under the Federal Carl D. Perkins Vocational-Technical Education Act of 1998
- Private career schools and private college vocational programs
- Employer-sponsored training
- Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker Programs funded by Title I-B of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998
- Work-Related Adult Basic Education and Literacy Programs, including Programs funded under the Federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (WIA Title II)
- Activities funded under the Federal Wagner-Peyser Act (WIA Title III)
- Apprenticeships

- The One-Stop (WorkSource) Career Center System (WIA Sec. 121(b))
- The State Job Skills Program
- Worker Retraining Program or any successor program
- Work-related components of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program (WIA Title IV)
- Services provided by the Department of Services for the Blind
- Programs offered by private and public nonprofit organizations that provide job training or work-related adult literacy services
- May include other local, State, and Federally funded workforce development programs; and
- May include other privately funded workforce development programs and initiatives.

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THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM TODAY

Northwest Workforce Council is a 27-member policy and oversight entity responsible for organizing a comprehensive, region-wide response to the challenges of building a highly skilled workforce. As defined in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the Council maintains majority private-sector representation to ensure the voice of local business, as key customers of the system, inform policy-setting and decision making. The Council works as an equal partner with local elected officials.

Northwest Workforce Council strategically oversees the quality and design of the local workforce development system; comprised of all of the public and private investments and activities undertaken to ensure individuals are employable and have jobs, and simultaneously to ensure companies can find and develop the skilled workforce they need to be successful.

The *business* of integrated workforce development is strengthening the connection between responding to employer needs and providing qualified job seekers. Integration of services is seen as a way to respond to customers' expectations that access to jobs and qualified applicants should be convenient and user friendly.

In its broadest sense, workforce development is about:

- Ensuring a K-12 education system that equips students with skills to excel
- Developing a system of training providers that responds effectively to employer needs
- Ensuring a postsecondary education system that works closely with business
- Promoting the importance of lifelong learning
- Increasing employer-sponsored training and education opportunities for workers

The Council, in multiple productive partnerships, has a systematic approach to workforce development programs in the Northwest Workforce Investment Area comprised of Whatcom, Skagit, Island, and San Juan counties.

The Council, working with local elected officials, oversees a Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and workforce development partners regarding the operation of an integrated workforce delivery system in the local area.

The Council also monitors the performance outcomes and operation of WorkSource one-stop career centers which serve as convenient access points to the workforce development system.

Framework for Doing Business

The Council is a powerful mechanism for comprehensive, community-wide workforce development planning and coordination. The Council promotes the alignment and integration of education, training and employment efforts coupled closely with economic revitalization strategies. The Council oversees a regional workforce development system that provides funding, direction, and a commitment of support where services exemplify the following shared principles, beliefs, and priorities:

VISIONARY LEADERSHIP

Leadership is a catalyst for change and works to remove barriers to change processes. Leaders inspire, motivate, and encourage the entire workforce to contribute, to be innovative, and to embrace change. Senior leaders set direction, create a customer focus, establish clear and visible values, and build high expectations.

MARKET BASED

The system is driven by the demands of customers, particularly employer customers. Employment and training programs should meet an identified need. Time and resources are focused on matters that create customer value or build upon the system's ability to do so.

COMPREHENSIVE

The system strives to build capacity of communities to engage each other in partnerships that balance priorities, share resources and work towards improvements. As a whole, the system offers a wide array of services to those in need, whatever their need, accordingly. Time and resources are focused on matters that create customer value or build upon the system's ability to do so.

OUTCOME AND RESULTS FOCUSED

The system must produce results to establish and maintain its relevance. The workforce system is driven by the Council's comprehensive plan based on the needs of the local labor market and the system's overall performance to meet outcome-based goals. Each component programs' measurement of concrete results contributes to the performance of the workforce system but they do not define that system in and of themselves.

QUALITY CONSCIOUS

The system provides services of the highest quality. Feedback from customers is measured and acted upon to drive improvements in individual programs. Continuous improvement is achieved by challenging the status-quo and seeking a better way. Creative problem solving and shared learning are embraced, including continuous improvement of existing approaches and significant change or innovation.

CUSTOMER FRIENDLY

The system (and all its parts) should be easily accessible, easily navigable, flexible, and adaptable to changing demand. It must be well known and "transparent" to all its potential customers.

INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY

The system management and oversight is independent of any single program or service provider. A single set of strategic goals, plans and objectives, standards and evaluation criteria apply to all the various component programs. These help keep service providers aware of and focused on *overall* service quality and *overall* customer satisfaction, and working together as an integrated system rather than as a collection of free-standing entities.

Washington Workforce Association's Workforce Policy and Legislative Framework

The state's twelve local Workforce Development Councils, which collectively form the Washington Workforce Association (WWA), have implemented local strategies to weather the Great Recession by closing skill gaps, putting people back to work and increasing productivity to harness opportunity for long-term economic development. WWA is uniquely positioned to

provide the workforce system continuity of leadership. WWA is committed to maintaining this momentum as changes take place both nationally and in Washington State.

Key Principles

The following principles drive WWA's local strategic thinking and are the lens through which it evaluates legislation and policies at both the state and national levels:

ACCOUNTABILITY

Measure success by the returns achieved when people return to work and business productivity improves.

LOCAL FLEXIBILITY AND AUTHORITY

Ensure that Workforce Development Councils have both the authority and the policy flexibility to respond to local and regional workforce development needs.

BUSINESS-LED BOARDS

Support business-led Workforce Development Councils as the primary responsible entity for overseeing workforce investments, issues and initiatives.

SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENTS

Encourage sustainable investments in both the delivery of services and local infrastructure so that Workforce Development Councils have the necessary resources to put people to work and to provide talent to businesses.

Northwest Workforce System Partnership

The Northwest Workforce Development Area has had a formal commitment in place supporting partnerships since 1992 in Whatcom County and 1994 in Skagit, San Juan, and Island Counties. The objective has been the alignment of services across programs and across providers. The Council established a partnership of key organizations committed to the shared vision of a high-performing, customer-focused, service delivery system. The system is continuously improved to be accountable and results-driven.

Northwest workforce system management team members include:

- Northwest Workforce Council
- Employment Security Department
- Whatcom Community College
- Bellingham Technical College
- Skagit Valley College
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

As work evolves and the scope of design activities effect additional community stakeholders, the partnership increases outreach and engagement of other important stakeholders. The partnership actively engages with the following organizations and entities, among others:

- Economic Development Association of Skagit County
- Port of Bellingham (ADO)
- Island County Economic Development Council

- San Juan County Economic Development Council
- Small Business Development Center (WWU)
- Council of Governments
- Labor and apprenticeship organizations
- K-12 educational agencies including:
 - The region's school districts
 - Education Services District No. 189
- Cascades Job Corps Center
- The Opportunity Council
- Community Action Skagit County
- Lummi, Nooksack, Samish, Upper Skagit & Swinomish Indian Nations
- Division of Child Support (DSHS)
- Bellingham/Whatcom Chamber of Commerce
- Bellingham/Whatcom Economic Development Council
- Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce
- Whatcom Alliance for Healthcare Advancement
- Center for Economic and Business Research (WWU)
- Center of Excellence in Marine Manufacturing & Technology

The Northwest's strong workforce development system includes three community colleges, a technical college, a tribal college, a regional university, apprenticeship training, twenty-two school districts with secondary vocational programs, three WorkSource one-stop career centers, the Friday Harbor Career Center, a Job Corps Center, and a variety of other state and local programs for adults and youth needing assistance entering or transitioning into employment.

A review of the workforce development programs and services indicates the area has thoughtfully targeted its employment and training resources toward developing a skilled workforce for a number of its key industries and sectors. These include health and allied services, advanced manufacturing (including marine manufacturing and wood products), and construction. The area continues to respond to the need for a skilled workforce in the rapidly changing workplace. Training in technical areas including: information technology, healthcare, welding, and process and manufacturing technology have each increased in direct response to developing employer and market needs.

The following is a brief overview of the types of programs and services offered by the Northwest workforce development system. These programs and activities reflect resources available to train, upgrade, and assist the jobseeker in obtaining employment while providing the employing community a qualified workforce to retain and grow viable business and industrial.

Training Institutions

One of the strengths of the Northwest area is the number of two-year and certificate programs offered through Bellingham Technical, Whatcom Community, Skagit Valley, and Northwest

Indian Colleges. Western Washington University has a variety of baccalaureate and market-driven post-baccalaureate programs.

Bellingham Technical College

Bellingham Technical College (BTC) currently offers over 30 two-year degree programs and 55 certificates. Recent program additions reflect the region's high-demand industries and include Anaerobic Digester and Sustainable Technology certificates as well as the Dental Hygiene and Veterinary Technician degree programs. Bellingham Technical College's workforce collaboration level and graduate job placement success rates are outstanding - and critical to our success. Over 300 community members and industry and labor representatives serve as advisors to BTC's programs, participate in career fairs, support programs and students, and work with the College to develop programs and offer internship and industry experience opportunities to students. Long-standing, critical workforce organization partners such as the Northwest Workforce Council and Northwest Economic Development Council, K-20 educational partners, and other community organizations help inform College training efforts. BTC serves a wide variety of students, many of them first-time college students from under-represented populations. The College has Student Success as its top priority, focusing on certificate or degree completion, workforce attainment or transfer to further education. Multiple grants from private, federal and state funding sources have helped the College and expand and develop high-demand programs, implement student mentoring programs, host off-site programs for students in rural locations, increase access to College courses and programs through distance and hybrid instructional formats, and provide intensive, specialized support programs which help underprepared students and underemployed workers succeed in College-level programs. The College's participation in national studies such as the Self-Sufficiency Interventions for Low-Income Families (ISIS) evaluation allows us to participate in in-depth analysis of current student success strategies; our participation in initiatives that encourage a data-driven College culture, such as Achieving the Dream (ATD), Washington State's Student Achievement Initiative (SAI), and the Governance Institute for Student Success (GISS) through the American Association of Community Colleges, is assisting the College in keeping its focus on developing successful strategies for student support.

Whatcom Community College

Whatcom Community College (WCC) offers 15 two-year degree programs and 18 certificate programs. Recent program revisions reflect the need to keep pace with rapid change in critical demand industries in the region including: computer information systems with added emphasis in information assurance and security, infusion of IT concepts into health professions curriculum (nursing, medical assisting), new stackable entry- and mid-certificates in early childhood education, and new emphasis in payroll accounting, QuickBooks, and not-for-profit accounting for accounting students. New offerings have been added at night for massage practitioner students and the physical therapist assistant program has been expanded to serve students in Pierce County. A new IBEST offering is available for those pursuing a Clerical Assistant certificate en-route to an office administration certificate or business administration 2-year degree.

Skagit Valley College

Skagit Valley College (SVC) embraces a strategic priority to align educational programs with regional and state workforce and economic development strategies. SVC's President's Roundtable on Workforce Development provides an opportunity to closely collaborate with Northwest Workforce Council, two economic development councils in the district, ports, municipalities and industry and labor representatives to develop a program mix representative of identified skills gaps and industry needs. SVC offers 26 two-year degree programs and 61 certificate programs with an emphasis in Health Science, Human Services and Public Resources, and Business clusters. Despite recent state budget cuts, partnerships with regional colleges in pursuit of grant funding has allowed SVC to continue to expand nursing and allied health, welding, and manufacturing, composites and marine programs. Reflective of local industry, SVC hosts the Northwest Center of Excellence for Marine Manufacturing and Technology. The college has invested in making education possible for students less prepared for college level work by using I-BEST instructional delivery to support students in six programs with an expansion to an additional three programs scheduled in 2014.

Northwest Indian College

Northwest Indian College (NWIC) provides post-secondary educational opportunities for native peoples and other area residents. The only accredited 2-year and 4-year tribal college in Washington, Oregon and Idaho, NWIC is located on the Lummi Reservation in Whatcom County, with extension sites at the Swinomish Reservation in Skagit County, Port Gamble S'Klallam in Kitsap County, Tulalip in Snohomish County, Muckleshoot in King County, Nisqually in Thurston County, and Nez Perce in Idaho. It houses the National Indian Center for Marine Environmental Research and Education. The college offers a Bachelor of Science in Native Environmental Science, Bachelor of Arts Degree in Native Studies Leadership, two year and transfer degree programs in; Associate of Arts and Science in Native American Studies, Oksale Native Education, Chemical Dependency Studies, Business and Entrepreneurship, and Public and Tribal Administration. The Workforce Education Department provides certificated professional development and vocational training courses in a variety of areas in health professions, construction trades and industrial certifications. Academic, vocational, continuing, and adult basic education is provided in an environment that recognizes and nurtures students' cultural identity. The college also provides business assistance.

Apprenticeship Training

Training for apprentices is offered at Bellingham Technical College and Skagit Valley College. Examples of courses offered include: Industrial Trade Math; Basic Mechanics for Electricians; Welding; Blueprint Reading; Basic Electricity for Mechanics, Millwrights and Non-Electricians; Apprentice Painter; and Apprentice Carpentry. The Electrical, Plumbing, Pipefitting, and Carpentry Technical Training Centers for joint apprenticeship programs are located in Skagit County. The area participates in recruiting for special programs available to involve youth in apprenticeship vocational exploration

Western Washington University

The area's workforce benefits from the presence of a nationally recognized institution of higher education. Continuing education and lifelong learning programs at Western Washington University (WWU) are particularly beneficial to incumbent workers and those seeking to upgrade skills. A variety of post-baccalaureate programs are offered. Western also offers technical and professional degrees well suited to the northwest area's needs; plastics technology, recreation management, computer science, business management, and the physical sciences. The recent development of a RN to BSN Nursing program is in direct response to the region's healthcare industry leadership stated need for advanced trained nursing staffs.

Additionally, WWU offers programs during the year for youth that serve as preparatory coursework for a wide-variety of future job requirements and interests. These programs cover academic enrichment, leadership training, and understanding private enterprise.

WWU Center for Business and Economic Research

Strategic planning requires accurate and timely information about the workforce and the local economy. The local workforce system benefits from a strong working relationship with WWU's Center for Economic and Business Research (CEBR), part of the College of Business and Economics. The CBER director sits on the board of the Council. The Center assists by providing a focus for economic and business research activities for the university and for the region's workforce and economic development partners through the provision of:

- Econometric model building and dissemination of regional forecasts.
- Economic data base management for local, state, regional, and national economic activity.
- Continued study of business cycles and fiscal issues in Washington State and British Columbia.

In addition, staff at the CEBR conduct regular cost of living and other surveys, work with a variety of business organizations, and communicate regularly with elected officials, nongovernmental organizations, and business leaders in the region.

Secondary Vocational Programs

Each of the twenty two school districts in the Northwest region provides vocational education programs which prepare youth for entry into post-secondary education, training and the workforce. All have articulation agreements with the area's two-year colleges; Skagit Valley, Whatcom and Bellingham Technical, that offer dual credit programs designed to integrate high school and college vocational programs. The programs of study allow students the opportunity to earn college credits, certificate or a two-year college degree based on competencies attained while in high school. These vocational technical programs develop skills needed to work in a technologically oriented society by emphasizing math, science and communication. The Council works with school districts to implement, expand and saturate work based learning opportunities that complement the vocational-technical training and articulated programs of study which exist with the local colleges. Work based learning provides student the opportunity

to explore occupations or industries to guide course selection, reinforce classroom learning, and create relevance for required courses.

The Northwest Career & Technical Academy

The Northwest Career & Technical Academy is recognized for its unique and specialized educational programs. One of only thirteen career---technical training centers in Washington State, the Northwest Career & Technical Academy serves juniors and seniors from 22 sending high schools in the region. The Northwest Career & Technical Academy serves as an extension campus for these area high schools and offers programs at three campuses, offering the following variety of courses, licenses, and certifications:

- Mount Vernon Main Campus: Academy of Veterinary Assisting; Culinary Arts; DigiPen Video Game Programming; Dental Technology; Medical Technology; Tourism and Hospitality
- Anacortes Campus: Aerospace Technology; Marine Technology
- Whatcom County Campus (Meridian High School): Construction Academy; Welding Academy; Sustainable Engineering

These programs provide the skills, knowledge, and professional leadership training necessary for the workplace or continuing education through an apprenticeship, community college, or university. Students will also be offered a jump-start through participation in internships, job shadows, field studies, clinical and other real world experiences as well as college articulated credits, industry certifications and licenses. Program certifications and licenses received by students represent valuable employment skills because they meet industry standards and increase potential earning power and post-secondary training/educational placement.

Private Career Training Programs

The region has a number of proprietary training schools and programs. The Council provides direction to the proper resources for those wishing to be listed on the state's preferred training provider list. Those that are on the preferred provider list are included as options for participants seeking vocational training through WIA funding. Commercial driving schools provide an important resource for an in-demand occupation as local community and technical colleges no longer provide this training. Washington Engineering Institute, Trinity Western and Charter College provide vocational training or degree completion programs, often targeted to the region's key industry sectors. Specialized industry-focused training is offered by Impact Washington as well as a plethora of smaller organizations and providers.

Employer Sponsored Training

The workforce system often partners with employers to leverage funding or other resources for worker training. The highly successful pre-employment training program of HeathTecna is an example of a collaborative effort of the employer and workforce system partners to expand this business and its workforce by nearly 600 workers. Other examples include procuring trainers for an advanced manufacturer interested in building the LEAN skills of its workforce.

One Stop Service Delivery System (WorkSource)

The region's one-stop career development system (WorkSource Northwest) is a trusted source of employment and training services. One-stop career centers, called WorkSource in Washington State are comprehensive network of state and local programs which meets customer needs and offers seamless, high quality service. A common look and feel to the system make it familiar and easily accessed wherever it is located. Currently, the Northwest has three certified one stop centers: WorkSource Whatcom located in Bellingham, WorkSource Whidbey located in Oak Harbor and WorkSource Skagit located in Mount Vernon. A small, Council-funded career center in Friday Harbor serves San Juan County.

Services offered to jobseekers at each site include such services as; labor market information, job counseling, job matching, and unemployment information and referral. At the one-stop centers, more individual intensive may be provided based upon need and eligibility requirements. More intensive services to jobseekers may include self-service and individual counseling, training may be available.

Business services offered through the WorkSource Northwest system include each of the Washington State required core services for business as well as intensive and fee-based services which address unmet need. Business services are designed to provide employers' access to job seekers that match the business' talent needs and to develop demand-driven training for their current workforce.

Programs Funded Under the Workforce Investment Act, Title I-B

These programs include services for adults, low income youth and dislocated workers delivered through the WorkSource system with staff located within the Northwest's one-stop career centers. At three (3) WorkSource Northwest centers, and the San Juan Career Center, jobseekers, including adults in transition, low-income youth, and incumbent workers seeking self-sufficiency, access multiple programs offering core, intensive and training services.

Active outreach, recruitment and enrollment of youth, adults and dislocated workers may also be conducted at appropriate sites in the community. For youth, services are delivered at schools, including alternative schools, juvenile detention facilities and at other youth service provider sites such as Northwest Youth Services and Community Action of Skagit County. With plant closures and substantial layoffs, rapid response services delivered on site include intake activities and workshops for dislocated workers.

Programs Funded Under the Wagner-Peyser Act

The Employment Security Department (ESD) operates the public labor exchange within the WorkSource Northwest career centers by providing no-fee, employment resources and staff-assisted services to employers and job seekers authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act. Activities include the provision of core services, such as: assisting job seekers in finding employment, assisting employers in filling jobs; and facilitating the

match between qualified jobseekers and employers. Wagner-Peyser supported labor exchange services serve as a cornerstone of the WorkSource system.

Veterans, unemployment insurance claimants, individuals with disabilities, migrant and seasonal farm workers, dislocated workers and others facing barriers to employment may receive intensive, staff-assisted services to gain suitable employment, e.g.: through various ESD-managed WorkSource programs, or through WorkSource partner programs, if eligible. In addition, businesses and job seekers are encouraged to explore job listings and employment and training information resources on www.WorksourceNorthwest.com or go2worksource.com.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) provides a full range of vocational services to enable individuals with disabilities to obtain and keep employment. Included in its services are vocational assessments for interest and abilities, labor market information, job search assistance, assistance with physical and mental restoration services, vocational training, and substantial counseling and guidance. Vocational Rehabilitation staff are collocated in WorkSource career centers in Whatcom and Skagit counties. DVR staff provide a leadership role and technical assistance in designing and implementing systems, practices, and training which allow all partners to better serve persons with disabilities.

WorkFirst Programs

There are a variety of programs in the area for low-income and individuals on Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). These programs are designed to provide job search, job retention, and wage progression assistance for those receiving public assistance. WorkSource provides employment services to WorkFirst participants as part of ESD's local WorkFirst contract requirements.

Mature Worker Services

The full range of services to older workers (55+ years old) is delivered through WorkSource Northwest career centers with staff located within the centers. There, mature workers access multiple programs offering core, intensive and training services, including the Senior Community Services Program (SCSP) funded under Title V of the Older Americans Act. At WorkSource Whatcom, specific evening hours are set aside to provide a forum for mature workers' issues discussion and offer more one-on-one staff support and assistance to orient and integrate mature workers into the available core, intensive and training services. Active outreach, recruitment, and enrollment of mature workers is also conducted at appropriate sites in the community, such as senior centers.

Digital Literacy: Since 2005 the Council has provided core services in WorkSource Northwest career centers to aid workers in building the computing skills necessary for success in today's workplace. Launched with a small pilot grant from Microsoft, the Council has evolved the program to a highly functional platform of volunteer computer

instructors supervised by Council staff. In 2012 alone, over 500 class seats were filled and over 1,500 volunteer hours logged in the Northwest Computer Literacy Instruction Corps (CLIC) program. The introductory training matriculates well with more advanced courses offered by community and technical colleges.

Incumbent Worker Training: The Council recognizes there is increasing need to train and retrain current workers to keep pace with the accelerating pace of technological advances, process refinements, and globalization. Customized training prepares workers with contemporary skills required to meet the needs of a particular employer or set of employers, enabling businesses to be competitive. The Council actively pursues current worker training funds for the region's key industry sectors and has used its formula funds, targeting training for workers needing to increase their skills and earnings, and Governor's 10% funds to address current worker training needs in health and allied services, as well as aerospace, marine and other advanced manufacturing.

Industry Tables: The Council continues its efforts to align training and service delivery with high-demand occupations and skill clusters in: health and allied services, and marine, wood products and other advanced manufacturing. Industry engagements often include broad participation from industry leadership, organized labor, educators, and workforce and economic development leadership. In support of this sector focus WIA training funds are targeted to identified sectors and occupations. The Council pursues additional funding sources to further its strategies in support of the region's key industry sectors. Industry tables examine workforce needs and create actionable plans to meet those needs. The Council has achieved success with numerous industry-led, sector-specific initiatives, and benefits from sector representation on the membership of the board.

Worker Retraining

This state funded program for dislocated workers and long-term unemployed workers is offered through Bellingham Technical, Skagit Valley, and Whatcom Community Colleges in association with the Council and the Employment Security Department. The colleges provide training in basic skills and literacy, vocational education, and related or supplemental instruction for apprentices.

Students who qualify for the program may receive financial assistance that can help with their tuition, books and tools. Training programs must prepare students for demand occupations that lead to jobs which provide a living wage for the area.

The State Job Skills Program

Washington's Job Skills Program (JSP), administered by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, is training customized to meet employers' specific needs. Training is delivered to new or current employees at the worksite or in a classroom.

JSP training is a tool for enhancing the growth of Washington's economy and increasing employment opportunities. JSP provides funding for training in regions with high

unemployment rates and high levels of poverty. It also supports areas with new and growing industries; locations where the local population does not have the skills needed to stay employed; and those regions impacted by economic changes that cause large-scale job loss.

The Northwest's community and technical colleges have implemented successful JSP training and are practiced at developing successful programs to meet local employers' need for new or current employees skill development.

Training Benefits Program

The Training Benefits program offers additional weeks of unemployment benefits so eligible claimants can train for careers in a high-demand field. Claimants are oriented to this program during the UIRO and EUC orientations offered at WorkSource. Information on training benefits is also available online and is described in Unemployment Claim Kits mailed to those opening an initial claim. Those expressing interest in Training Benefits are presented with the appropriate application materials. WorkSource partners at Whatcom Community, Bellingham Technical, and Skagit Valley Colleges offer approved programs which meet Training Benefit standards.

Cascades Job Corps Center

Cascades Job Corps Center is one of eleven centers in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. The program is for individuals ages 16-24 who meet income and program eligibility. Job Corps offers training to earn a GED or high school diploma, English as a Second Language and trade-specific career training. At Cascades, vocational courses include Facilities Maintenance, Office Administration, Carpentry, Cement Masonry, Food Service, Dental Assistant, Electrical Wiring, Certified Nurse's Aide, Painting, Medical Administrative Assistant, and Clinical Medical Assistant. Eligible youth receive room and board and basic healthcare. Students who live near the Job Corps campus may train as a "non-resident". The Center also has a unique cooperative partnership with the Sedro Woolley School District that includes a High School Completion Program that enables Job Corps participants to complete and receive a high school diploma.

Literacy Programs

A variety of non-profit and community based organizations provide literacy services throughout the region. Some programs, such as financial literacy, offer classes through WorkSource career centers.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN OF THE AREA ECONOMY

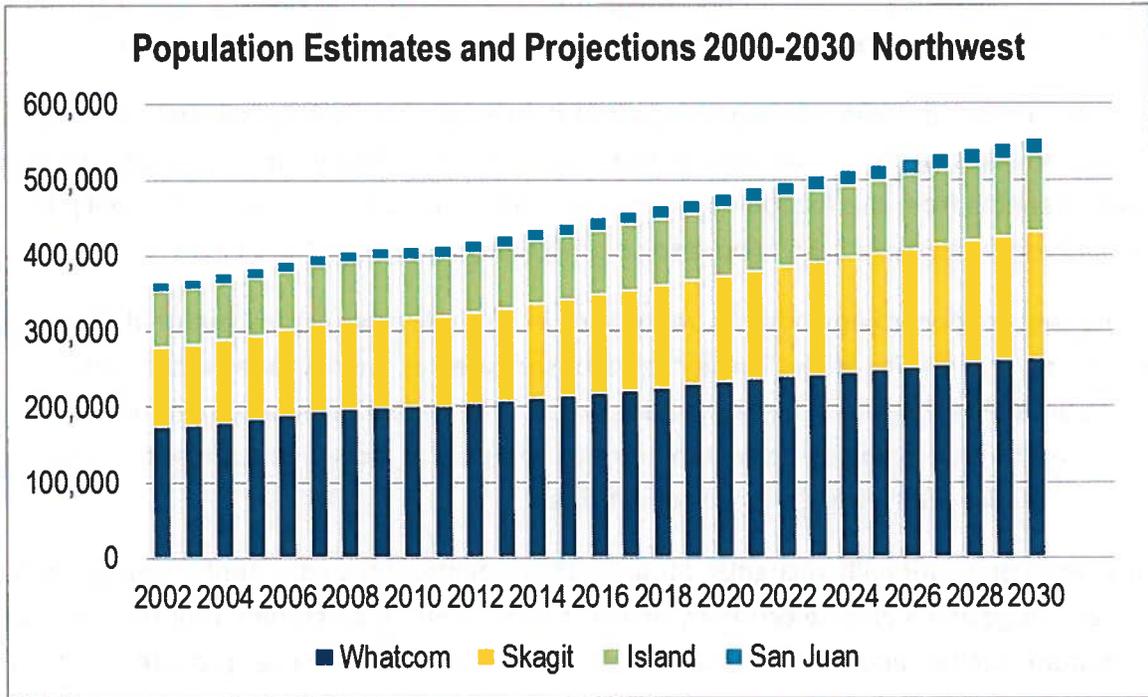
The counties of Island, San Juan, Skagit and Whatcom form the Northwest Area of Washington State's workforce development system. Geographically located in the far northwest corner of the state, the area borders Canada to the north and Snohomish County to the south.

Skagit, Whatcom and Island Counties are part of the I-5 corridor linking two international, metropolitan cities, Seattle, Washington, and Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The area's economy benefits from this location by increased trade and commerce and additional job opportunities for residents who choose to commute to jobs outside their residential areas.

The Northwest region is known for its abundance of natural resources, exceptional scenery, rural settings, and quality of life. These characteristics are key factors for attracting and retaining businesses, workers, families and retirees. The desirable environment and close proximity to the two major metropolitan areas contributes to growth in population, tourism, recreation, service, and wholesale and retail trade.

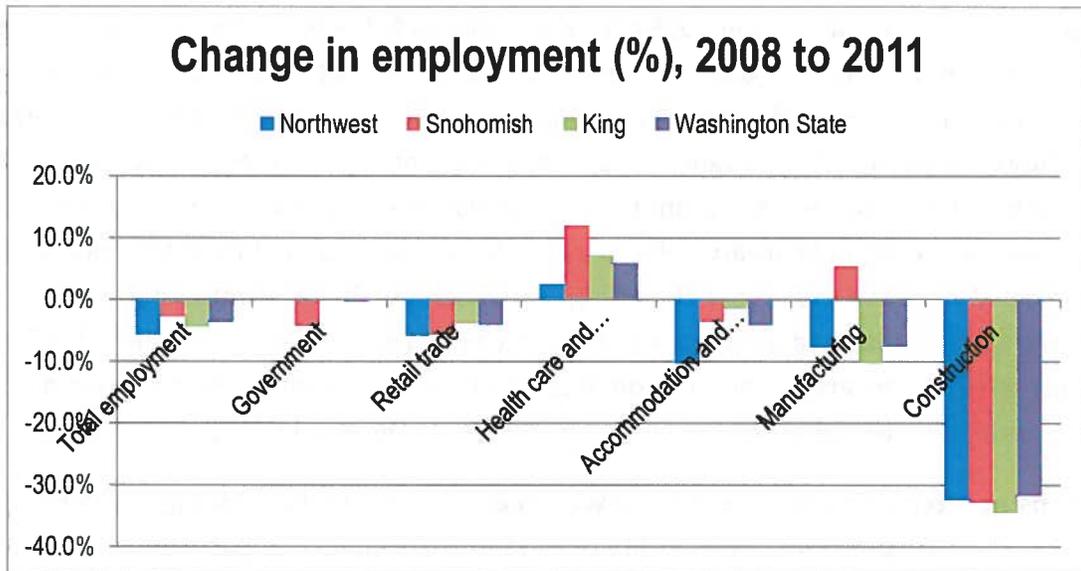
The presence of a nationally recognized four-year university, three community colleges and a technical college and a diverse economy which includes a Naval air station, four oil refineries, an aluminum smelter, and notable retail, tourist and recreation industries provide stability to the area. There are many niche manufacturers, including aerospace providers, and a large variety of other small businesses that create a well-rounded economic base.

Population growth has slowed with the current economic downturn, but remains stronger in this region than many parts of the country.



Source: Washington State Employment Security Department

From 2008 to 2011, total employment in the region declined by 8,661 or 5.7 percent. Proportionally, the Northwest endured greater job losses than neighboring Snohomish County, King County or Washington State as a whole. Key industry sectors in the region include: Advanced Manufacturing, Health and Allied Services and Construction (see Appendix C). They have been negatively impacted by the recession to a certain degree but remain strategic clusters for the region. Employment fell sharply, particularly in the construction sector. The region lost a collective 4,038 construction jobs from 2008 to 2011, a 32.4 percent loss. Manufacturing is faring better with 1,154 job loss (7.6% lost). Healthcare and social assistance was the only sector that did not report absolute losses over the course of the recession and recovery period. This sector added 393 jobs from 2008 to 2011, a 2.5 percent increase.



Source: Washington State Employment Security Department

There are signs our economy is starting to recover. Recent growth and employment are positive though the area has a long way to go to return to pre-recession levels.

Nonagricultural employment estimates anticipate estimated growth from 143,600 nonfarm jobs to an estimated 155,200 positions in 2015 and an estimated 164,400 positions in 2020. These figures represent a 1.6 percent growth rate between 2010 and 2015 and a 1.2 percent growth rate between 2015 and 2020. Estimates for these periods within Northwest in aggregate are composed of a variety of growth and decline rated in various NAICS categories.

Electrical equipment and appliance manufacturing is estimated to grow by 5.9 percent by 2020 and fabricated metal product manufacturing is also estimated to grow at a brisk pace of 4.6 percent. Other areas of nonfarm employment are also estimated to improve such as employments service as well as education and health services. Decline in jobs is estimated in other sectors such as printing and related support activities.

Reviewing the region by occupation, it appears slow yet stable growth has occurred since 2010 with continued slow and stable growth anticipated in many sectors through 2020, while some sectors are anticipated to decrease. Jobs in the health care fields are estimated to increase such as physical therapist assistants and home health aides and dentists through 2020 while jobs in some occupations in tourism such as travel agents, are estimated to decline. The Northwest area included approximately 13,838 firms in the first quarter of 2012 with Whatcom County hosting the largest number at 6,946. Skagit County hosted approximately 4,011 firms in the first quarter of this year while Island and San Juan counties listed approximately 1,937 and 944 firms respectively.

The economic recovery, starting in 2009 brought moderately lower unemployment rates and job growth to the Northwest region. However, job gains have yet to compensate for losses during the great recession and unemployment levels still remain elevated above 2007 levels. In general, key clusters including advanced manufacturing, construction, and health are noting slow growth and improvements. Manufacturing initial unemployment insurance (UI) claims have dropped from 494 in February 2009 to 210 in December 2012 in Whatcom County. While Skagit dropped from 597 in January 2009 to 133 in December 2012. Continuing claims for UI in health care and social assistance dropped in Whatcom County to 134 in December 2012 from 228 in July 2010. In the area of accommodation and food service Whatcom recorded a drop from 256 continuing UI claims for December 2009 to 85 in December 2012.

Despite the economic downturn, the Northwest region faces a crucial shortage of skilled-labor. This shortage limits some industries' ability to expand and remain competitive.

In an economy with a high unemployment rate, employer should have no problem recruiting talent. Contrary to popular opinion, there are job openings requiring highly skilled and knowledgeable workers that are vacant because job applicants do not have the particular skills and knowledge employers require. Majority of people claiming unemployment benefits in 2012 have an education attainment of high school diploma/GED or less. Many become long term unemployment, leading to disconnection from the labor force.

County	Education Attained of Persons Claiming Unemployment Benefits in 2012					
	Total Distinct Claimants *	Less Than High School	High School Diploma or GED	College no degree	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree or higher
	Percent					
Island	2,949	6.8%	47.0%	16.9%	14.2%	15.1%
San Juan	610	6.1%	39.2%	17.7%	12.8%	24.3%
Skagit	7,282	15.8%	47.2%	11.4%	15.6%	10.0%
Whatcom	10,190	11.4%	42.2%	13.2%	16.9%	16.2%

Source: ESD

*Includes Regular, Extended and Emergency Unemployment Compensation

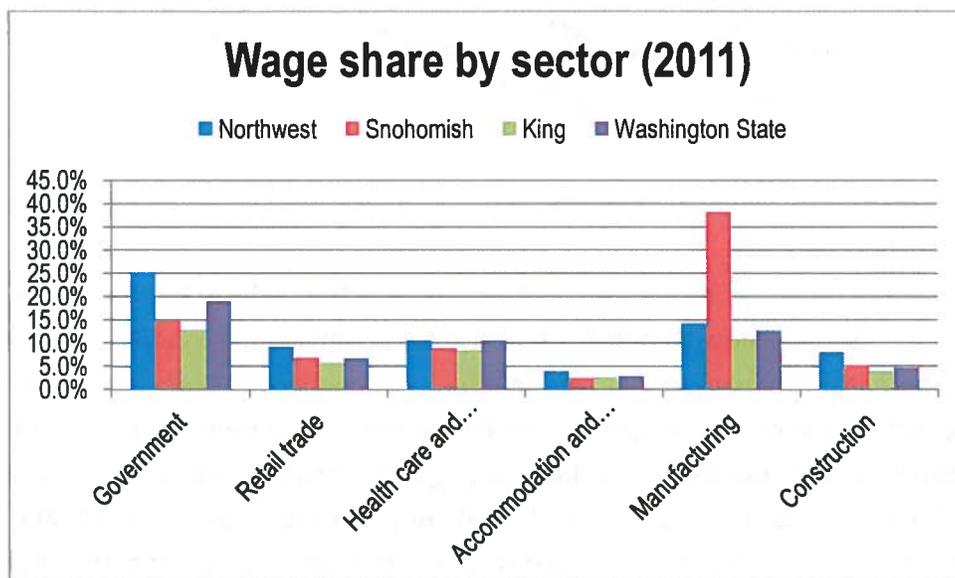
Private sector leaders in key sectors stress their industries are undergoing a dramatic transformation in terms of technology, market dynamics and skills requirement.

In May 2012, the Council collaborated with Whatcom Community College , Peace Health, SEIU, and Whatcom Alliance for Healthcare Access on the Healthcare Leadership Workforce Summit. Industry leaders were convened to discuss the future of patient care and skill requirements, and changing workforce needs. The industry is in transition. The future will look very

different; for example, two area hospitals no longer utilizing LPNs. This has significant implications on workforce preparation.

Over the coming years, global growth will be driven by economies outside the United States. Exports provide new opportunities for innovation and business growth and drive job creation. Manufacturing companies are entering and expanding into new foreign markets. The demand for highly skilled workers will continue to increase.

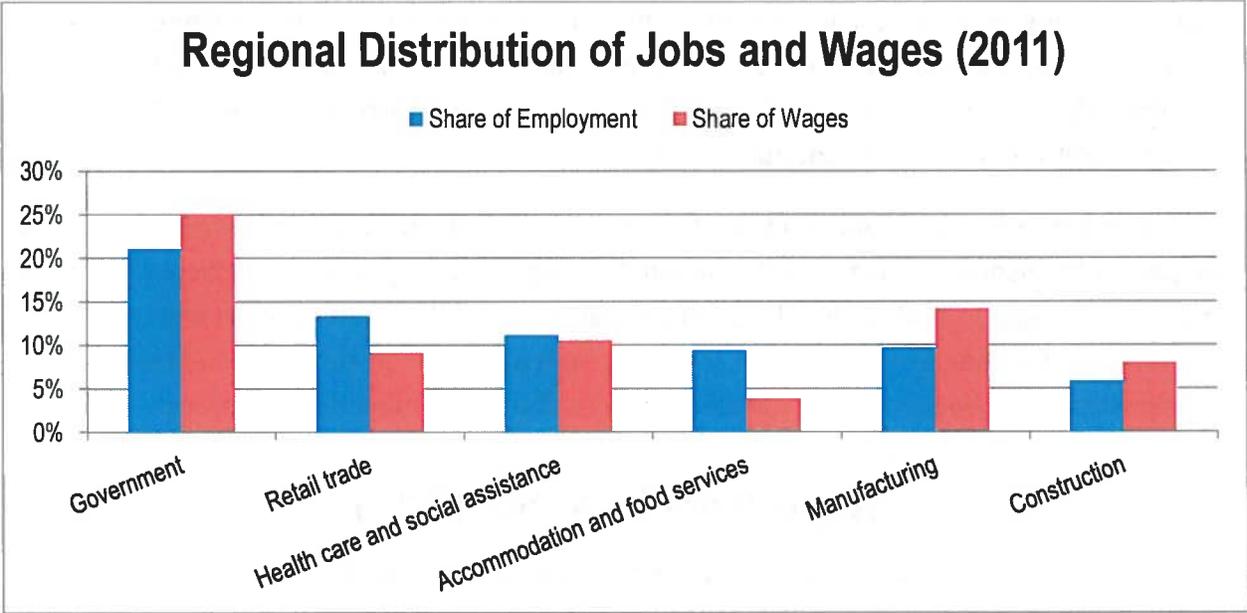
The region lies in the economic shadow of the greater Seattle metropolitan area where wages and per capita income trend above the national average. Demographic patterns are such that employers struggle to find qualified workers, especially in middle management and technical occupations. Companies in our region are losing skilled workers to those in neighboring metropolitan areas due to greater compensations and advancement opportunities.



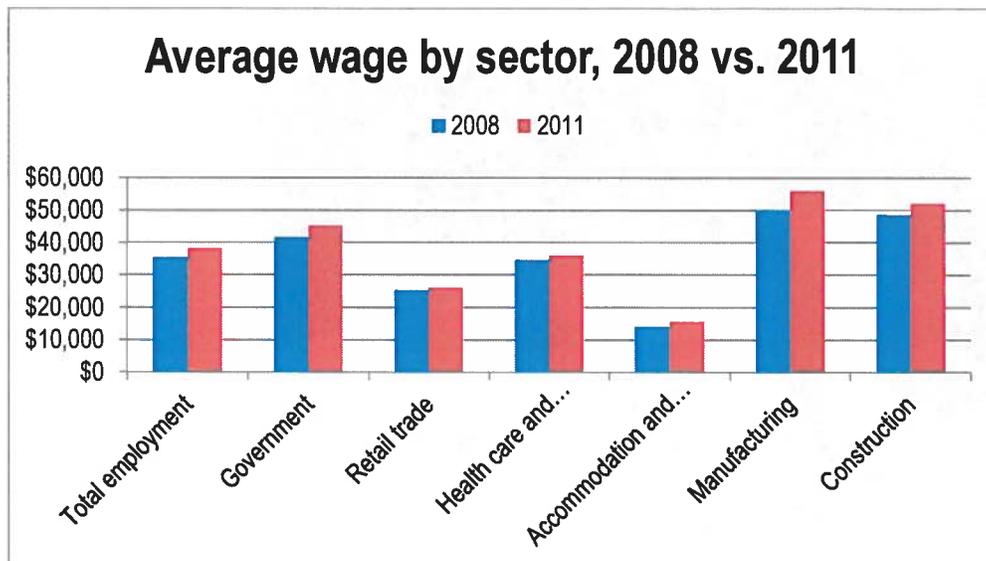
Excluding the government sector, manufacturing sector has the highest share of wages and retail sector has the highest share of employment.

The retail sector is frequently debated in terms of its economic development value as it tends to cycle existing money rather than providing new sources of income to the region. From an economic development perspective, retail can be viewed as an export – especially in Whatcom County. Given the close proximity to British Columbia, retail in the Northwest actually attracts “new” money. In terms of workforce development, the challenge with retail is the number of entry level jobs relative to the whole, the value of pay associated with those entry level jobs;

high turnover, and a lack of perceived career ladders. However, entry level jobs are valuable in terms of soft skills development.



Manufacturing and construction sectors continue to have the highest average wage. Manufacturing is seeing a slow steady growth. Construction sector was hit hard by the recession. There is positive movement in industrial and commercial construction but residential construction remain sluggish. British Columbia is experiencing considerable growth with new industrial, commercial and residential projects. This is resulting in a shortage in their skilled workforce. There could be potential opportunities to leverage their demand for skilled workers with our need for jobs for our dislocated construction workers and apprentices.



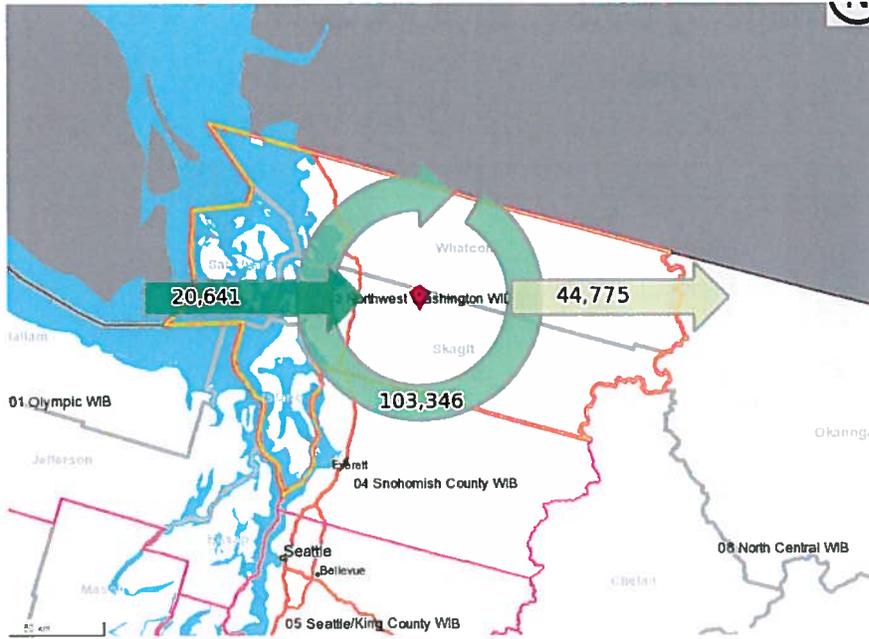
Commuting Patterns

Thirty percent of the people in the region commute out of the area for work, and about seventeen percent of the jobs in the region are held by people who commute in.

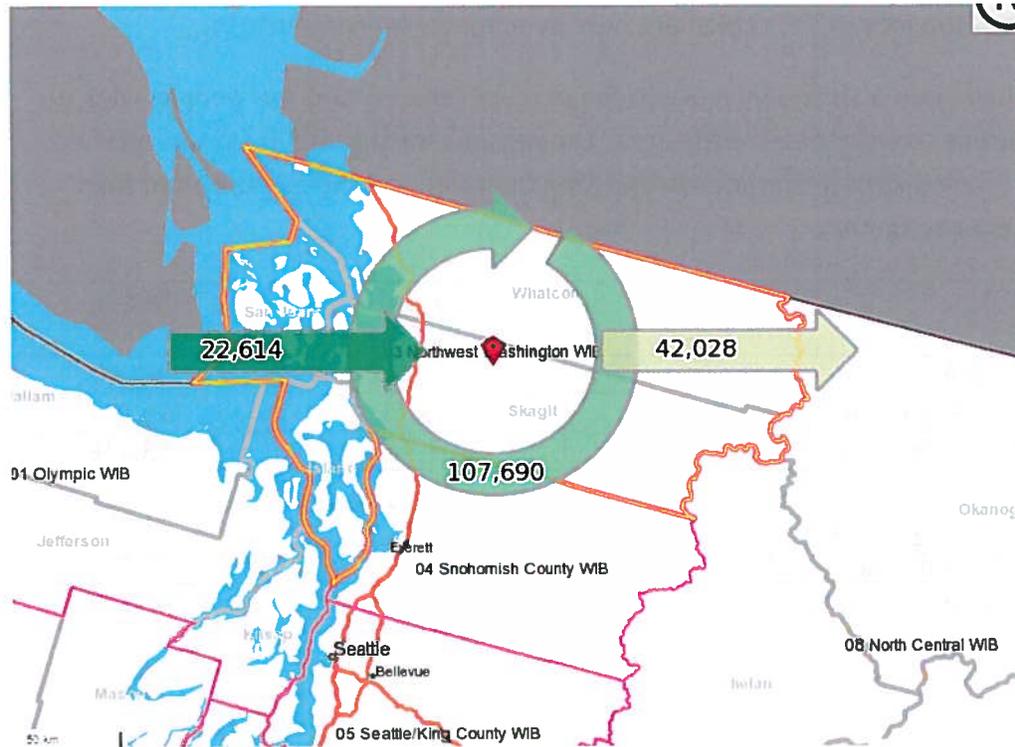
Since 2006, there had been a steady increase in the percent (and number) of people living in the NW but commuting to work outside the area. The reasons for this are not clear but the faster recovery of employment in Snohomish and King Counties and the expansion of the Boeing workforce may be factors.

	Count	Share
Employed in NW WDA	123,987	100%
Employed in the area, but living outside the area	20,641	16.6%
Employed and living in the area	103,346	83.4%
Living in NW WDA and employed	148,121	100%
Living in the area, but working outside	44,775	30.2%
Living and employed in the area	103,346	69.8%

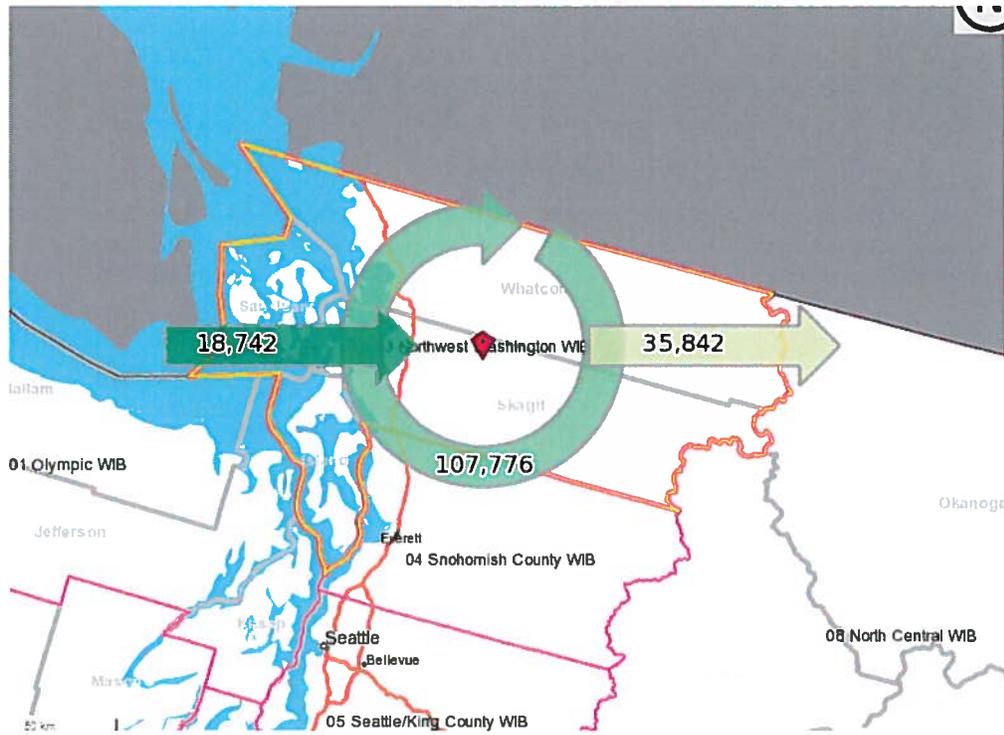
2010



2008



2006

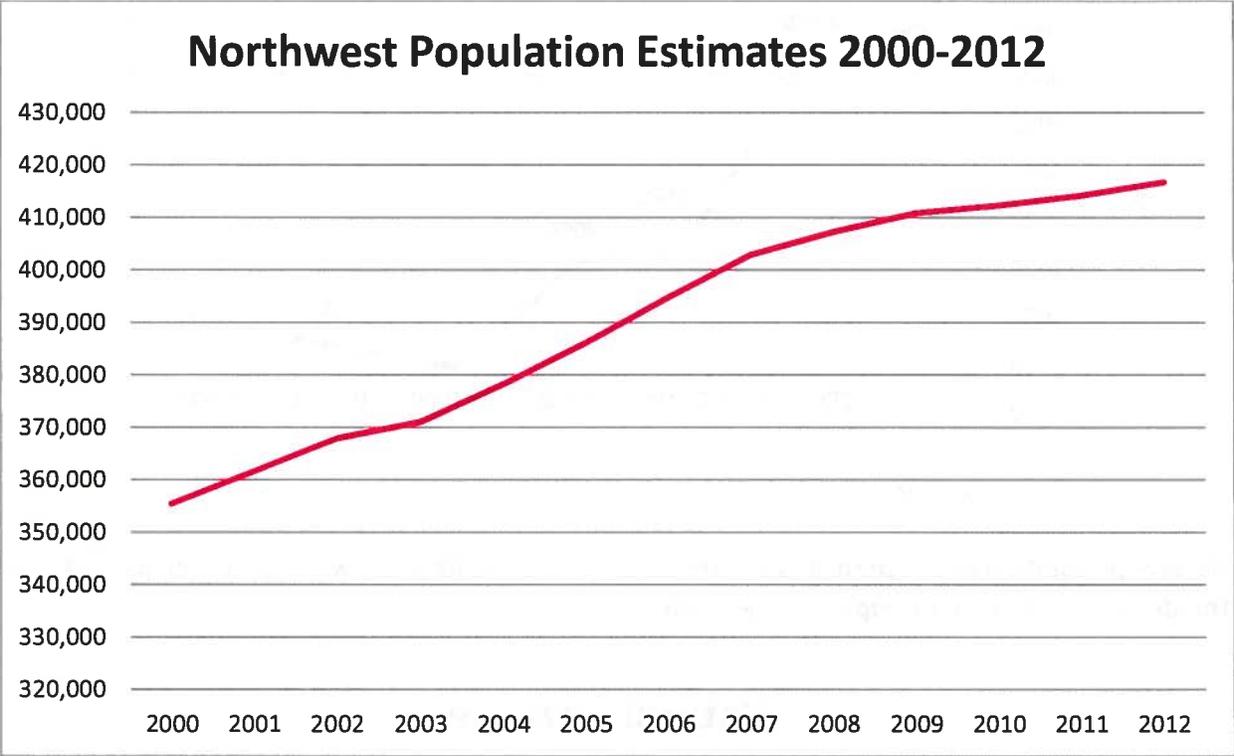


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CHANGES IN THE WORKFORCE

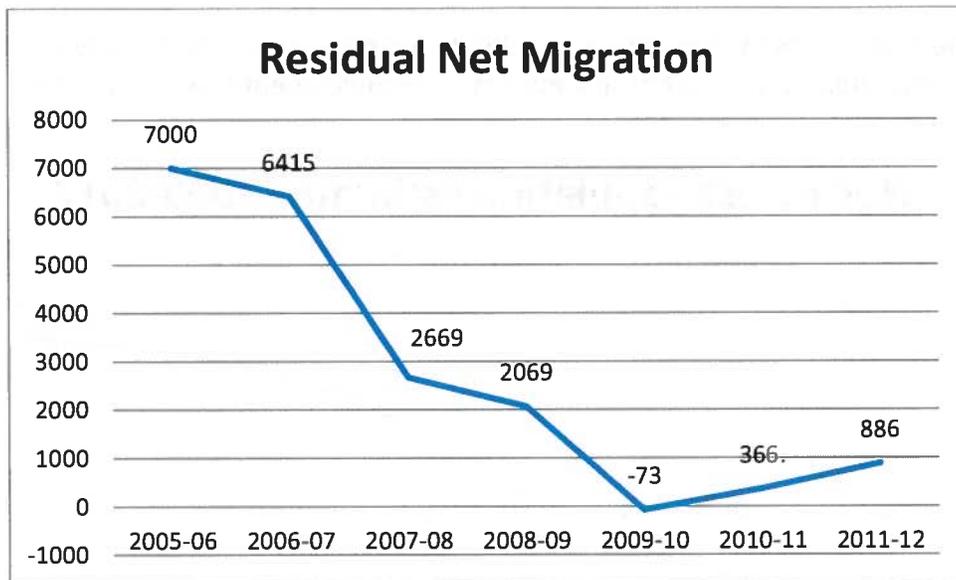
The Northwest, like most of the state, has and will continue to experience a significant change in the demographics of the population, particularly, the advancing age of its citizens and workforce and an increasingly diverse population.

The Northwest continues to experience a moderate increase in population, but at a much slower rate since 2008 when the housing market and employment started to decline.



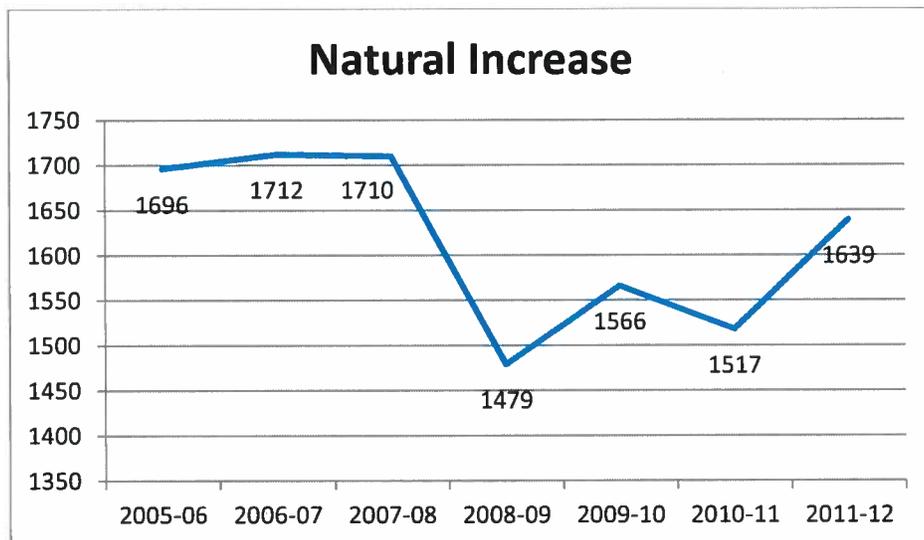
Source: OFM

The drop in growth rate was primarily a function of a rapid decrease in residual net migration which began to pick up in the past two years. If this increase continues, it has a potential impact on both who is available for the workforce, what occupations are needed and for a return of the residential housing market.



Source: OFM

Natural population increase (births-deaths) also showed a drop but was not the major factor in the decline in the rate of population growth.



Source: OFM

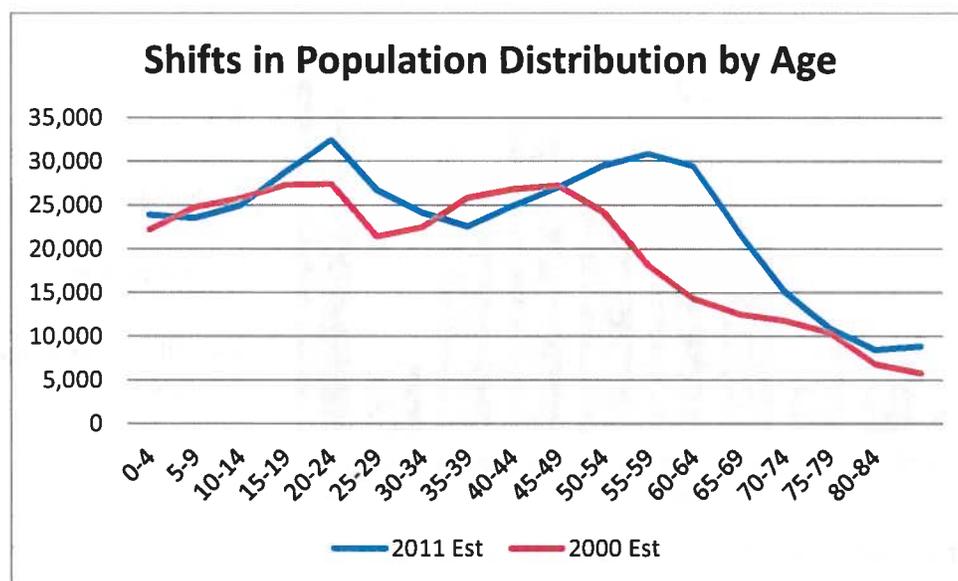
An Aging Population

Approximately 23% of the total population is above the age of 60. The number of citizens above the age of 60 will continue to increase because of: (a) the aging of a large current 50-60 year old cohort; (b) the projected advanced longevity of its citizens; and (c) increased in-migration of these age groups as a result of personal lifestyle changes and the presence of attractive retirement communities. These will have impact on the types of services provided and the corresponding workforce talent needed.

Population Estimates Age Distribution in 2011	Northwest	% of Total NW Pop.
<i>Preschool (0 to 4)</i>	23,910	6%
<i>School Age (5 to 19)</i>	77,314	19%
<i>Young Adult (20 to 29)</i>	59,175	14%
<i>Mid Adult (30 to 49)</i>	98,700	24%
<i>Older Adult (50 to 69)</i>	111,722	27%
<i>Older (70 plus)</i>	43,378	10%

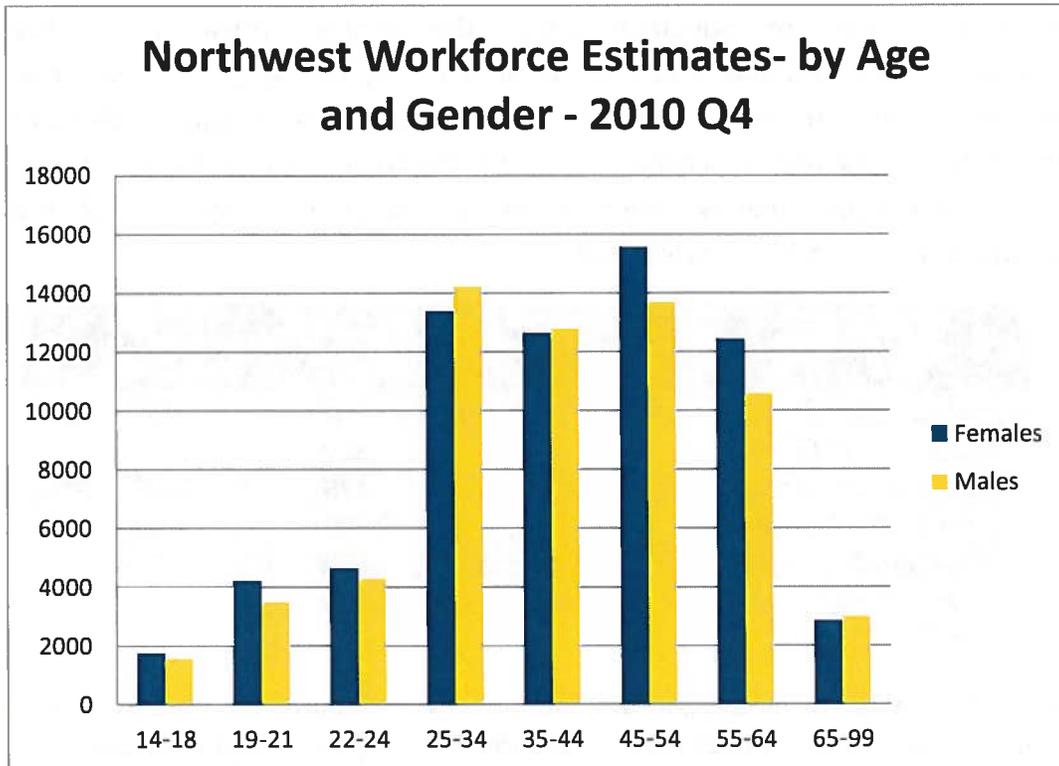
Source: LMEA

Over the last ten years, the most significant increase (62%) occurred in the 50-69 year old population. The next largest increase (21%) occurred in the young adult population, age 20 – 29. The 30- 49 year old “mid-adult” cohort showed a small decrease of 4%. All four Northwest counties had fewer people in their 30-49 in 2011 than in 2000. This was due to the smaller cohort now in its 30’s and early 40’s, as well as the possibility people in their 30’s relocate to larger metropolitan areas for higher wages (out-migration). This represents a loss of one of the most productive segments of the population.

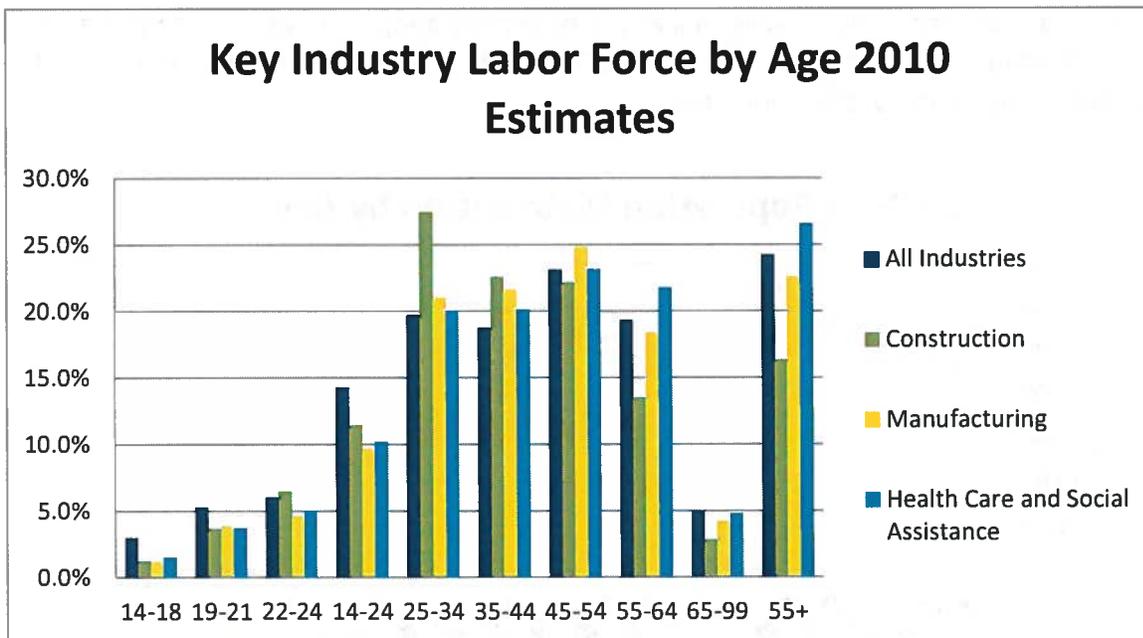


Source: OFM

These demographic changes significantly influence the composition of the available workforce.



Source: [Workforce Explorer Washington](#)



Source: Washington Employment Security Department

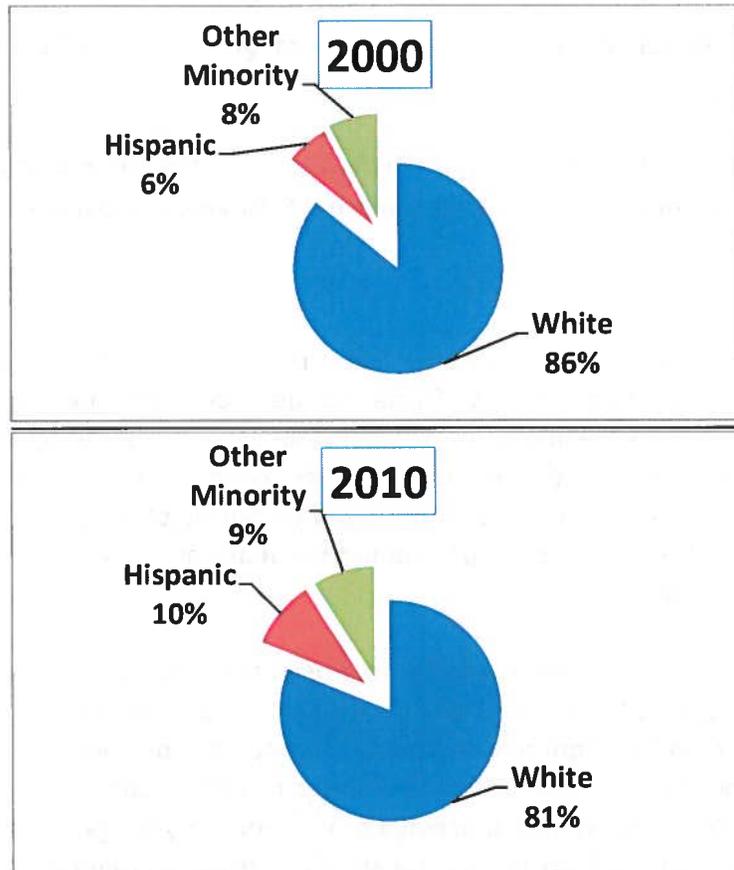
- The region's workforce has fewer people in the middle age ranges and more in both extremes than is evidenced in the statewide workforce.
- The large number of workers in the 18-24 year old group and relative "fall off" in the middle categories is consistent with the large number of education institutions which attract students into the area. Relatively low wages (compared to Seattle metropolitan area and the US) for workers in the 30-64 age range may encourage their out-migration to those areas.
- Specific sectors such as health and manufacturing show a more pronounced difference, with a relatively high share of workers in the 55-64 year old group (much more than statewide).

With the increase in the age of the workforce and citizens, many workforce issues will come to the forefront over the next two decades. These include a) age retirement patterns and their impact on the labor pool; b) the impact of restructuring and dislocation on the older worker and the workforce as a whole; c) the need for upgrading and retraining incumbent older workers for new, emerging occupations or increased technical job responsibilities and competencies; and d) the compatibility of demand occupations and jobs with the interests and skills of the mature worker.

Many of the boomer generation say they plan to delay retirement because of financial losses and stagnant incomes; they have drawn down savings and need to keep working at jobs they would rather not work at for economic necessity. They also cope with low interest rates on their savings, and poor likelihood of receiving employer health insurance after retiring. Yet by deciding to stay at work they are also blocking the pipeline for younger people seeking to advance their careers in a weak economy. The area has seen a continued increase in the youth population over the last five years. This age group shares some similar workforce issues with older workers, including the compatibility of demand occupations and jobs aligned with the interests and skills of youth. The wage structure is also an issue in retaining youth in local employment. Known as the "baby boomlet" (ages 30-40), this demographic cohort is not nearly the size of its baby boom predecessor and may be inadequate in size and current skills to replace the older workers retiring from the workforce. The challenge for the area will be in retaining and developing this valuable emergent labor resource. Over the next five years and beyond, there is potential to lose young workers to jobs in the Seattle metropolitan area, because either the wages are higher or the jobs more readily match their skills and interests.

The Workforce Is Increasingly Ethnically Diverse

In the last ten years, there have been continued increases in the minority population with Hispanics having the largest increase. It is expected that this increase in non-white groups will be maintained through 2030.



This region's workforce is expected to follow the statewide demographic trend in terms of labor force composition by race and ethnicity. The percent of Washington's labor force from nonwhite backgrounds is expected to more than double between 1990 and 2030, increasing from 8.4 percent in 1990 to 18.5 percent in 2030. The proportion of the labor force that is Hispanic is projected to quadruple, from 3.5 percent in 1990 to 13.5 percent as of 2030.

The rate of families not speaking English at home continued to increase in 2000-2010 years, albeit at a somewhat slower rate than in 1990-2000.

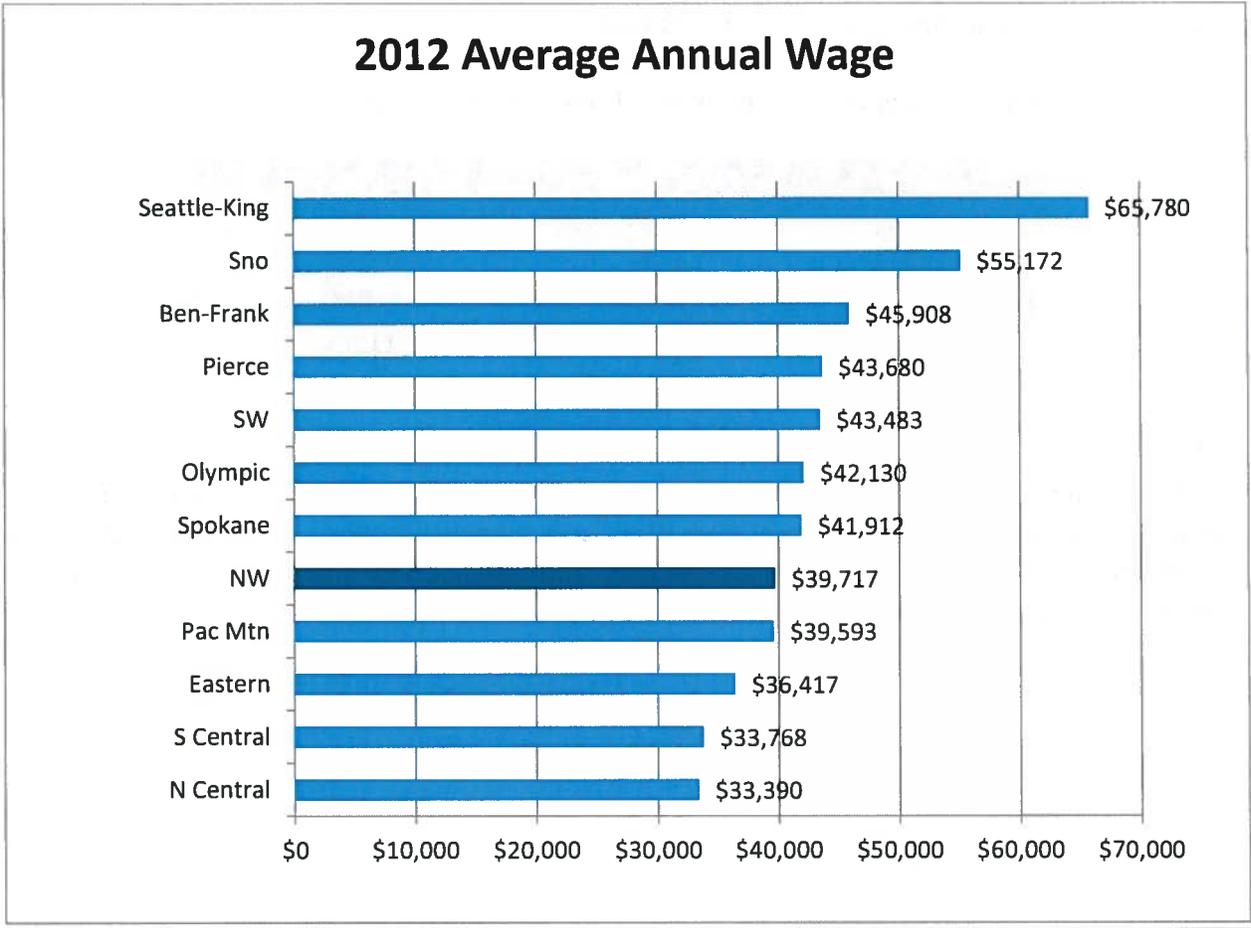
Percentage of Population Speaking a Language Other Than English at Home

County	2000 Survey	2010 Survey
ISLAND	8.2%	7.7%
SAN JUAN	4.9%	5.6%
SKAGIT	11.7%	15.2%
WHATCOM	9.2%	11.5%

Source: [US Census Bureau](#)

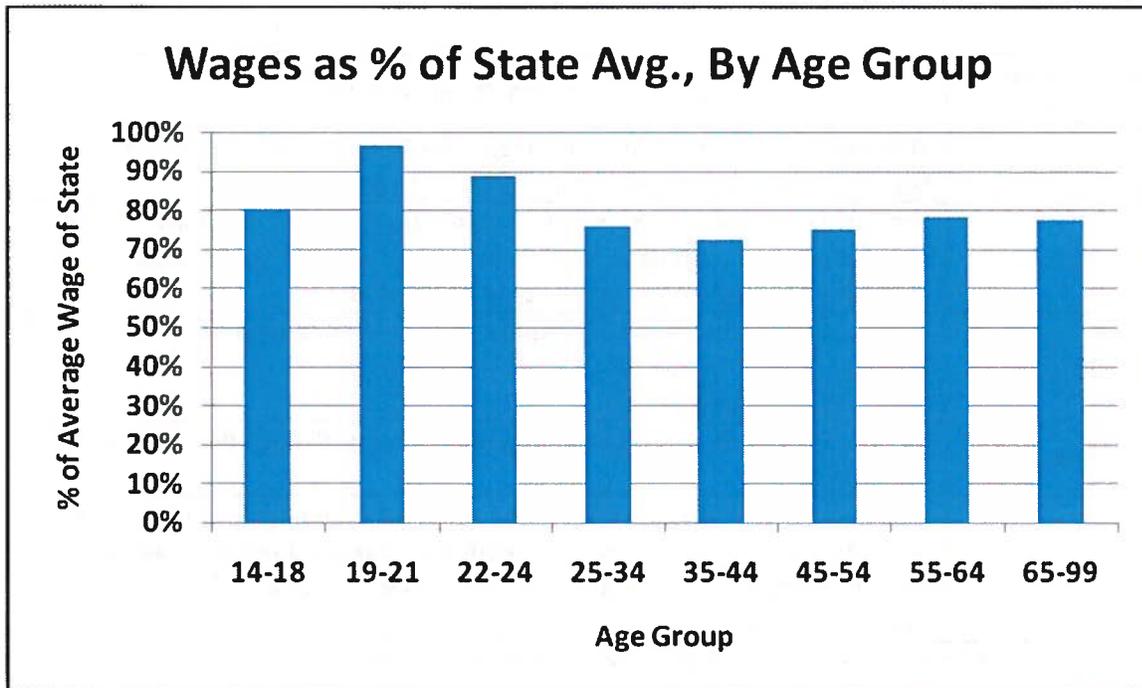
Employers here, as in all other parts of the US, must consider language ability and divergent cultural issues within the workforce. Recruiting and training methods are likely to change to better target and address concerns of minority and underserved populations. English as a Second Language (ESL) challenges will also increase.

How Do Wages in the Area Compare to the Other Regions in the State?



Source: Washington Employment Security Department

How Do Wages for Different Age Groups in the Area Compare to the State Average?



- Young workers do not face the same wage gap as other workers. This finding may be due to the fact many young workers are employed in jobs paying minimum or similar wage, so there is not as much wage disparity in general for younger workers.
- The growing wage gap as you move up in age is almost certainly part of the reason people in their 30s choose to leave the region.

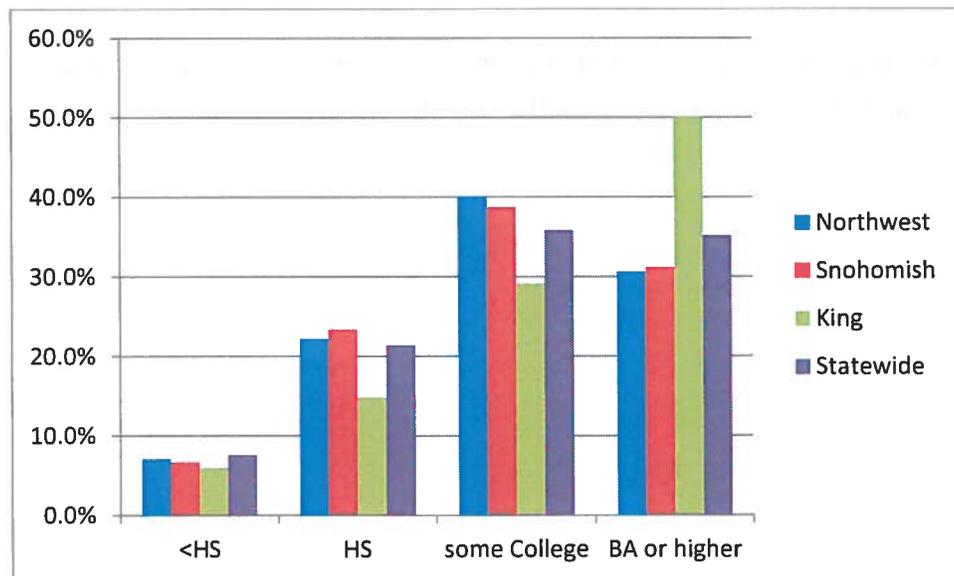
What Skills Are Needed for Jobs in the Region?

Percent of Jobs in Region	Education and Training Needed
22%	These occupations may require a high school diploma or GED certificate. Some may require a formal training course to obtain a license.
34%	These occupations usually require a high school diploma and may require some vocational training or job-related course work. In some cases, an associate's or bachelor's degree could be needed.
29%	Most occupations in this zone require training in vocational schools, related on-the-job experience, or an associate's degree. Some may require a bachelor's degree
11%	Most of these occupations require a four - year bachelor's degree, but some do not
5%	A bachelor's degree is the minimum formal education required for these occupations. However, many also require graduate school. For example, they may require a master's degree, and some require a Ph.D., M.D., or J.D. (law degree).

Source: Employment Security – Regional Labor Economist for Northwest Region

Education Levels of the Workforce

Education levels are comparable to neighboring areas such as Snohomish and King Counties, although King County has a higher percentage of workers with Bachelor degrees and above.



Source: Washington State Employment Security Department

Basic Information Technology (IT) and Computer Fundamentals

Basic IT competency has become a minimum requirement for the preponderance of jobs. IT skills are a bridge to enter employment, academic classes, formal computer classes, or vocational training. For those already employed, basic IT competency is a key to keeping and advancing their employment.

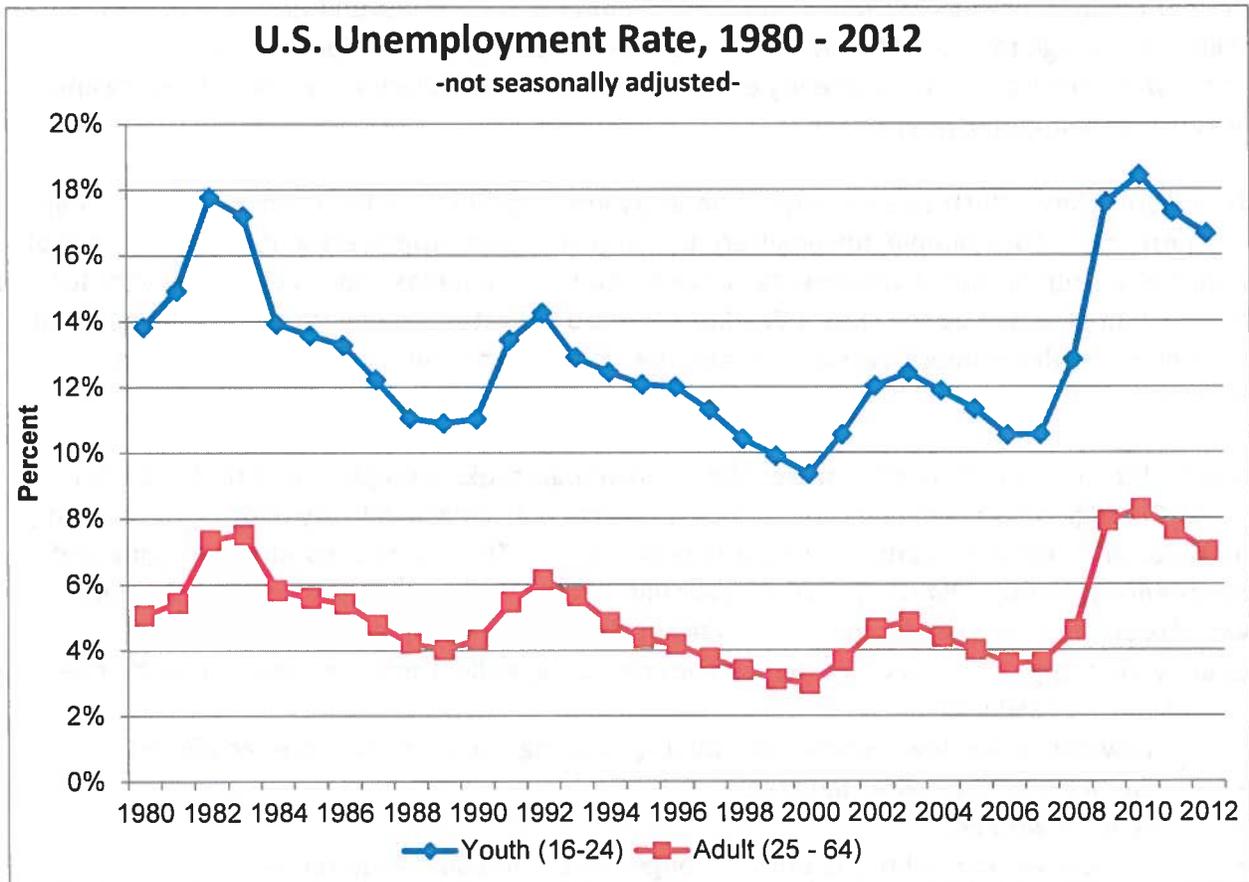
The region's key industries each require an entry level workforce with information technology competencies. For example, hospitals are the largest private employers and require IT skills of their housekeeping and environmental services staff. Hiring needs and occupational vacancy survey data analyzed by the state's Workforce Board indicates employers' continuing demand for workers with technological skill sets and their ongoing difficulties in finding qualified workers.

Much of the current IT training misses those individuals seeking employment that lack basic IT skills. The region is becoming more ethnically diverse and service delivery models and training methods are changing to address minority populations. The region's workforce is aging and experiencing an out-migration of 20-40 year olds, a technically adept age cohort. As older workers exit full time employment or physically demanding occupations, their new employment opportunities will require basic computing skills. These trends point to the need to provide basic IT skills to;

- Low skilled and low income individuals (including youth and welfare recipients)
- Speakers of non-native language
- Mature workers
- Current workers whose IT skills no longer meet minimum requirements

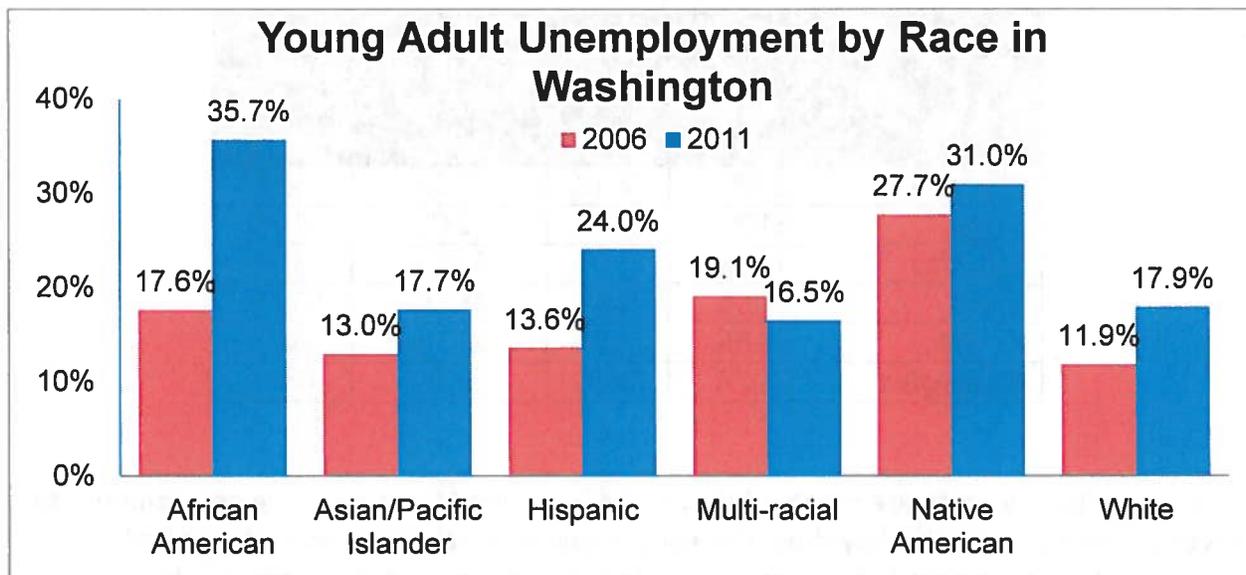
Young Adults in the Workforce

Young adults (16-24) are a large potential workforce. This age group tends to have low labor force participation. While it is not unusual for young adults to have higher unemployment rates than older workers; in a tight labor job market, the rate increases. Many baby boomers are deciding to delay retirement due to economic necessity. They are clogging the pipeline for younger people seeking to find their first jobs and advance their careers in a weak economy. In 2012, 16.7 percent of our state's young adults were unemployed, compared to 7 percent of adult workers (25-64).



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012, Current Population Survey.

Unemployment rates are even higher among minorities than the general population of young adults. In 2011, African American young adults in Washington had the highest unemployment rate with 35.7 percent, followed by young Native Americans (31 percent) and Hispanics (24 percent). White and Asian/Pacific Islander young adults had nearly identical unemployment rates of less than 18 percent. Interestingly, multi-racial young adults had the lowest unemployment rate of 16.5 percent.



Source: US Census Bureau's 2011 and 2006 American Community Survey.

Education continues to be an indicator of employment success for young adults. Education beyond a high school diploma is proven to help young adults successfully enter the labor market, earn high wages and increase job security. Unfortunately, according to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's Graduation and Dropout Statistics Annual Report 2010-2011, approximately one in four high school students in the state dropped out in the 2010-11 school year.

Of those who graduated, many did not go on to post-secondary education or training following graduation. They are competing for jobs in a tight job market that often require more advanced credentials. Of those who do go on to post-secondary education, too few are entering programs in high-demand fields. Consequently, employers are leaving positions unfilled for lack of qualified candidates. Young people's inability to obtain a first job makes it challenging for them to acquire soft skills critical to their workplace success. Persistent unemployment and disconnection from the world of work places our region's youth at a competitive disadvantage.

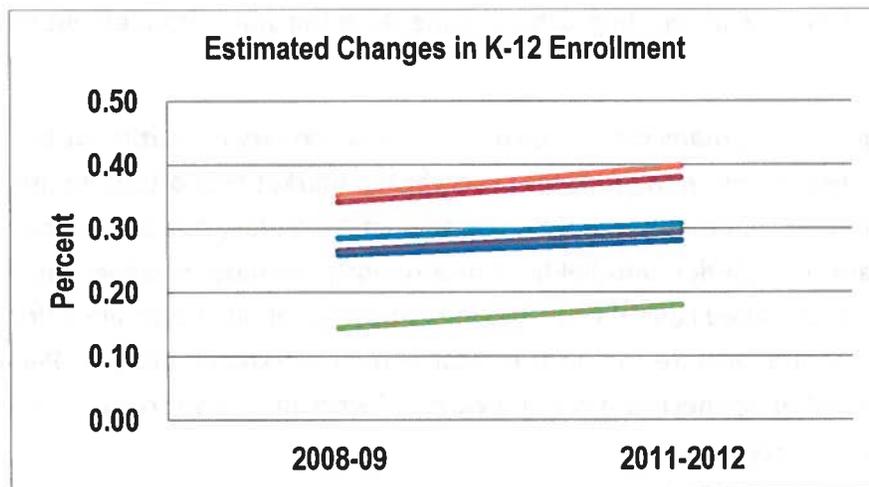
Minority Youth

The need to develop minority youth as a community and workforce resource is growing. Of youth enrolled in public and private schools, minority enrollment in the region is increasing faster than the state. Minority student enrollment increases clearly indicate growing diversity in the workforce of tomorrow.

	Enrollment Estimates		Percent Change	
	2008-09		2004-05 - 2008-09	
	Minority	White	Minority	White
Whatcom	25.9%	74.1%	19.9%	-5.5%
Skagit	34.2%	65.8%	22.6%	-8.8%
San Juan	14.4%	85.6%	27.9%	-3.6%
Island	26.5%	73.5%	18.8%	-5.4%
NW WA	28.5%	71.5%	21.3%	-6.5%
Washington	35.2%	64.8%	18.5%	-7.8%

To ensure minority youth are prepared to succeed in the workforce and have opportunities to develop competitive skills, they should be encouraged to develop strong academic and computer skills, be exposed to occupations and participate in work experiences in the health, science, technology, manufacturing, construction, and business and commerce fields.

Within certain employment sectors, most notably health care, the need for a bi-lingual and bi-cultural workforce is an opportunity for minority and underrepresented youth to enter the labor market in high wage, high skill jobs if they are provided the necessary career education, academic preparation and technical training.



Dropout Youth

Education level is a predictor of the ability to reach and sustain economic success. It is important the workforce development system encourage high school and post-secondary education completion by all groups, particularly those historically unsuccessful in completing high school, continuing at the post-secondary level, or traditionally employed in low-paying jobs. In addition to minority populations, these groups include low-income, disabled, limited English speaking, and women.

2009-10 County Graduation and Dropout Rates, Grades 7-12 (All Students)

County	Net Students Served in Grade						Dropout Rate in Grade						Number	Rate	On-Time Grad Rate	Est Cohort Dropout	Est Cohort Cont
	7	8	9	10	11	12	7	8	9	10	11	12					
Island	658	584	675	670	696	644	0.20%	0.00%	1.20%	1.20%	1.60%	4.20%	53	8.20%	84.20%	7.90%	7.90%
San Juan	132	135	149	119	151	134	0.00%	0.70%	1.30%	4.20%	6.00%	6.00%	6	4.50%	79.60%	16.40%	4.00%
Skagit	1423	1399	1526	1469	1685	1207	0.40%	0.50%	1.80%	3.20%	6.70%	11.90%	30	2.50%	75.90%	21.90%	2.20%
Whatcom	2057	2105	2309	2099	2293	1915	0.60%	1.00%	2.30%	3.00%	4.70%	5.80%	152	7.90%	77.90%	15.00%	7.20%

Source: WWU CEBR

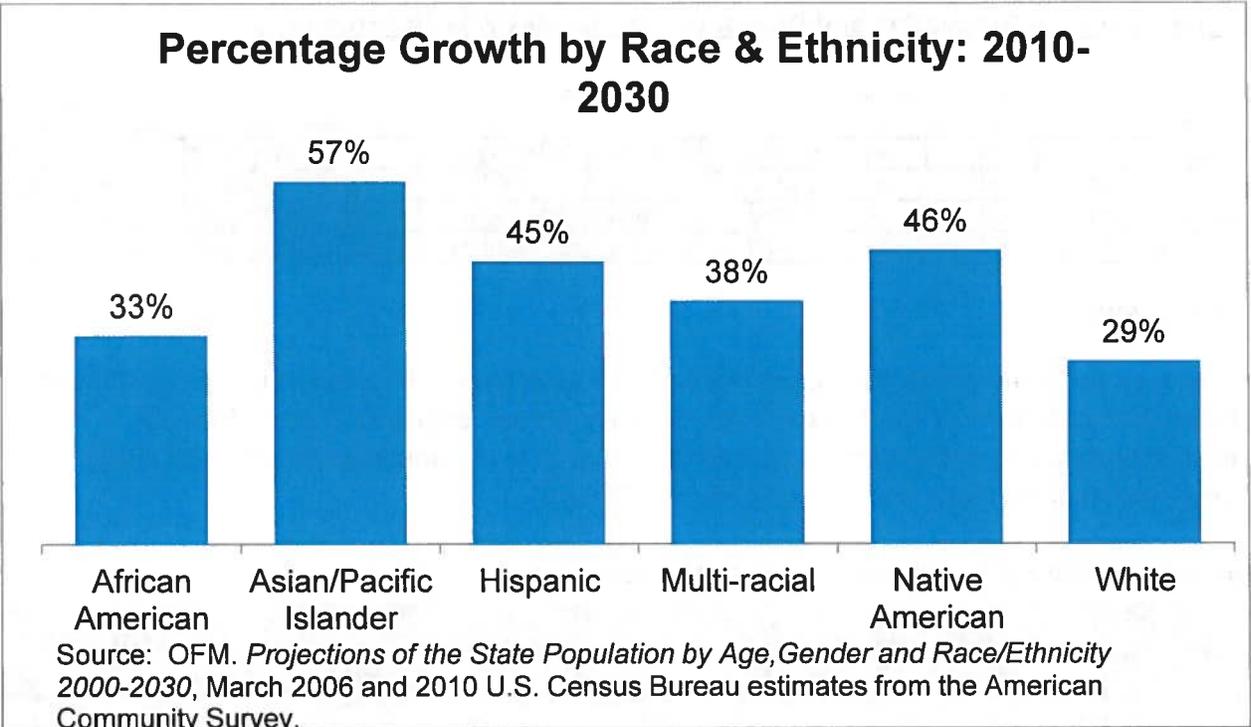
However, for many young adults, postsecondary educational achievement is proving difficult. More than one-third of Washington's young adults are not engaging in some form of postsecondary education within a year of their high school graduation (HEDB, HED 2012). This problem becomes more acute in minority population.

What percentage of 2010 high school graduates enrolled in postsecondary education?

District	Washington					Out of State					Total	
	Total	Public 4yr	Private 4yr	Public 2yr	Private 2yr	Total	Public 4yr	Private 4yr	Public 2yr	Private 2yr	HS Graduates	% Going to College
Anacortes	80-84%	30-34%	3-4%	45-49%	0-2%	15-19%	3-4%	10-14%	0-2%	0-2%	183	65-69%
Bellingham	85%	31%	5%	50%	0-1%	15%	6%	8%	0-1%	0-1%	761	71%
Blaine	85-89%	25-29%	0-5%	55-59%	0-5%	15-19%	6-9%	6-9%	0-5%	0-5%	142	55-59%
Burlington-Edison	90-94%	25-29%	5-9%	55-59%	0-2%	10-14%	3-4%	3-4%	0-2%	0-2%	252	71%
Concrete	100%	0-20%	0-20%	100%	0-20%	0-20%	0-20%	0-20%	0-20%	0-20%	45	40-44%
Coupeville	80-84%	30-34%	6-9%	40-44%	0-5%	15-19%	0-5%	6-9%	6-9%	0-5%	81	60-64%
Ferndale	85%	31%	0-2%	52%	0-2%	15%	6%	7%	0-2%	0-2%	293	70%
La Conner	100%	50-59%	11-19%	20-29%	0-10%	0-10%	0-10%	0-10%	0-10%	0-10%	45	60-64%
Lopez Island	40-59%	21-39%	0-20%	0-20%	0-20%	40-59%	0-20%	21-39%	0-20%	0-20%	16	60-79%
Lynden	85-89%	15-19%	5-9%	65-69%	0-2%	10-14%	3-4%	0-2%	5-9%	0-2%	206	63%
Meridian	90-94%	25-29%	10-14%	55-59%	0-5%	6-9%	0-5%	0-5%	0-5%	0-5%	84	55-59%
Mount Baker	90-94%	20-24%	0-5%	65-69%	0-5%	6-9%	0-5%	0-5%	0-5%	0-5%	148	60-64%
Mount Vernon	90-94%	25-29%	3-4%	55-59%	0-2%	10-14%	3-4%	5-9%	3-4%	0-2%	297	63%
Nooksack Valley	90-94%	25-29%	0-5%	60-64%	0-5%	10-14%	0-5%	0-5%	0-5%	0-5%	102	50-54%
Oak Harbor	86%	23%	0-2%	62%	0-2%	14%	6%	5%	3%	0-2%	341	58%
Orcas	60-79%	21-39%	0-20%	21-39%	0-20%	21-39%	0-20%	0-20%	0-20%	0-20%	27	60-69%
San Juan	70-74%	40-44%	10-14%	15-19%	0-5%	30-34%	15-19%	0-5%	6-9%	0-5%	84	65-69%
Sedro Woolley	90-94%	25-29%	5-9%	60-64%	0-2%	5-9%	0-2%	0-2%	0-2%	0-2%	233	52%
Statewide	83%	28%	5%	50%	0-1%	17%	6%	8%	2%	0-1%	65706	62%

Source: Education Research & Data Center (ERDC)

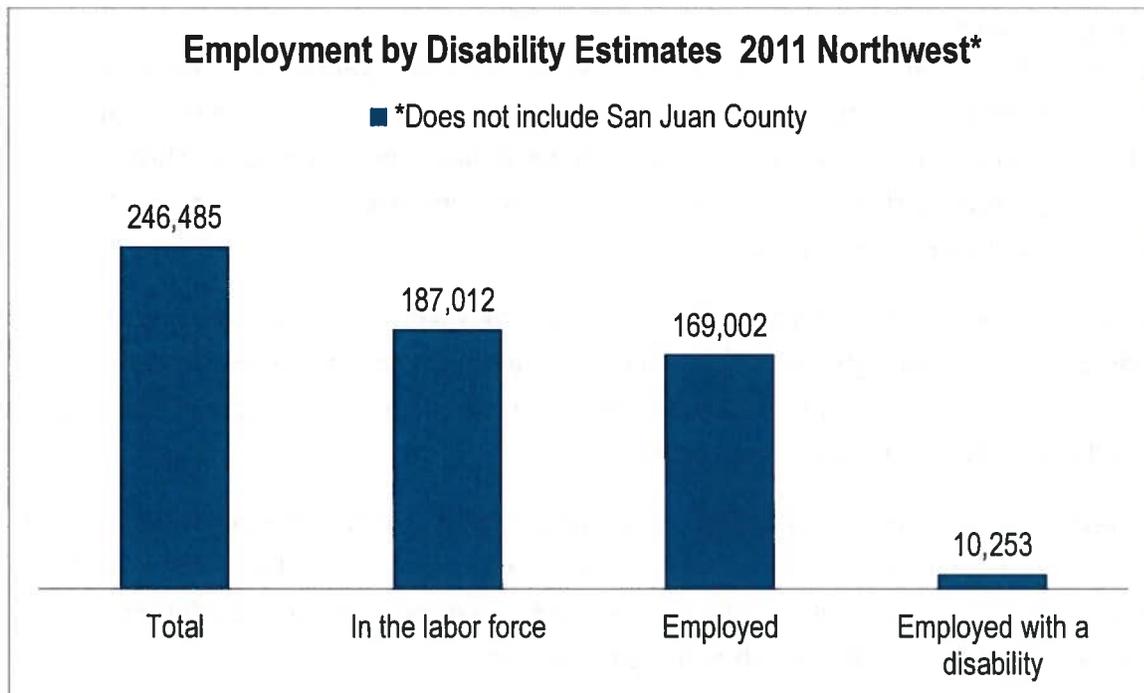
When comparing postsecondary trends with population projections, minority population growth is expected to significantly outpace whites. If minorities continue to obtain postsecondary education at rates lower than whites, our future workforce will be less educated than it is today.



Our region’s youth must make stronger connections to the workplace. Strategies important to the success of these groups include completion of high school and post-secondary training, and fostering the development of critical work readiness skills. Whether enough young people are in the workforce to replace retiring workers depends on how well and how quickly we engage youth in training and employment strategies.

People with Disabilities

Reliable summary data and trending information for this population is difficult to obtain. Under-reporting is common and data collection has been inconsistent, so the size of this group and whether their labor force participation is increasing or decreasing is hard to determine. Nevertheless, in the Northwest, 6% of the employed population is individuals with a reported disability. This compares favorably with the state-wide estimate that 7.4% of all Washington residents age 16 to 46 were employed individuals with a reported disability. Of unemployed individuals, a higher percent (14%) have a reported disability while 24% of those not in the labor force have a disability.



Source: ESD

Of employed individuals with disabilities, having a hearing difficulty is the most reported, followed by individuals with an ambulatory difficulty.

The Challenges Ahead

With the above-mentioned trends and changes in workforce demographics and the economy, the Northwest Workforce Council and its partners face challenges in assisting all residents to prepare for, find and keep employment in local high-wage, high-demand industry clusters. Careful planning targeting these challenges will help the system respond to the needs of industry, youth, and adult workers alike.

While current economic conditions have impacts across the spectrum of industries in the region, competition to find highly qualified workers remains. Unless more workers are produced with the skill and knowledge competencies employers need, the growing skill gap experienced will likely to slow economic recovery.

Over the next five years the labor shortage will become critical as baby boomers retire and the number of younger workers decreases. The labor shortage, especially in the growing number of occupations requiring high skills, will be exacerbated by a disengaged young adult population and an increase of workers with English as a second language.

Employers remain concerned too few young people consider advanced manufacturing or careers in trades, are unaware of skills needed, or the career's financial rewards. As experienced workers retire, they become difficult to replace because too few entry-level workers are equipped with the skills or preparation required to advance. This underscores the region's need for a well-conceived, coordinated and executed pipeline strategy.

The changes in the economy to being more knowledge-based, technology-dependent and global require current workers to be life-long learners and continue to gain new skills and education throughout their careers. On average, workers hold more than 10 jobs between the ages of 18 and 40, this means employers require workers with more applied work ready skills, and workers must continually retool and upgrade their competencies.

Education continues to be an indicator of employment success for young adults. In the 2010-11 school year, high school dropout rates for all students in the region ranges from 7.6 to 18.7 percent; the rates increase dramatically with low income and limited English speaking students. Those who graduated often lack adequate workplace skills for entry-level positions and high unemployment limits work experience opportunities for youth. The ever increasing cost of tuition makes it challenging for individuals to obtain the education or training needed to enter or advance in their chosen career field. As a result, many young adults are disconnected from the labor force.

It is important to continue to strengthen the connections between K-12 and post-secondary education and industry to promote career opportunities, foster the development of critical work readiness skills, and to expand work-based learning opportunities.

Long-term unemployed individuals lacking recent or relevant work experience are challenged by a competitive job market which demands contemporary skills. Older workers face a high rate of chronic unemployment, leading to their disconnection from the labor market. They are also competing with the underemployed. Innovative approaches to retool and reengage the long term unemployed are necessary.

To remain competitive in the national and global market, a long-term commitment for a skilled, flexible and technically competent workforce is necessary. We must continue to develop and implement strategies to effectively match dislocated workers to existing job opportunities. This will entail providing necessary short term training, certifications and on-the job training to rapidly fill available positions and return these workers to employment as soon as possible. We must also continue to address the underlying skill shortages that exist for projected medium and high skill jobs in the area's key industry sectors and clusters.

The workforce system will be asked to serve more people at a fast pace with more flexibility. It will require us to increase our engagement with industry, education and economic development partners to create innovative solutions to respond to rapidly changing industry needs and demographic shifts.

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STRATEGIC GOALS, OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Northwest Workforce Council is dedicated to addressing the full spectrum of workforce needs through an outcome and customer based model that addresses the needs of both employers and job seekers. The Council's core business is to improve the ability of our workforce to meet the demands of business and industry. The Council envisions a cohesive workforce strategy created through the common goals of business, education, labor, and community organizations will yield strong economic outcomes and an adaptable and skilled workforce. To that end, the Council has adopted the following four strategic goals:

Lead the Region's One-Stop Career Center System Which:

- Aligns education, employment and training services
- Reinforces retraining and retention of the current workforce
- Provides valued services and dependable results for business and the workforce
- Embeds the principles of continuous quality improvement.

Strengthen the Regional Workforce Development System Which:

- Expands ways in which business is engaged
- Tailors its services and products responsive to business
- Leverages resources and aligns strategies of key partners
- Partners strategically to strengthen regional competitiveness and job creation
- Elevates support of workforce development issues, policies and initiatives

Champion A Systemic Approach to Lifelong Learning Which:

- Is responsive to business and industry needs
- Enables workers to identify opportunities and pathways for career success;
- Offers workers opportunities to upgrade their skills in response to changing workforce needs and challenges
- Promotes competency-based education and training programs

Strategically Partner With Regional Economic Development:

- Identify opportunities to align education, workforce, and economic development
- Leverage resources to achieve common goals

The Council has identified the following strategic actions and initiatives for the Northwest workforce development system. It should be noted rapid and unpredictable changes to the regional, state, and national economy make this strategic plan a “living” document. Changes in course or ability to accomplish all strategies in the Action Plan may well be compromised by events beyond the power of the Council to influence. It is the Council’s intent to pursue the following actions to the best of our ability and modify the Plan as circumstances warrant.

Goal A. Lead the Region’s One-Stop Career Center System Which:

A-1 Aligns education, employment and training services

- a) Leverage time and investment resources with partner agencies to support training and education
- b) Support short-term training options to maximize funding and minimize training time
- c) Align WorkSource service delivery system with state and regional economic priorities
- d) Increase collaborations between education institutions, community partners and industry

A-2 Reinforces retraining and retention of the current workforce

- a) Provide high quality labor market information that enables workers to respond to changes in technology or skill demands of business and informs workers of opportunities to improve their skills.
- b) Advocate for continued availability and expansion of training programs accessible to employees through flexible times and locations, and through hybrid and on-line delivery
- c) Bring education and industry together to identify skills that enhance worker retention and promotion
- d) Encourage business investment in worker training and retraining by promoting facility use for training, flexible work scheduling, and matching funds
- e) Provide and market services to business to provide upgrade and transition training to current workers

A-3 Provides valued services and dependable results

- a) Strengthen the agility of WorkSource system partners response to emerging or changing employer needs
- b) Make WorkSource services more widely known and available
 - i. Deploy the new suite of WorkSource marketing products
 - ii. Advocate for improved first point of contact introductions (web-based, place bound)
- c) Champion and implement opportunities for job seeker skill growth aligned with labor market demand
- d) Sustain and/or grow employer satisfaction with WorkSource services

A-4 Embeds the principles of continuous quality improvement

- a) Maintain a rigorous one-stop operator and site certification process based upon the quality principles of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award
- b) Foster a culture and daily practice of continuous quality improvement within the WorkSource Northwest Career Centers
- c) Continue to refine and increase use of the region's knowledge management system, known as DAWN – Dynamically Aligned Workforce Network
- d) Focus attention on system outcome performance through a quarterly report to the board's oversight body, Quality Assurance Committee

Goal B. Strengthen the Regional Workforce Development System Which:

B-1 Expands ways in which business is engaged

- a) Conduct and/or participate in regional conferences on key industry sectors to foster the exchange of ideas and innovations.
- b) Convene and/or participate in local industry forums and tables to identify industry's emerging or unmet talent/workforce needs
- c) Develop a distribution model to disseminate workforce intelligence garnered from business forums and investigations conducted by workforce and economic development partners.
- d) Expand the number of businesses participating in work-integrated learning (i.e. internships, pre-apprenticeship, on the job training, mentorship).
- e) Grow partnerships with industries to market their career opportunities to youth, parents, and other advisors and influencers.

B-2 Tailors its services and products responsive to business

- a) Provide high quality labor market information that enables programs to respond to changes in the labor market and informs students and customers about current career opportunities
- b) Increase employers' knowledge and use of valued workforce system services
- c) Engage employers in identifying skill standards and promote training programs that provide skills to industry standards
- d) Grow opportunities for students and job-seekers to build workplace competencies in the classroom and through experiential learning
- e) Advocate for continued availability and expansion of training programs accessible to current workers through flexible times and locations, and through hybrid and on-line delivery

B-3 Leverages resources and aligns strategies of key partners

- a) Enhance coordination between workforce and economic development in key economic clusters
- b) Promote strategies for networking across geographic, professional, business and interest-based communities
- c) Maintain active partnership with other workforce councils and educational and economic development organizations to develop new funding resources

- d) Maintain collaboration with community and technical college partners for coordination of student support resources to maximize student access and success in training.
- e) Align resources to support secondary vocational education programs for high school students that establish educational and employment pipelines in targeted industries.
- f) Leverages resources for work-based experience and internships for high school student aligned with their career pathways that maximize outcomes including program retention, graduation, entry into post-secondary training and employment.
- g) Work with secondary and post-secondary vocation education programs to enhance all partners' performance on State core and Federal common measures

B-4 Partners strategically to strengthen regional competitiveness and job creation

- a) Enhance partnerships with economic development organizations and employers to support regional efforts for business attraction, expansion and job retention
- b) Coordinate business engagement activities to identify talent needs and convene stakeholders to align activities to meet those needs
- c) Collaborate with economic development and education partners to leverage resources, increase efficiency and provide quality business services

B-5 Elevates support of workforce development issues, policies and initiatives

- a) Network at the Federal level with the key workforce staff of US Senators and representatives.
- b) Increase outreach to stakeholders and potential financial partners.
- c) Develop talking points and communication tools to communicate systemic barriers and regulatory and statutory impediments to business success and innovation.
- d) Continue to strengthen the workforce and the Council's profile with the media, key stakeholders and funders.

Goal C. Champion A Systemic Approach to Lifelong Learning Which:

C-1 Is responsive to business and industry needs

- a) Identify training and educational opportunities to support targeted industries' workforce skill needs
- b) Identify and support training in high demand occupations
- c) Expedite worker training to meet industry and market demands
- d) Collaborate with industry partners to innovate just-in-time trainings tailored to business need
- e) Build training capacity for employer-based recruitment and retention strategies for a multi-generational, multi-cultural workforce

C-2 Enables workers to identify multiple pathways for career success

- a) Introduce K-12 and other young adults, their advisors, and parents to career opportunities and connecting activities
- b) Expose youth to activities to broaden knowledge of career options in high demand industries
- c) Increase work-based learning opportunities that promote career pathways and soft skill development
- d) Support efforts to promote professional technical/vocational and apprenticeship programs.
- e) Provide joint outreach and recruiting efforts with local colleges to engage students in post-secondary education

C-3 Offers workers opportunities to upgrade their skills in response to changing workforce needs and challenges

- a) Expand career and education pathways to enter and advance in the workforce
- b) Support continuous learning in all phases of employment: preparation, retention and advancement
- c) Provide learning opportunities for workers to keep pace with evolving technology
- d) Cultivate soft skills through mentorship opportunities with local businesses
- e) Integrate basic skills remediation with long-term training opportunities
- f) Increase participation in adult basic education and high school completion

C-4 Promotes competency-based education and training

- a) Bring education and industry together to identify skill standards that enhance hiring, retention and promotion
- b) Partner with education to enable industry recognized credentialing of skill attainment
- c) Promote attainment of industry recognized certificates and credentials in target industries
- d) Provide high quality labor market information that enables participants to make decisions on career progression and “stacking” of industry recognized credentials
- e) Promote workplace skills attainment and credentialing through KeyTrain, WorkKeys, and National Work Readiness Credential
- f) Increase the use of credit for prior learning which lead to certificates and credentials

Goal D. Strategically Partner with Regional Economic Development:

- a) Identify opportunities to align education, workforce, and economic development
- b) Leverage resources to achieve common goals

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PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

The Northwest Area's performance accountability system is consistent with the accountability provisions of WIA, the State and the Department of Labor's regulations and guidelines. The Council uses the information collected and reported through the statewide information system (SKIES) and the data and post-program outcomes collected and reported by the State Workforce Board and the Employment Security Department on federal Common Measures and on state Core Performance Measures, based upon data matches or state administered surveys of individuals and employers. The Council also applies the results of its continuous quality improvement methods, which include performance data, customer flow data, customer surveys, comment cards, and focus groups.

The purposes of the performance review and accountability system is to improve performance; provide quality and effective services to customers; and assist the Council in overseeing the one-stop (WorkSource) system programs, including WIA Title I-B programs. The Council carries out its performance accountability responsibilities on a regular and timely basis through its Quality Assurance Committee. The Quality Assurance Committee receives and reviews local WIA levels of performance on federal Common Measures and on state Core Performance measures (Appendix A). This committee is responsible for reviewing the performance information provided by the State Board, Employment Security Department and that collected by the Council either through SKIES or its continuous quality improvement processes; incorporating the findings and conclusions of these efforts in its strategic planning; and initiating timely and effective performance-based consequences that may include incentives, improvement plans, or sanctions. Performance data is used to select and evaluate one-stop operators (WorkSource) and WIA Title I-B program operators and if determined necessary, initiate interventions or terminate an operator for cause.

Northwest Workforce Council reviewed the performance of WIA Title I programs and the other workforce development programs throughout its strategic planning process to assist in determining strategic goals and strategies for the workforce development system. To improve performance, meet customer needs and develop a world class workforce, it has set goals and strategies that include skills standards, competency attainment, system integration, lifelong learning and a commitment to continuous quality improvement.

The Council believes its strategies will strengthen the services, increase outcome performance and develop the necessary skill level needed by the worker and the employer in today's work environment. The Council will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies in relation to local labor market needs, demographics of the current and emerging workforce, the outcomes achieved by the participants, and customer feedback. The Council will, if necessary, revise its strategies if the labor market needs, performance or customer feedback determines an expansion or change is necessary.

The Council recognizes the value and benefit of management indicators to track and predict performance. Working closely with its partners to track and report common measures across multiple federal workforce development programs: Employment Security Department, Job

Corps, and the Department of Social and Health Services Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. The Council's Quality Assurance Committee has continually refined its Northwest Workforce System Quarterly Performance Report to improve its usefulness as a performance oversight tool. The report includes measures of importance to the Council and the one stop system which include: DOL federal common measure performance of programs operated by WorkSource Northwest partner organizations, WIA training investment, WIA fiscal summary, competitive workforce grants and awards by key sector, one stop customer flow, business and job seeker satisfaction, unemployment, and other significant workforce system issues or accomplishments of the quarter. The report provides timely insight into performance attainment and aids the Council in its oversight role to ensure the region's programs meet performance goals.

The Council has developed a comprehensive tracking system for WIA Title 1B performance for Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. The Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs are designed to meet the Common Performance Measures with entry into employment, retention and earnings gain as well as literacy and numeracy gains and credentials for Youth.

The Council, in its strategic planning capacity, reviews the performance of the other workforce development programs in the area which include Adult Basic Education, Post-Secondary Vocational Technical Education, Apprenticeships, Private Schools, and Secondary Vocational Education. The outcomes on state workforce core measures for these programs are reviewed annually. (Appendix B). The Quality Assurance and Planning Committees, and the Youth Council receive and review state workforce programs' local outcomes, and state level targets and outcomes to inform the development of the Council's strategic goals and objectives and specific strategies.

The Council is not directly responsible for the performance of the above local workforce development programs which are governed and administered by other agencies or organizations. The purposes of the performance review of these programs include but are not limited to: improving outcomes for its customers, expanding existing coordination efforts, increasing services and resources to customers, and providing quality and current information to employers and job seekers.

WorkSource Northwest staff work actively with secondary and post-secondary vocation education programs to enhance all partners' performance on State core and common measures. Examples for secondary vocational education programs include the NWC's implementation of the Opportunity Internship Scholarship that establishes educational and employment pipelines to high demand occupations in targeted industries for low-income high school students. Another is connecting Tech-Prep and career and technical education students to NWC's Youth Vocational Scholarship that supports low income youth in key industry sector vocational training at local public colleges. Internship for low income high school students are aligned with their career pathways when feasible and lead to program retention, graduation and post-secondary training.

At the post-secondary level, the WorkSource staff actively engage with the local colleges' Worker Retraining staff to coordinate resources and services to dislocated workers, increasing retention in training and employment outcomes after training completion. NWC coordinates with the State Opportunity Grant program which supports low income adults to train for high-wage, high-demand careers. Staff meet and identify individual students that need additional assistance and provide resources and services that help the student complete their training program past the point of Opportunity Grant support.

The State's Workforce Board establishes criteria and performance levels and maintains the system for training services provider eligibility and performance. This information provides useful baseline data for reviewing the performance of other workforce development programs.

Continuous Quality Improvement in WorkSource Operations

Northwest Workforce Council, with agreement of the chief local elected official and in accordance with its Workforce Investment Act (WIA) mandate, designates and certifies one-stop Career Center operators and those sites wishing to become, or remain, a part of the WorkSource-Northwest one-stop system. The Council is authorized to approve, approve provisionally with a required plan of action to address deficient areas, or deny an application. A technical assistance guide is sent that identifies both strengths and opportunities for improvement. Subsequent applications are reviewed to assure the Council's recommendations have been addressed and the expected quality system continues to mature in sophistication and deployment. Certification is for a three-year term.

The certification process is managed by the Quality Assurance Committee's Certification Team, whose membership consists of representatives from organized labor and private industry. The full Council membership acts upon the Quality Assurance Committee's recommendations. In 2012 the Certification Team members conducted a review and improvement cycle of the Council's certification materials and process. The updated process and improved application materials were approved by the Council in December 2012.

Operators and the sites they operate must represent the highest standards of quality in the delivery of employment and training services. Any entity wishing certification must demonstrate processes, practices, and performance outcomes which meet or exceed a set of quality standards based upon the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award criteria and defined within the [Council's WorkSource Certification Application](#):

LEADERSHIP A commitment to excellence in the WorkSource Northwest system is modeled and shaped by strong public and private leadership. The Council provides the workforce development system with effective private-sector led oversight of the regional system, while agency leaders work collaboratively to provide active and supportive management to achieve system goals. Senior leadership is directly involved in creating and sustaining common values, organizational directions, performance expectations, and customer focus. Leaders remove barriers which deter innovation and quality improvement.

STRATEGIC PLANNING WorkSource Northwest is managed in accordance with the Council's strategic and operations plans, WorkSource system policies and regional protocols. The Council's plan focuses on ensuring quality and results. WorkSource Northwest one-stop operator(s) develop and use a Quality Plan that demonstrates to the Council strategies for achieving its Framework for Doing Business. The Quality Plan sets strategies and objectives for the next one to three years, while containing clear and measurable implementation steps in support of the Council's Strategic and Operations Plan.

CUSTOMER FOCUS The WorkSource Northwest system is based upon an unwavering focus on the needs of its business and job seeker customers. Services are shaped and assessed by attention to customer needs and associated adjustments to strategies, processes, and products. Customer satisfaction calls for the use of relevant data and information as an integral piece of the organization's performance. The Council requires the solicitation and applied use of customer feedback to inform continuous quality improvements.

MEASUREMENT, ANALYSIS AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT In order to ensure WorkSource Northwest system is managed effectively, responds to customer needs, and produces results, consistent use of meaningful data is fundamental. Performance must be reviewed and analyzed and that knowledge then used to lead performance improvement.

WORKFORCE FOCUS WorkSource Northwest sites are well-integrated, high-performance work organizations. Collaborating agencies reduce duplication of effort, empower staff to make decisions, and invest in staff development. Leadership ensures staff have the tools and skills they need to provide excellent service. Every staff member has the ability and authority to meet customer needs, either directly or, when appropriate, by helping the customer make the right connections to the expertise he or she seeks.

OPERATIONS FOCUS WorkSource Northwest is a high quality, customer service enterprise. To ensure ongoing success, emphasis is placed on continuous improvement of key processes to reduce variability and rework and improve performance. Agility is required to respond quickly, flexibly and effectively to changing requirements. Work systems and work processes are designed, managed, and improved to deliver customer value and achieve organizational success.

RESULTS In its oversight role of the workforce development system, Northwest Workforce Council reviews outcomes of the one-stop career centers and affiliated sites of WorkSource Northwest. Each partner organization and program within this system contributes to the system's overall performance, while each is responsible to its funding source for program results and compliance. Program and organizational performance are one aspect of performance results. The Council is also interested in ensuring the collective system of one stop career centers and affiliated sites, known as WorkSource Northwest, contributes to the achievement of its strategic goals for the workforce development system.

Performance Based Accountability and Incentives

Northwest Workforce Council is accountable for the results of WIA Title I-B through a system of performance-based interventions, and shares in accountability for vocational education and adult education results through a system of incentives.

WIA authorizes incentive funding for states that exceed the “adjusted levels of performance” in WIA Title I and adult education and family literacy. A state that achieves 100 percent on the average for all the federal core indicators will be considered to have exceeded the “adjusted levels of performance.” The State Workforce Board allocated the funds to local areas that exceeded their expected level of performance in these programs.

For WIA Title I B, the state may earmark a portion of the state set aside to reward local areas that exceed 100 percent of the average of the expected levels of performance for the state and federal core indicators. When ESD has allocated these funds to local areas, they are used locally to advance other strategic initiatives. ESD has not allocated any of these funds to local areas since the 2008 Program Year. Since PY 2008, the Council, as WIA 1-B program operator, has exceeded 100 percent of the average of the expected levels of performance for the state and federal core indicators.

A workforce area is considered to not meet local performance measures when its actual performance falls below 80% of the target, for any one of the Adult, Dislocated Worker or Youth federal common measures in a program year. An area is at risk of failing a target if actual performance for any quarter (1st, 2nd, or 3rd) is less than 80% of the program’s target or if there is a significant decline in performance. In such a circumstance, the state will notify that Council’s executive director and will schedule technical assistance with the appropriate local area staff.

If an area fails to meet a target for a program year (based on results available after the 4th quarter), the state will notify that Council’s executive director to provide additional technical assistance. In collaboration with the state, the Council will be required to develop a performance improvement plan. The performance improvement plan must be submitted to the state within 75 days of the program year’s conclusion. The State will provide technical assistance and may require other actions (as determined by the State) to assist with performance improvement.

If the target failure continues for a second consecutive year, the state will notify the Chief Local Elected Official, the Council chair, and the Council’s executive director. The State will require the initiation of appropriate corrective action to prevent further failure of that target. When all other corrective action efforts have been exhausted, the State will utilize incremental sanctions up to, and including, the steps described in 20 CFR 666.420(b)(1-3). A Council may appeal any sanction according to the process described at 20 CFR 666.420(c).

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Local Area Profile

This section of the Local Integrated Workforce Plan is comprised of a form that must be completed and submitted as part of the Plan.

Workforce Development Area:

Northwest

County or Counties Served:

Island, Skagit, San Juan & Whatcom

Fiscal Agent/Entity Responsible for the disbursement of grant funds:

Northwest Workforce Council

- Local One-stop System
 - I. List One-stop(s) and affiliate site(s). If you have a documented plan that will result in the addition or subtraction of a one-stop or an affiliate site during the course of this plan period, please describe those planned changes.
 - WorkSource Whatcom
 - WorkSource Skagit
 - WorkSource Whidbey
 - II. List Operator(s) for each One-stop. If the Operator is a partnership, list all entities in the partnership.

Northwest Workforce Council is the one-stop operator for the three one-stop centers.

WIA Service Providers (include WDC if applicable):

Dislocated Worker Program	Indicate service(s) provided by each		
Service Provider	Core	Intensive	Training
Northwest Workforce Council	X	X	X
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Adult Program	Indicate service(s) provided by each		
Service Provider	Core	Intensive	Training
Northwest Workforce Council	X	X	X
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Youth Program	Indicate service(s) provided by each		
Service Provider	Core	Intensive	Training
Northwest Workforce Council	X	X	X
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note:

WSID may issue separate requests for a current list of WIA Title I-B service providers in the future.

WIA AND WAGNER-PEYSER OPERATIONS PLAN

Northwest Workforce Council (NWC) has a long and successful history of providing employment and training programs for youth and adults. These Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs address the range of services needed by workers at all stages of their careers to participate in the local economy while helping to meet the talent needs of local industry. NWC is the designated One-Stop Operator for the three fully certified WorkSource Northwest Career Centers in Bellingham, Mount Vernon and Oak Harbor.

SERVING YOUTH THROUGH THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT AND BEYOND

Describe your local area's design framework (including the 10 program elements outlined in 20 CFR 664.410 and WIA Sec.129(c)(2)) for WIA Youth activities. Please also describe local initiatives to better serve WIA Youth participants and to align with local multiple pathway strategies around first careers through outreach and integrated service delivery. Please further describe how you will engage employers to create work-integrated learning opportunities.

NWC operates WIA Title I-B youth programs and contracts to provide additional complementary youth services. The purpose is to improve employability through education and training opportunities that help develop workplace attributes and skills valued by local industry. The program serves eligible youth, 16-21 years old who have one or more of the following characteristics: deficient in basic literacy skills; school dropout; homeless; runaway; foster child; pregnant or parenting; offender; disability; limited English proficiency, or require additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and retain employment.

The WIA youth program applies a competency-based approach to assessment and services using Workforce Skills Standards and prepares youth for employment or post-secondary education and training opportunities. Services provide linkages between academic and occupational learning with strong relationships to the job market and employers.

The Council provides leadership in growing collaborations between businesses, secondary and post-secondary educational institutions and community youth service providers to ensure effective and meaningful workforce preparation experiences for youth. Outstanding results are consistently achieved by engaging education, business, labor, and community service providers to develop a coordinated system which provides basic academic, life, work and technical skills preparation for workers as defined by industry. The Council strives to incorporate these areas of skill development in all community approaches to youth employment preparation. The Council engages business to identify their needs and expectations. This information is then used to assist youth in acquiring the skills, attributes and knowledge demanded by business.

The Council remains active in focusing resources to collectively address systemic issues of workforce development. NWC and partners leverage resources beyond those available through WIA Title I-B to create pipelines of new workers to meet emerging skills gaps. This begins with secondary education career marketing programs that seek to attract and prepare students for high-wage, high-demand industry clusters. Through community partnerships, NWC influences

the development of the workforce in significantly greater proportion than WIA funding alone would be able to achieve.

The WIA Youth program engages in joint outreach, marketing and recruiting efforts with secondary schools, community and technical colleges, business organizations, community-based youth service providers, and other partner staff for referral of youth to workforce preparation services within the community. Emphasis is placed on outreach to target populations including high school students, recent high school graduates, community and technical college completers who are not transferring to a four year institution, drop outs, and other underserved populations.

Eligibility criteria require the youth most in need receive priority services. Therefore, there is active recruitment for low-income youth, minority status, dropouts, teen parents and those youth considered to have a disability.

Eligible youth are guided through an assessment to determine their education and workplace competencies and deficiencies, in turn helping determine which services are best suited to prepare them for employment. Assessment areas may include: academic skill level, occupational skills attainment, prior work experience, employability, interests, aptitude, and need for supportive services to permit participation in program services. Results of assessments are used to develop an employment plan which identifies service needs including; employment/career goals including non-traditional occupations (if applicable), achievement objectives and appropriate support services.

Youth Service Delivery System Components

The Council champions a mix of approaches to provide access to career information, education, work experience and training to prepare youth for post-secondary education, training and employment. Opportunities are customized based on individual need and available resources to support long-term employment goals.

Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction including those available through local school districts; non-profit agencies; community organizations and business and volunteer involvement for the purpose of dropout prevention, school retention, skill development, drop out reengagement and as preparation for specific occupations.

Basic skills competencies are crucial to the success of youth in the labor market. Youth lacking basic educational skills are counseled to participate in remedial education. A variety of approaches are used to assess academic skills including the review of school transcripts and standardized test results released by school districts, administration of the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASA), or referral for more in depth testing. High school non-completers are counseled toward high school completion or GED preparation activities. An emphasis on academic basic skills attainment supports the WIA requirement that the development plan for youth lacking educational competencies must include an educational component.

Alternative secondary school services including those provided by school districts; community and technical colleges; Job Corps or any entity whose education program meets local and state education requirements for a high school diploma or GED.

Summer employment opportunities directly linked to academic and occupational learning that are designed to enhance academic performance, job skill development, career awareness, and build self-confidence. Summer employment opportunities are linked to career exploration, “soft skills” development, applied academics, and occupational skills development.

Paid and unpaid work experiences including internships and job shadowing. Work experiences are planned, structured, learning experiences that take place in a workplace. Work experiences may be in private for profit, non-profit, or public sectors. These experiences help youth acquire an understanding of personal attributes, knowledge, and skills needed to obtain and advance in employment and provide an opportunity for career exploration and skill development.

Work experiences may include the following elements:

- Application of academic skills within a work context
- Instruction in employability skills or workplace skills such as the employer defined Workforce Skills Standards
- Exposure to various aspects of an industry or occupation
- Adult mentorship
- Integration of basic academic skills into work activities

Career decision making

Reliable labor market information is necessary to make informed decisions on employment and career options. Comprehensive career guidance and counseling provide youth with the information needed to develop career pathways in high-wage, high-demand occupations. The Council advocates with its stakeholders the use of www.CareerBridge.wa.gov site for information on occupations, training and employment. Youth learn how to access and use labor market information to formulate career plans with steps to achieve their career goals and to revise those plans and goals as they progress in their working lives.

Occupational skills training including occupational and vocational education training provided by a school district; community or technical college; career and technical academy; apprenticeship program; local businesses through internship or on-the-job training contract; Job Corps; or other occupational skill training program directed toward the acquisition of abilities or proficiencies in earning a living through a trade, profession, or business.

Leadership development opportunities, which include activities encouraging citizenship and soft skills, decision making, team work, and communication skills. Leadership development opportunities may include the following:

- Work experience and internship opportunities

- Community and service learning projects
- Peer-centered activities, including peer mentoring and tutoring
- Organizational and team work training, including leadership training
- Training in decision-making, including determining priorities
- Citizenship training, including life skills training such as parenting, work behavior training, and budgeting of resources
- Employability skills and positive social behavior development

Supportive Services may be provided as determined from assessment to permit an eligible youth to participate in WIA activities. Supportive Services may be: referral to community services; assistance with transportation; assistance with child care; assistance with housing; referral to medical services; assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work related tools, or other services required for the individual to participate in training.

Adult mentoring of at least twelve months may occur during and after program participation. Adult mentors may include the assignment of a responsible adult by community service organization, school district program, or other youth mentorship programs within the community.

Comprehensive guidance and counseling as appropriate to the needs of the individual including referrals to mental health, drug and alcohol, and abuse counseling.

Job search training on job search components such as how to: obtain labor market information, assess their skills, complete a resume and applications, and conduct themselves in informational or employment interviews. Staff provides training to community partners in job search components to reach non-WIA eligible youth and markets WorkSource job search services within the community.

Follow-up services for WIA youth participants. Activities are determined upon individual need. Follow-up may include:

- Post-secondary education or training retention
- Leadership development and supportive service activities
- Employment retention, including assistance in addressing work-related problems that arise
- Assistance in securing better paying jobs, career development, and education through lifelong learning
- Work related peer support group activities

Examples of Local WIA Youth Initiatives

Experience Work Project

A skills gap between young workers and the expectations of employers continues to widen, fueled in part by the Great Recession and long periods of youth unemployment or no employment. In response, the Council partnered with Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce to create the Experience Work Project. The Project matches students in high school and college vocational training programs with businesses offering on-site

opportunities for career exploration, job shadow or internship. Mentorship relationships are created which assist young adults moving into the workplace. Students participate in robust learning experience throughout the year. Mentors rate students' professional behaviors as either meeting or exceeding their expectations. Of those mentors responding to a survey, 100% indicated they would like to participate again.

YES2Jobs

The **Youth Employment Skills (YES2Jobs)** workshop is tailored to youth 16–21 years old to assist them in finding employment. It provides job search skills which help enhance the employment chances for youth facing a very tight job market. Content includes resume writing, job search websites, applications, interviewing and work readiness skills. Yes2Jobs workshops are promoted to youth and their parents through WorkSource, partner agencies, schools, social media, promotional fliers, and newspapers.

EYE on Jobs - Educating Youth for Employment delivers specialized work readiness and job search services to high school students with disabilities. This project is a community collaboration focusing on the particular needs of youth with disabilities in both the job search process and in retaining successful work-based activities. Partner agencies include Northwest Workforce Council, Skagit County Department of Developmental Disabilities, Skagit County Child and Family Consortium, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the LaConner, Burlington, Sedro-Woolley and Concrete School Districts.

The program encompasses three primary components:

- Parents and school staff (teachers, aides and work-based learning coordinators) receive training and information on their role in their child's/student's success in developing work readiness skills and preparation for job search and employment, what students will receive and a review of disclosure and accommodation issues.
- Specialized workshops on resumes, applications, interviewing and workplace behavior are provided at each school. Students receive handbooks to use for future reference with parents and teachers.
- Employers and representatives of non-profit agencies who can provide work-based learning opportunities are provided training. Information presented includes distinctions between internship, volunteer and paid employment and the relative values of each option.

Varsity in Volunteerism (VIV) is a unique collaboration with a school district to encourage students to stay in school by connecting work with learning and creating recognition within the school of the value of work. The program recognizes student volunteer hours with a high school varsity letter. Sponsors include United General Hospital, United Way, Sedro Woolley Chamber of Commerce, Sedro Woolley High School, Skagit County Child

and Family Consortium and Northwest Workforce Council. The program provides positive opportunities for students to engage in the workplace, learn about appropriate workplace roles and behavior, explore careers and gain work-related skills. VIV provides local employers/businesses and non-profit organizations a pool of willing and eager workers to assist with projects as they learn about the world of work. Training for supervisors on successfully working with youth is provided. Youth attend a series of workshops to develop soft skills, work readiness, and employment retention skills. Students achieving 100 volunteer hours are rewarded with a varsity letter. Employers note their businesses are enhanced through this association.

Hands On Training Tours (H.O.T.) involve youth in apprenticeship vocational exploration activities at the Pipefitters, Electrical and Carpenters Technical Training Centers. Additional trades representatives offer students exposure to trades offered beyond those available locally. NWC participates in coordinating this event and recruiting youth from area high schools from the five surrounding counties. As part of the Tour, students receive “hands on training” in various trades. Pipe bending, screw gun races, and using math to solve real electrical problems are popular activities. They hear workers’ speak first hand on apprenticeship occupations, preparation, and the benefits of trade careers. Students see, touch and experience the various trades.

Employer engagement to create work-integrated learning opportunities

The Council leverages local initiatives for youth to partner with business, chambers, and economic development to promote the need for work based learning opportunities. By expanding the training provided to business in the Varsity in Volunteering and EYE on Jobs programs and by leveraging and expanding the scope and number of businesses that participate in the Experience Work Project, the Council is increasing work-based learning opportunities to prepare youth for high-demand, high-wage careers.

ENSURING THE SUCCESS OF ADULTS & DISLOCATED WORKERS THROUGH THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT

Describe your local area’s WIA Adult activities (20 CFR 661.350(a)(5) and WIA Sec.118(b)(4)), including efforts to align with local multiple pathway strategies around first careers and transitioning workers through outreach and integrated service delivery (i.e., coordination with Wagner-Peyser, and other partner programs). Please also address the following sub-populations in your response: Unemployment Insurance claimants, older workers, individuals with disabilities and, as applicable, migrant seasonal farm workers (WDA 3, 8, 9, 10, and 11 only).

Describe your local area’s Dislocated Worker activities (20 CFR 661.350(a)(5)), including efforts to align with multiple pathways strategies around transitioning workers through outreach and integrated service delivery (i.e., coordination with Wagner-Peyser, Trade Adjustment Assistance, and other partner programs).

Northwest Workforce Council provides comprehensive and timely strategies to strengthen the workforce in response to the region’s diverse needs. By employing an integrated approach with community and agency partners, the Council leverages and aligns resources in response to labor market demand. As businesses evolve, a diversified and highly adaptable workforce is

necessary to compete in the labor market. The Council continues to innovate lifelong learning opportunities to refine transferrable and occupational skills required in the modern work environment. The dislocated worker and adult programs, funded by the Workforce Investment Act, support the Council's mission by providing multiple pathways to employment for individuals at all stages in their careers; those who have experienced a layoff, are entering the workforce for the first time, are transitioning to different careers, need assistance to upgrade their skills to retain employment or have barriers to achieving economic self-sufficiency. Individuals served by these programs receive customized services to assist with career guidance, job search preparation, the identification and removal of barriers to employment, remediation of occupational skills gaps and the attainment of work readiness skills to meet employer needs.

Northwest Workforce Council provides core and intensive services under WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. In doing so, the Council focuses on an integrated approach to service delivery to ensure comprehensive outreach and collaborative assistance to participants in the dislocated worker and adult programs. The integrated service design responds to business needs by using an industry/occupational sector as a guide to training and employment activities. The approach encompasses the following operating principles:

- Keep it simple and easy to follow
- Focus on high-wage, high demand occupations
- Reduce labor/staff intensity in the customer flow
- Reduce duplication of upfront services/activities across funding streams
- Direct customer flow and service development by vocational/sector choice

Partners in the WorkSource system are cross trained on eligibility requirements and opportunities available from agencies providing services within the one-stop career center environment. Staff knowledge is built through regular presentations in staff meetings and a coordinated series of partner agency open-house orientations scheduled throughout the year. This training supports an integrated and seamless approach to the customer referral process. The region's knowledge management system, called DAWN, provides key process flow, designated referral experts, and standardized referral information templates for each of the area's workforce development programs. Referral pages include current recruitment status, key contacts, and next step instruction.

Customers benefit from an integrated service design, which provides Wagner-Peyser funded job search preparation assistance to the general public through the Job Hunter workshop series and other core services delivered within the WorkSource Centers. All Unemployment Insurance claimants attend a mandatory orientation at WorkSource. In these orientations claimants are provided a comprehensive overview of the services available in the WorkSource system. These initial and self-service program components are well articulated with intensive and training program services for individuals who meet eligibility requirements and require individualized plans to overcome barriers to employment.

Customers who appear to meet eligibility requirements for WIA 1-B and who are in need of customized job search assistance, career preparation and training assistance are referred to group orientations at WorkSource for an overview of dislocated worker and adult programs. These group orientations are targeted to unemployed UI recipients, the long-term unemployed, formerly self-employed individuals, displaced homemakers and low-income adults with barriers to employment. Attendees receive an introduction to program eligibility requirements, application process, and training and employment assistance. After attending orientation, customers have an opportunity to schedule an appointment with a WIA representative to determine eligibility and appropriateness for WIA 1-B adult or dislocated worker services and begin customizing a plan based on employment and training needs.

Adults and dislocated workers who attend introductory orientations to WIA 1-B services receive a general overview of additional programs and services available at the WorkSource center. As an example, an unemployed or low-income individual may additionally benefit from disability support services available through Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. WorkSource Northwest Career Centers maintain a full complement of assistive technologies to aid persons with a disability in accessing the resources of the one-stop system. Staff familiarization with the technology is maintained through short, intermittent, hands-on demonstrations conducted by DVR partner staff in the centers' All Staff meetings and via web-based instruction on staffs' knowledge management system, DAWN. DAWN also hosts links to disability-related resources and important processes, such as requesting an interpreter as a reasonable accommodation for a customer. WorkSource Northwest has a long and fruitful partnership with DVR, which is resident in two of three of the region's career centers. Northwest staff interact daily with customers with disabilities and are the beneficiaries of learning the competencies necessary in serving those customers from their DVR colleagues, whether DVR participants or not. The region's Competencies for Workforce Development Professionals includes a competency on diversity and another for Disability Specialist. The region has a robust policy, in place since 2004, on reasonable accommodation: *Provision of Reasonable Accommodation, Reasonable Modification, and Auxiliary Aids and Services to Persons with Disabilities*. A Regional Access Team meets quarterly to evaluate WorkSource facilities and programs for accessibility. Team members serve as local experts in assisting their colleagues to better serve persons with a disability. A commitment to universal design is expressed through a standard review process for any new print or media material to ensure it meets 508 Style Guidelines. Weekly orientations to DVR services are held in the WorkSource centers and program co-enrollments are pursued when this strategy makes the best use of resources to assist participants in achieving employment goals.

A range of services to mature workers (55+ years old) are fully integrated and delivered through the area's one stop system. Mature workers access multiple programs offering core, intensive and training services, including the Senior Community Services Employment Program funded under Title V of the Older Americans Act, within the one stops. WorkSource Whatcom offers extended evening operating hours which provide staff support to orient and integrate mature workers to services. Mature adults benefit from the evenings' *55 and Better* workshops which provide a relaxed environment to discuss job search techniques pertinent to this age cohort, as

well as one-on-one assistance with computer applications to access online job search preparation materials. Full enrollment of the area's allocated slots for the Senior Community Services Employment Program and attendance at the *55 and Better* workshops are indicators that older workers are being served. Outreach, recruitment and enrollment of mature workers are conducted at appropriate sites and events, such as senior centers, and through newspaper supplements targeting senior individuals in the community.

Veterans and eligible spouses receive priority of service for all programs and Employment Security Department (ESD) staff a representative to help veterans translate their skills to civilian employment and navigate community resources available to assist in that transition.

The Council's WIA I-B program providers work closely with OIC of Washington's farmworker program and ESD's migrant seasonal farm worker program, making cross-referrals and co-enrollments when appropriate. Both OIC and ESD assist in outreach to the farmworker community for WIA I-B programs.

Assessment and Eligibility

Customers enrolled in WIA 1-B adult and dislocated worker programs must meet eligibility criteria and demonstrate a need and ability to benefit from services to obtain or retain employment. The policies used to determine eligibility for the adult and the dislocated worker programs are Eligibility Verification and Priority Selection for Title I-B Adults #01-21 and for Title I-B Dislocated Worker #WIA 01-20 respectively. Services are customized based on the evaluation of a customer's occupational skill set, work readiness, and viability to obtain employment in high demand occupations within key sectors. Representatives for the WIA programs utilize a variety of assessment tools including interview outlines, electronic and paper assessments, and competency based evaluations of basic skills to identify skills, interests and aptitude. Results from assessment tests and progress reports from community and technical colleges and partner agencies engaged with customers additionally guide career planning and help determine appropriate services to moderate skills gaps. Once determined eligible for services, the customer develops an employment plan with a WIA representative to determine timelines for goals and to begin researching labor market information for high-wage, high-demand employment.

Career Decision Making

NWC advocates the use of www.CareerBridge.wa.gov as one important source of information on occupations, training and employment. The area refers to the Occupations in Demand list for long and short-term occupational forecasts. The Occupations in Demand list aids in a consistent and appropriate navigation of employment and training opportunities. Career guidance and counseling is provided adults and dislocated workers to make useful meaning of the information gathered to help inform good choices and wise investments in the career planning process.

WIA representatives are actively involved in program advisory committees at the community and technical colleges to keep pace with labor and skill trends in the advanced manufacturing, health and construction sectors. These venues also provide opportunity to network with local

businesses to customize training plans for WIA and co-enrolled TAA participants in alignment with real time hiring needs.

Basic Skills

Basic skills competencies are crucial to remain competitive in the labor market. Adults and dislocated workers are counseled to participate in educational opportunities to remedy basic skills deficiencies. High school non-completers are directed toward GED preparation activities at the local community and technical colleges and other GED preparation training centers. Financial support is available for testing fees and GED certification.

Non-English and limited English speaking participants are also directed toward the local community and technical colleges and other training courses for English as a Second Language (ESL) to prepare workers to be sufficiently workplace functional in English.

The implementation of online learning resources, such as KeyTrain, allow WorkSource staff to assign lessons in reading, writing and math to reinforce basic skills development and prepare individuals for work readiness skills necessary to be successful in the workplace.

WIA provides pathways for immediate remediation of basic skills deficiencies and supports opportunities for advancement to longer term programs through colleges' Integrated Basic Education Skills Training (I-BEST) programs. I-BEST provides opportunity for individuals to earn a degree in high demand sectors while remediating basic skills. This strategy proves particularly beneficial to migrant seasonal farmworkers who speak English as a second language and individuals with learning disabilities who require additional tutoring assistance for educational achievement.

Lifelong Learning

The Council is committed to lifelong learning opportunities to assist businesses and the workforce in remaining competitive. Technologic fluency is a minimum requirement for a preponderance of jobs. For many, Information Technology (IT) skills are a necessary bridge to enter employment, academic classes, formal computer classes or vocational training. For those already employed, computer literacy is a key to keeping and advancing their employment.

The problem of a "digital divide" in the workforce is addressed by NWC through its sponsorship of hands-on WorkSource courses to develop basic computer skills, workplace email, and Microsoft Office applications. WorkSource's WOW eLearning program further supports improving job seeker computer literacy by providing a no-cost online learning program with over 1,000 self-study courses and a certification program.

The greatest need and benefit potential of these programs is in serving low skilled and low income individuals; limited English speaking individuals; mature workers (55+); and current workers whose IT skills no longer meet minimum requirements in the workplace.

Training Opportunities

There are multiple pathways for workers in need of occupation specific skills to obtain career goals. Training pathways are supported by an integrated service delivery model with multiple

partner agencies to best leverage time and resources. Training may be combined to provide the most effective and efficient use of resources, including time and funds, to achieve career progress and economic self-sufficiency.

Internship

Long-term unemployed and individuals with minimal work history benefit from internships as a means to demonstrate work readiness skills, learn occupational skills and earn an employment reference. Non-profit agencies partner with NWC to design training plans and provide skills training. Often employment plans include additional services such as classroom training from community and technical colleges or job search assistance through the Job Hunter series.

Classroom Training

Labor market indicators highlight the need for a workforce trained in occupational specific skills. The Council partners with local colleges to ensure programs meet industry standards and provide competencies aligned with contemporary labor market demands. WIA program participants are counseled on multiple pathways leading to careers in fields in need of workers and which provide livable wages. Participants are assisted in pursuing training opportunities to develop skills and certifications necessary for successful employment, career advancement and wage progression.

Individuals with minimal work experience and the long-term unemployed separated from occupations no longer in demand benefit from certifications and degrees earned through programs at local educational institutions. Unemployment insurance recipients who seek training to enter high-demand occupations access WIA tuition scholarships and may apply for a reprieve from UI job search requirements (Commissioner Approved Training) and additional unemployment benefits (Training Benefits) in support of training completion. WIA scholarships support students in long-term training programs as well as short-term industry specific certifications to support the minimum qualifications of businesses.

Tuition costs have increased by 150% over the past five years and are expected to increase again over the next two years. The Council continues to work closely with community partners in identifying strategies to provide blended funding to low income and unemployed adults in need of classroom training. WIA coordinates with other funding sources such as federal financial aid including Pell, Worker Retraining, Basic Food Employment & Training, and Opportunity Grant to maximize financial resources available to students in need of classroom training. Coordinators from the community and technical colleges present information about enrollment, funding, and program availability to prospective participants at dislocated worker orientations and WIA staff engage local college representatives in the process of building training plans.

At the post-secondary level, WIA staff work with Worker Retraining, BFET and Opportunity Grant representatives to coordinate resources and services to dislocated worker and low income adults to increase retention in training and secure employment outcomes upon completion of training. Staff meet once quarterly with representatives from the various

funding sources as a measure of continuous quality improvement in combined outreach and service delivery efforts.

On-the-Job Training (OJT)

On-the-job training is a successful strategy for employers to invest in and retain employees trained to their specific needs. WIA representatives assist employers with creating training plans for adult and dislocated worker new hires while mentoring and tracking the success of the employee during the training process. Employers receive partial wage reimbursement for the new hire to offset the time and expense of providing needed training.

On-the-Job Training affords employers the flexibility to train workers to the specifications of the company and may include additional support from other agencies. The Council continues to focus on opportunities presented by expanded hiring needs in the advanced manufacturing sector. Manufacturers now benefit from the combination of contracted classroom training instruction alongside hands-on group activities, as well as recruitment and retention support.

NWC and ESD team members responded to a local manufacturing employer's staffing needs by implementing a screening and referral process which identifies job applicants in need of OJT for successful employment and aligns them with available positions. A referral tracking mechanism supports the process and identifies potential NEG and WIA Governor's 10% eligible job seekers for OJT opportunities. The referral process continues to be an effective strategy to connect the long-term unemployed with immediate employment opportunities with businesses willing to provide training.

NWC and ESD integrate service delivery in support of co-enrolled participants' employment and training goals. For example, WorkFirst participants engaged in job search activities, TAA co-enrolled participants, and veterans receiving assistance through the Veterans Services Representative can all benefit from OJT as a means to immediate employment as they are further supported by a network of WorkSource services.

Apprenticeship Services

Apprenticeship services are one of the options an individual can explore when he/she comes into a WorkSource Northwest Career Center. The Plumbers and Pipefitters, Electrical and Carpenters Technical Training Centers for joint apprenticeship programs are located in Skagit County, offering opportunities for collaboration (see H.O.T. tours description).

Support Services

Adults and dislocated workers engaged in employment and training programs have access to support services to help offset expenses which may impede their ability to complete the activities necessary in order to return to employment. Financial assistance is available to help offset unexpected expenses relating to transportation, utility or rent costs while engaged in program services when no other community resources are available to meet the need.

NWC partners with ESD in providing support services to individuals receiving classroom training and job search assistance through the Trade Adjustment Act program. NWC and ESD staffs communicate needs for supportive services across programs in order for a participant to successfully continue in classroom training. When a need is identified that would jeopardize a Trade Act participant's ability to complete classroom training, the participant is referred to the WIA dislocated worker program for co-enrollment and provision of necessary supportive services which results in training completion. A similar process is in place to assist Trade participants during job search. If there are expenses not available under the TAA program for individuals to relocate for employment or for job search assistance, funds may be provided from WIA 1-B dislocated worker program to assist TAA participants to return to work.

ASSISTING WORKERS IN THEIR REEMPLOYMENT AND FOSTERING STRATEGIES TO AVOID OR MINIMIZE LAYOFF – RAPID RESPONSE

Describe your local area's Rapid Response strategy (20 CFR 661.350(a)(6)) and WIA Sec. 118(a)(5)), including the coordination of state and local resources and activities.

The Council coordinates and oversees a highly engaged and coordinated rapid response system. Execution of an integrated plan for all dislocated worker programs including Trade Act, Worker Retraining and WIA Title IB programs provides focus on businesses' workforce needs and provides for a consistent, timely, high quality, and innovative approach to the delivery of services to all dislocated adults. Through Council leadership, rapid response practitioners exhibit an array of competencies across many disciplines which helps create seamless solutions for all customers. Rapid Response is simultaneously strategic and operational. Solutions are customized to needs and yet consistent in their quality.

The Council oversees an emerging new vision of Rapid Response from a layoff response model to a comprehensive economic transition model which requires the engagement of leadership and practitioners. A wide area network of practitioners and stakeholders comprise an informal "early warning system" which alert partners to potential job loss, allowing a system response to avoid or minimize job loss. Tools such as the Shared Work Program, Trade Act for Businesses, targeted workforce-related advocacy, and local economic development programs can help to avert the loss of jobs from the Northwest economy.

The Council's coordination of services, activities, resources and benefits facilitate the goal of returning affected individuals to work, in demand occupations, as quickly as possible. Critical attributes of the Northwest's Rapid Response system include:

- A systematic orientation towards layoff prevention, strategic planning, and reemployment
- Mastery of applicable rules and regulations
- Establishment and maintenance of broad partnerships
- Clear and consistent procedures and policies

- Leadership seeks comprehensive solutions over menu-based services
- Properly trained staff

During a layoff of significance, onsite Rapid Response orientations are coordinated within a broad partnership and with the State Dislocated Worker Unit. Orientations include on site information on the applications and requirements of Unemployment Insurance. Workers receive orientation to all applicable dislocated worker programs (WIA, Worker Retraining, and Trade Act) and then followed up with staff assisted sessions where the dislocated worker is assisted with the application and intake for multiple programs.

Workers are counseled in multiple career pathways to attain reemployment and recapture or improve their wages. Participants are provided a review of their assessment materials and develop a plan. Using assessment materials, participants complete a reality check of the plan, develop a service plan to verify goals are congruent with assessment results and will lead to employment in a demand occupation. Part of the plan development includes eligibility and coordination of all dislocated worker funding streams. For those participants accessing training resources, Trade Act, WIA and Worker Retraining funds are aligned and coordinated with a single point of contact for the participant. Co-enrollments are made in accordance with the Council's policy, Guidelines and Process for Co-enrollment of TAA and WIA IB Dislocated Workers RE: WIA 01-29.

An Individual Training Account proposal is used by WIA participants which documents the need for training and assessment followed by diagnostic assessment, when appropriate, in the following areas:

- Employment history and accomplishments
- Prior training
- Education history
- Re-Employment skills
 - > Making career decisions and goal setting
 - > Using labor market information
 - > Preparing a resume and cover letter
 - > Filling out applications
 - > Interviewing
- Job-keeping skills
- Motivation, attitude and work values
- Basic Skills: reading, math, writing, remedial education, English as a second language (ESL)
- Occupational skills and abilities
- Aptitudes
- Individual employment goal and labor market needs
- Career interests
- Short and long term education and career goals
- Life circumstances and barriers to participation

For those who have marketable job skills and who will benefit from intensive job search assistance, services are coordinated to ensure a quick re-entry into the workforce at a competitive wage.

AIDING LOCAL BUSINESS CUSTOMERS THROUGH VALUED SERVICES AND REGIONAL STRATEGIES

Describe how your local area meets the needs of employers (20CFR 661.350(a)(i)), including approaches and tactics to connect employers to WorkSource resources and to help employers strengthen and grow their businesses, and how those efforts align with local multiple pathway strategies designed to benefit employers.

The Council's business and employer services strategy for the WorkSource Northwest system is articulated in its Regional Business Services Plan, which provides roles and responsibilities of system partners. The region's strategy is in alignment with the Council's strategic goals and with Employment Security Department's WorkSource System Policy 1014, Revision 1, Coordinated Business Services.

This foundation sets the framework to quickly and effectively adapt operations to provide a highly qualified workforce which meets the needs of our dynamic marketplace and fuels the economic growth of our region. This approach maximizes efficiencies and aids in establishing a comprehensive approach to business customers under the WorkSource brand; that provides a coordinated and responsive system of outreach and services to employers; that staff are knowledgeable of services and able to make appropriate referrals if needed, and the SKIES system is used by partners to create and manage job orders, record employer contacts and document services provided to employers.

The Council's Vision for Business Services:

- To provide services on a universal basis and in a customer-focused, market-driven approach
- To enhance the workforce development system's capacity for responsiveness to a rapidly changing marketplace
- To promote a healthy business climate to attract and retain businesses and jobs

The main objectives of the Council's framework policy are to:

- Align separately funded workforce development programs to provide comprehensive solutions to business customers
- Focus, align, and improve the effectiveness of the region's business services delivery
- Increase the value of services available and business customers' satisfaction with those services
- Build collaborative opportunities with partners to achieve goals
- Create an effective single point of contact process
- Enhance business' use of WorkSource services to address their workforce needs

Guiding Principles

- Recognition of the business as a primary customer, stakeholder and investor.
- Alignment of service delivery strategy to respond to business customer demand.
- Prioritizing the delivery of select services to business most able to fuel regional economic and community growth, targeting sectors with high wage, high skill occupations.
- Deployment of a highly competent staff able to deliver quality products and services.
- A robust labor exchange system which provides job seekers access to jobs and business access to an available, skilled workforce.

Demand-Driven Business Services

Regardless of the condition of the economy, the job market is determined by business demand. Business services are established to serve the demand side of the workforce talent equation by strengthening the relationship and the quality of interactions with employers, generating access to more and better jobs. Services which develop businesses contribute to the development of the workforce; services to develop the workforce contribute to the development of business.

Key Industry Initiatives

The Council's core business is to improve the ability of the workforce to meet the demands of business and industry. The local workforce development system provides an array of business services, with resource investment in targeted industry sectors. The Council strategically aligns WIA training investments and service delivery with high demand occupations and skill clusters in growth industries.

Industry Tables

Industry tables can take many forms, but are often characterized as public-private partnerships of leadership from business, labor, workforce development, economic development and education. Industry tables work together to help clarify industry's workforce needs and respond as a system to adapt or customize local approaches to provide workers with the skills required within industries vital to our regional economy. Through industry tables and other venues, the Council convenes leadership across jurisdictional boundaries to address workforce-related issues

Closing Skill Gaps

As business and industry continue to evolve their workplaces, the skills of workers need also to continually evolve to ensure profit and productivity. Strategies to address skill gaps begin in the K-12 system with pipeline activities to attract young people to careers and industries with promising futures. The preparation of young people with the necessary academic and experiential backgrounds to succeed in these occupations also begins in K-12. Skill gap continues with engagement of key industry leadership to identify existing, emerging, and anticipated worker skill gaps. Influences on skill gaps can include anything from changes in technology, contracts, work methods, or even an aging workforce.

Business Services Within the WorkSource One-Stop Career Centers

The Council oversees the operation of one-stop career centers (WorkSource) which serve as convenient access points to the workforce development system. The Council is responsible for developing and implementing policies and procedures that align partners' activities and resources into a seamless delivery system for high quality, customer-driven services.

Required business services from ESD Policy 1014 Rev. 1 (2012):

- Developing employer linkages with workforce investment activities
- Engaging employers' participation in the workforce system and ensuring the effective provision of connecting, brokering and coaching activities to assist in meeting hiring needs
- Labor Exchange services provided in alignment with the local plan
- Rapid Response services and information regarding business restructuring or closure
- Access to professional WorkSource facilities for recruitment and hiring activities
- Access to labor market information
- Employee training and re-training
- Referral to online resources

Labor Exchange

Labor exchange is defined as: assisting employers in filling jobs; assisting job seekers in finding employment; and facilitating the match between the employer and job seeker. Coordination begins with customer (business/employer/job seeker) introduction to an automated labor exchange system, including such items as a centralized job listing system, WorkSource branded products, and a shared client history system.

Outreach strategies and priorities for Wagner-Peyser Labor Exchange services are developed annually in coordination with Northwest Workforce Council and in concert with local labor market data and intelligence.

Industry-Focused On-the-Job and Customized Training

Delivering skill-based, industry-valued training has become a focal point in workforce development. With knowledge and skill requirements changing at breakneck speed, employers, employees, educators and students alike struggle to stay abreast of escalating skill demands in the workplace. Through resource leveraging with public and private investments, the Council targets its WIA and grant training resources to increase the number of workers in high demand occupations within targeted sectors.

- **Identification of specific industry trends and skill requirements:** Workplace trends and skill requirements are identified and training organized to address emergent needs.
- **Setting high standards for education and training providers:** Only those training providers who produce results and meet high standards are approved by the Council as preferred providers.
- **Use of workforce and occupational skill standards:** The integration of Workforce Skill Standards (soft skills) into curricula and training throughout the Northwest system provides a common understanding of the skills, attributes, and characteristics generally required by employers. Occupational skill standards, professional competencies, and industry recognized certifications provide the system an opportunity to benchmark worker training against industry standards.

The WorkSource system solicits requests from business in targeted industries for training activities that can be offered to up-skill current workers and on-the-job training to bridge the gap created by a lack of available skilled workers.

Talent Pipeline Strategies

Increasing the size and quality of the available labor pool is critical to meeting the current and future workforce needs of business. This is accomplished through a myriad of strategies which include: career fairs, industry familiarization tours, K-12 speaker series, career camps, youth employment, coordination with school to work and tech-prep programs, participation with industry on collegiate advisory committees, and other such strategies as may be funded and contemporary.

Job Retention

Workforce development and economic development have a mutual interest in saving and retaining jobs. Retention of existing jobs is as important as is the creation of new jobs to the local economy.

An early warning system brings the Northwest economic and workforce development communities together to reduce the number of jobs potentially being shed. As 69% of the region's jobs are attributable to small business, providing support to this vital segment is essential to job retention.

Employment Security Department's Shared Work program is an excellent indicator of businesses whose jobs may be at risk. Currently, the Shared Work program has 135 businesses and 1,700 Northwest workers participating. Companies in the program are approached and offered technical assistance from either the Economic Development Association of Skagit County or Western Washington University's Small Business Development Center. The free, confidential counseling offers a variety of services including financial analysis, access to capital, and competitive analysis. Those businesses receiving technical assistance experienced a 24% larger increase in sales than companies that did not. More importantly, companies accessing technical assistance saved or created 9% more jobs than those that did not. To date, the

Northwest's early warning program has connected 31 companies with our local providers, affecting 161 at risk jobs.

The WIA I-B programs provide follow-up services and job retention services including job counseling, assistance, resolving barriers, and referral to appropriate resources to former participants and to participants who were co-enrolled in other partner programs including Trade Act. These services may include reasonable expenses for supplemental skills training.

Hiring Events

Job fairs and hiring events provide excellent exposure to businesses with job openings and cast a wide net in attracting potential applicants. Hiring events and job fairs may include but are not limited to:

- Single employer on site
- General public events
- Target demographic events
- Target skill events
- Target industry sectors

Specialized job fairs may be scheduled on an as-needed basis to meet individual business needs (e.g. large recruitments, layoffs, etc.)

CONNECTING VETERANS AND SPOUSES TO A FULL RANGE OF SERVICES

Describe your local area's efforts to provide targeted outreach to veterans and eligible spouses, including a description of any special initiatives to serve the veteran population.

The Northwest's approach to targeted outreach to veterans and their eligible spouses is defined, in part, within the Council's Policy 1009-2, Revision 1, Priority of Service to Veterans and Eligible Spouses, which supports state and federal policies to provide priority of services to veterans. Priority selection policies for all WIA Title I-B Programs comply with the Jobs for Veterans Act (PL 107 228) and state and federal policies to provide priority of services to veterans.

Within the WorkSource environment, particular attention is devoted to making all veterans and eligible spouses aware of priority of service. WorkSource Northwest Career Centers have strategies in place to help make certain all covered persons are:

- Identified at the point of entry so they can take advantage of priority of service;
- Made aware of their entitlement to priority of service; and
- Provided information on the full array of employment, training and placement services available; and any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs or services. through the following strategies:
 - > Priority of Service 'notification sheet' is provided at entrance and at each front end help desk during initial customer contacts
 - > Veteran services is projected on flat screen TV slide show (where available)

- › Veteran services are incorporated into Daily Event postings (space permitting)
- › Veteran services and priority of service is mentioned in orientations and Rapid Response
- › Veteran status is inquired about in Front End Assessments and Initial Assessments
- › Veteran services are highlighted in www.TourWorkSource.com
- › Veteran priority of service is highlighted on Job Seeker front page of regional website, www.WorksourceNorthwest.com

Local Veterans Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program staff provide services within WorkSource, and help coordinate with partners the delivery of services to veterans through core, intensive and training services. Their focus is on providing services to special disabled veterans, veterans of the Vietnam Era, disabled veterans other than special disabled veterans, and all other veterans and eligible persons. Case management services are provided to all Chapter 31 referrals needing such services.

Veterans’ staff perform outreach activities to veterans and eligible persons not currently accessing the system through connections with local organizations such as:

Department of Veterans Affairs	Veterans of Foreign Wars
Disabled American Veterans	American Legion
Naval Air Station Whidbey Fleet and Family Support Center	Skagit and Island County Housing Authorities
Skagit County Veterans Administrative Board Marine Corps League	Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement
Community Action of Skagit County	Department of Health
Opportunity Council	Oak Harbor Elks Lodge
Vet Clubs at community colleges	Island County Veterans Advisory Board
Vet Corps Navigator (SVC)	Society of Human Resource Managers
US Department of Homeland Security	Island County Veterans Services
DSHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation	

Additional outreach opportunities occur as Veteran representatives participate in the region’s Rapid Response team and in their community advisory roles with Skagit County Veterans Administrative Board and Whatcom Veterans Advisory Board.

The Federal Veterans’ Affairs Work-Study Allowance Program enables college work-study students to assist the Northwest’s veteran team. These students reach out to notify veterans of current employment opportunities, as well as contact customers in SKIES who might be veterans to verify their veteran status.

WorkSource staff assist in the organization of twice annual, veteran-focused, hiring events. These events are often coordinated in close association with veteran organizations and military units. At least one hiring event coincides with and celebrates November’s Hire-A-Veteran

month. Hiring events in Island County are orchestrated to ensure maximum collaboration with Fleet and Family Services.

The Fleet and Family Support Center located on Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, an active workforce system partner, participates in WorkSource Whidbey planning activities, delivers training content to job seekers and promotes and refers to WorkSource within the military family community. Veterans take advantage of both the WorkSource Whidbey Center and transition assistance provided by experienced Work and Family Life Consultants on base at the Fleet and Family Support Center. Our programs complement each other and our veterans and their families receive valuable assistance as they transition to civilian life.

AMERICAN JOB CENTER NETWORK – A NEW TAGLINE TO DESCRIBE THE ONE-STOP SYSTEM

Describe your local area's plans for American Job Center Network (AJC) branding as informed by WIN 0025.

The Council is consistent in monitoring and providing technical support to achieve WorkSource brand conformance. A NWC senior staff person is assigned the responsibility of communicating brand expectations, providing essential resources, staff training, and operational assistance to support the brand and to provide a local liaison with state communications staff.

NWC will implement the WorkSource logo with the American Job Center (AJC) Network tagline as new local WorkSource product is developed. WIA and Wagner-Peyser programs, all operated wholly within WorkSource Northwest Career Centers, have adopted the new WorkSource brand with AJC tagline. Staff in all WorkSource Northwest sites have been introduced to the new branding via training at All Staff and program meetings. All newly created materials are appropriately branded with the new logo treatment. Centrally (state) supplied WorkSource materials with the new branding will be implemented as they become available.

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2013-2017 WIA Title I-B and WorkSource System Assurances

Planning Process and Public Comment	References
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1. The local board has processes and timelines, consistent with WIA Section 118(c)(2) to obtain input into the development of the Local Plan and to give opportunity for comment by representatives of local elected officials, local workforce investment boards, businesses, labor organizations, other primary stakeholders, and the general public for a 30-day period.	WIA Sections 118(b)(7), 118(c)(1), 118(c)(2); 20 CFR 661.345(b)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2. The local board afforded entities responsible for planning or administering programs and activities covered in the Local Plan opportunities to review and comment on the draft plan.	WIA Sections 118(b)(7), 118(c)(1), 118(c)(2); 20 CFR 661.345(b)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3. The final local plan is available and accessible to the general public.	20 CFR 661.345(b)(1)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4. The local board has established procedures to ensure public access (including people with disabilities) to board meetings and information regarding board activities, such as board membership and minutes.	WIA Section 117(e); 20 CFR 661.307
Required Policies and Procedures	References
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5. The local board makes publicly-available any local requirements for the public workforce system, such as policies, including policies for the use of WIA Title I funds.	WIA Section 118(b)(10); 20 CFR 665.350(a)(13)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6. The local board has established a written policy or procedure that identifies circumstances that might present conflict of interest for any local workforce investment board or entity that they represent, and provides for the resolution of conflicts.	WIA Sections 112(b)(13), 111(f), 117(g); WIA Policy 3420 Revision 1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7. The local board has copies of memoranda of understanding between the local board and each one-stop partner concerning the operation of the one-stop delivery system in the local area, and has provided the State with the latest versions of its memoranda of understanding.	WIA Section 121(c), 134(d)(2); 20 CFR 661.120(b), 661.350, 662.310(b)(c), WorkSource System Policy 1013
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 8. The local board has written policy or procedures that ensure one-stop operator agreements are reviewed and updated at least every two years.	WIA Section 118(b)(10); WorkSource System Policy 1008 Revision 1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 9. The local board has negotiated and reached agreement on local performance measures with the chief elected official and the governor.	WIA Sections 117(d)(5), 118(b)(3); 20 CFR 665.301(5)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 10. The local board has procurement policies and procedures for selecting one-stop operators, awarding contracts under WIA Title I-B	WIA Sections 121(d)(2) (A), 123; 20 CFR 662.410; 20 CFR 663.430; 20.CFR 661.310;

	Adult and Dislocated Worker funding provisions, and awarding contracts for Youth service provision under Title I-B in accordance with applicable state and local laws, rules, and regulations, provided no conflict exists with WIA.	WIA Policy 3405
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11. The local board has procedures for identifying and determining the eligibility of training providers and their programs to receive WIA Title I-B individual training accounts and to train dislocated workers receiving additional unemployment insurance benefits via the state's Training Benefits Program.	WIA Sections 117(d)(2)(c), 118(b)(2)(A), 122; 20 CFR 663.350(a)(3)(i), 663.500-590; WIA Policy 3635
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	12. The local board has written procedures for resolving grievances and complaints alleging violations of WIA Title I regulations, grants, or other agreements under WIA and written policies or procedures for assisting customers who express interest in filing complaints at any point of service, including, at a minimum, a requirement that all partners can identify appropriate staff contacts and refer customers to those contacts.	WIA Section 188; 20 CFR 667.600; WIA Policy 3440, Revision 1; WIA Policy 3445; WIA Policy 3450 Revision 1; WorkSource System Policy 1012
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	13. The local board has assurances from its one-stop operator that all one-stop centers and, as applicable, affiliate sites have front-end services consistent with the state's integrated front-end service policy and their local plan.	WorkSource System Policy 1010 Revision 1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	14. The local board has established at least one comprehensive, full-service one-stop center and has a written process for the Chief Local Elected Official and local board to determine that the center conforms to the definition therein.	WIA Section 134(a)(2); 20 CFR 662.100
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	15. The local board provides to employers the basic business services outlined in WorkSource System Policy 1014.	WorkSource System Policy 1014
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	16. The local board has written processes or procedures and has identified standard assessment objectives and resources to be used to support service delivery strategies at one-stop centers and, as applicable, affiliate sites.	WorkSource System Policies 1016 and 1011; WIA Policy 3685; WIA Title II, SBCTC State Assessment Policy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	17. The local board ensures that outreach is provided to populations and sub-populations who can benefit from one-stop services.	WIA Section 188; 29 CFR 37.42
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	18. The local board implements universal access to programs and activities to individuals through reasonable recruitment targeting, outreach efforts, assessments, service delivery, partnership development, and numeric goals.	WIA Section 188; 29 CFR 37.42
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	19. The local board complies with the nondiscrimination provisions of Section 188, and assures that Methods of Administration were developed and implemented.	WIA Section 188; 29 CFR 37.54(a)(1); WIA Policy 3445 and 3450 Revision 1

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	20. The local board collects and maintains data necessary to show compliance with nondiscrimination provisions of Section 188.	WIA Section 185; 29 CFR 37.37; WIA Policy 3445 and 3450 Revision 1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	21. The local board complies with restrictions governing the use of federal funds for political activities, the use of the one-stop environment for political activities, and the local board complies with the applicable certification and disclosure requirements.	WorkSource System Policy 1018; 2 CFR Part 225 Appendix B; 2 CFR Part 230 Appendix B; 48 CFR 31.205-22; RCW 42.52.180; TEGL 2-12; 29 CFR Part 93.100
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	22. The local boards in WDAs 3, 8, 9, & 11 negotiate an MOU with the WIA 167 grantee which sets forth their respective responsibilities for making the full range of services available through the One-Stop system available to farmworkers.	WIA Section 167 20 CFR 669.220(a)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	23. The local board follows confidentiality requirements for wage and education records as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), as amended, WIA, and applicable Departmental regulations.	WIA Sections 136(f)(2), (f)(3), 122, 85(a)(4)(B); 20 USC 1232g; 20 CFR 666.150; 20 CFR part 603
Administration of Funds		References
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	24. The local board has a written policy and procedures to competitively award grants and contracts for WIA Title I activities (or applicable federal waiver), including a process to be used to procure training services made as exceptions to the Individual Training Account process.	WIA Section 118(b)(9); 20 CFR 661.350(a)(10); WIA Policy 3405; WIA Section 134(d)(4)(G); 20 CFR 663.430(a)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	25. The local board has accounting systems that follow current Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and written fiscal-controls and fund-accounting procedures and ensures such procedures are followed to ensure proper disbursement and accounting of fund allotments made for WIA adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs.	WIA Section 118(b)(8) WIA Policy 3230 Revision 1; WIA Policy 3250
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	26. The local board ensures compliance with the uniform administrative requirements in WIA through annual, on-site monitoring of each local sub-recipient.	WIA Section 184(a)(3); 20 CFR 667.200; 20 CFR 667.400; 20 CFR 667.410; WIA Policy 3230 Revision 1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	27. The local board has a local allowable cost and prior approval policy that includes a process for the approval of expenditures of \$5,000 or more for equipment requested by subcontractors.	WIA Policy 3260, Revision 2
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	28. The local board has a written debt collection policy and procedures that conforms with state and federal requirements and a process for maintaining a permanent record of all debt collection cases that supports the decisions made and documents the actions taken with respect to debt collection, restoration, or other debt resolution activities.	WIA Section 184; 20 CFR Part 652; 20 CFR 667.410(a), 667.500(a)(2), 667.740; WIA Policy 3265 Revision 1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	29. The local board has a written policy and procedures for ensuring	WIA Section 184(a)(2)(A); 20 CFR Part 652;

	management and inventory of all properties obtained using WIA funds, including property purchased with JTPA funds and transferred to WIA, and that comply with WIA, Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) and, in the cases of local government, Local Government Property Acquisition policies.	29 CFR Part 95; 29 CFR Part 97; OMB Circular A-21; OMB Circular A-87; OMB Circular A-110; OMB Circular A-122; OMB Circular A-133; OMB Circular A-133; Federal Register Vol. 65, No. 124; Generally Accepted Accounting Procedures (GAAP); WIA Policy 3452
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	30. The local board will not use funds received under WIA to assist, promote, or deter union organizing.	WIA Section 181(b)(7); 20 CFR 663.730
	Eligibility	References
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	31. The local board has a written policy and procedures that ensure adequate and correct determinations of eligibility for WIA-funded core and intensive services and qualifications for enrollment of adults, dislocated workers, and youth in WIA-funded intensive and training services, consistent with state policy on eligibility and priority for service.	WIA Section 134(d)(4)(E); 20 CFR Part 663 Subpart A, B, and C; WIA Policies 3636 Revision 1, 3638, 3920 Revision 1, and 3640 Revision 2
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	32. The local board has a written policy and procedures for awarding Individual Training Accounts to eligible adults, dislocated workers, and youth receiving WIA Title I-B training services, including dollar and/or duration limit(s), limits on the number of times an individual may modify an ITA, and how ITAs will be obligated and authorized.	WIA Section 134(d)(4)(G); 20 CFR 663.400, 663.410, 663.420, 663.430, 663.440; WIA Policy 3655
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	33. The local board has a written policy and procedures that establish internal controls, documentation requirements, and leveraging and coordination of other community resources when providing supportive services and, as applicable, needs-related payments to eligible adult, dislocated workers, and youth enrolled in WIA Title I-B programs.	WIA Sections 129(c)(2)(G), 134(e)(2); 20 CFR Subpart H, 663.800-840; 20 CFR 664.440; WIA Policy 3695 Revision 1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	34. The local board has a written policy for priority of service in its WorkSource centers and, as applicable, affiliate sites and for local workforce providers that ensures veterans and eligible spouses are identified at the point of entry so they can take advantage of priority of service, are made aware of their entitlement to priority of service, and provided information on the array of employment, training and placement services and eligibility requirements for those programs or services.	Jobs for Veterans Act; Veterans' Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act; 20 CFR 1010; TEGL 10-09; Veterans Program Letter 07-09; WorkSource System Policy 1009 Revision 1

Performance	References
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 35. The local board has a process to annually review the results of the State Core Measures for programs in the workforce development system and a process for considering the State Core Measures results in local planning efforts.	WorkSource System Policy 1017

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This section of the Local Integrated Workforce Plan is comprised of a form that must be signed by appropriate officials. This form serves as the WDC's certification that it complies with all required components of the Workforce Investment Act Title I-B.

Local Certification

This 2013-2017 Local Integrated Workforce Plan is submitted in accordance with the provisions of the Workforce Investment Act Title I-B and plan development guidelines adopted by the state Workforce Board on November 15, 2012.

The Northwest Workforce Development Council certifies that it complies with all required components of the Workforce Investment Act Title I-B its regulations, written U.S. Department of Labor guidance implementing the laws, and all other applicable federal and state laws, regulations, policies and guidance. The Council also assures that it will exercise oversight over Wagner-Peyser Act activities delivered as part of the one-stop system.

Please customize this signature page to accommodate your CLEO structure; e.g. local areas requiring more than one CLEO signature.

Kenneth A. Dahlstedt
Chief Local Elected Official

5/29/13
Date

[Signature]
Workforce Development Council Chair

5-29-13
Date

Appendix A

EXPECTED LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE FOR PY 2012
FEDERAL COMMON MEASURES & STATE CORE MEASURES

Performance Targets for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I-B	
Performance Measure	New Targets
	PY 2012
<u>Federal Adult Measures</u>	
<i>Entered Employment</i>	77.2%
<i>Retention</i>	84.9%
<i>Earnings</i>	\$14,337
<u>Federal Dislocated Worker Measures</u>	
<i>Entered Employment</i>	78.1%
<i>Retention</i>	86.5%
<i>Earnings</i>	\$17,338
<u>Federal Youth Measures</u>	
<i>Placement in Employment or Education</i>	70.6%
<i>Degree or Certificate</i>	74.4%
<i>Literacy and Numeracy Gains</i>	51.9%
<u>State Adult Measures</u>	
<i>Credential Rate</i>	To Be Determined
<i>Employment Q3 After Exit</i>	77.7%
<i>Annualized Median Earnings</i>	\$25,482
<u>State Dislocated Worker Measures</u>	
<i>Credential Rate</i>	To Be Determined
<i>Employment Q3 After Exit</i>	82.1%
<i>Annualized Median</i>	\$34,605
<u>State Youth Measures</u>	
<i>Credential Rate</i>	To Be Determined
<i>Employment Q3 After Exit</i>	79.4%
<i>Annualized Median</i>	\$11,307

Appendix B

Other State Workforce Core Measures: Local & Statewide Performance: PY 2012			
Program	WDA	2010-11 Core Measure Outcomes	2010-11 Core Measure Outcomes
	WDA Name	Northwest	Statewide
ADULTS			
Apprenticeship	Employment Rate	75.7%	69.9%
	Credential Rate	54.9%	51.6%
	Annualized Earnings	\$51,814	\$47,115
CTC Professional Technical	Employment Rate	65.9%	64.5%
	Credential Rate	50.0%	56.6%
	Annualized Earnings	\$22,916	\$26,138
Private Career Schools	Employment Rate	65.9%	61.8%
	Credential Rate	80.8%	78.3%
	Annualized Earnings	\$23,258	\$20,812
WIA Dislocated Worker	Employment Rate	65.5%	65.3%
	Annualized Earnings	\$31,849	\$33,979
Worker Retraining	Employment Rate	63.3%	65.6%
	Credential Rate	50.6%	56.8%
	Annualized Earnings	\$27,436	\$30,331
ADULTS WITH BARRIERS			
Adult Basic Education	Employment Rate	54.4%	47.9%
	Annualized Earnings	\$16,904	\$16,808
Services for the Blind	Employment Rate	18.8%	42.7%
	Rehabilitation Rate	43.8%	65.6%
	Annualized Earnings	\$21,901	\$22,802
Vocational Rehabilitation	Employment Rate	50.5%	46.7%
	Rehabilitation Rate	63.1%	51.9%
	Annualized Earnings	\$13,855	\$14,520
WIA Adult	Employment Rate	74.0%	66.7%
	Annualized Earnings	\$30,626	\$22,497
Work First	Employment Rate	41.2%	39.6%
	Annualized Earnings	\$11,979	\$12,426
YOUTH			
Secondary CTE	Employment/Postsecondary Rate	80.6%	83.1%
	Annualized Earnings (not in school)	\$11,262	\$10,959
WIA Youth	Placement Rate	70.2%	61.8%
	Annualized Earnings	\$12,459	\$10,865

Note: Credential rates for WIA programs are being revised and are therefore not shown.

Appendix C

PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The plan development process involved a range of activities over a several month period extending to April 7, 2013, including:

- early community notification of plan development guidelines and solicitation of comment and issues as the plan was being developed;
- research and analysis on the regional economy and labor market, the current and future workforce, and the workforce development system in conjunction with Hart Hodges PhD, Director, WWU Center for Economic & Business Research and Regional Labor Economists Elizabeth Court, PhD and Anneliese Vance-Sherman, PhD, ESD Labor Market & Economic Analysis
- board member input at NWC committee meetings on January 30, 2013;
- targeted stakeholder input solicited from partner and community leadership;
- participation of NWC staff members in strategic planning activities of partner agencies to help ensure continuity of plans;
- incorporation of strategic directions and actions from multiple complementary and parallel planning documents, grants and contracts, and action plans drawn from throughout the region;
- review and approval at February 27, 2013 Executive Committee meeting of draft Integrated Workforce Plan for 30 day public comment period
- a thirty day public comment period commencing March 1, 2013 with the draft Integrated Plan posted on the Council's nwboard.org website;
- comments compiled and reviewed from public posting period (no dissenting or adverse comments received);
- review of board member and community stakeholder input and approval of the draft Plan by the local elected officials and full Council at March 27, 2013 board meeting.

Appendix D

List of Strategic Clusters for Workforce Development Strategic Industry Clusters

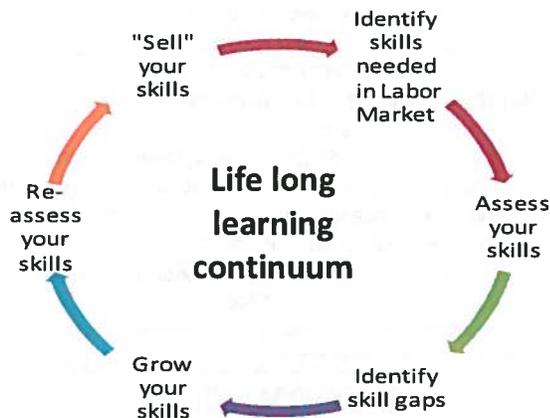
Workforce Development Area	Reconciled Strategic Clusters (by rank order unless not numbered)
Northwest WDA Whatcom, Skagit, Island, and San Juan Counties	1. Manufacturing (Advanced Manufacturing) 1.a. Petroleum Products Manufacturing 1.b. Wood Product Manufacturing 1.c. Primary Metal Manufacturing 1.d. Food Manufacturing 1.e. Machinery Manufacturing 1.f. Transportation Equipment Manufacturing (including aerospace and marine) 2. Construction 3. Health Care



FOUNDATION SKILLS

Employers Need People Who Have These Skills:

The **Foundation Skills** and **Workforce Skill Standards** represent the skills, attributes and characteristics employers in this community are looking for when hiring and promoting workers.



BASIC SKILLS

- Reading**
 - Locates and interprets technical vocabulary and key messages from written information in prose and documents.
- Writing**
 - Communicates thoughts and key information in writing; records information completely and accurately.
- Arithmetic**
 - Performs basic computation and makes estimates without a calculator; uses basic numerical concepts, including whole numbers, percentages, charts, etc. to display information.
- Mathematics**
 - Approaches practical problems using mathematical techniques; expresses mathematical concepts orally and in writing; and understands the role of chance in the occurrence and prediction of events.
- Listening**
 - Receives, interprets and responds appropriately to verbal messages and other clues such as body language; for example, to comprehend, to learn, to critically evaluate, to appreciate, or to support the speaker.
- Speaking**
 - Organizes ideas and speaks clearly; communicates appropriate to listeners and situations; participates in conversations, discussions and group presentations; asks questions when needed.

THINKING SKILLS

- Creative Thinking**
 - Uses imagination freely; combines ideas or information in new ways, makes connection between seemingly unrelated ideas, and reshapes goals in ways that reveal new possibilities.
- Decision Making**
 - Specifies goals and constraints, generates alternatives, considers risks, evaluates and chooses best alternative.
- Problem Solving**
 - Recognizes that a problem exists (and that there is a discrepancy between what is and what should or could be); identifies possible causes; creates, implements, and revises plan.
- Seeing Things in the Mind's Eye**
 - Organizes and processes symbols, pictures, graphs, objects or other information; for example, sees a building from a blueprint or the taste of food from reading a recipe.
- Knowing How to Learn**
 - Recognizes and applies new knowledge and skills in both familiar and changing situations and is aware of learning tools (e.g. learning styles), formal learning strategies (e.g. note taking), and informal learning strategies (e.g. awareness of unidentified false assumptions that may lead to faulty conclusions).
- Reasoning**
 - Discovers a rule or principle underlying the relationship between two or more objects; uses logic to draw conclusions.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Responsibility**
 - Exerts a high level of effort and perseverance toward goal attainment; works hard to become excellent at doing tasks even when assigned an unpleasant task.
- Self-Esteem**
 - Believes in own self-worth and maintains a positive view of self; demonstrates knowledge of own skills and abilities.
- Social**
 - Demonstrates understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy and politeness in new and on-going group settings; asserts self in familiar and unfamiliar social situations.
- Self-Management**
 - "Self-starter"; assesses own abilities accurately and sets well-defined and realistic personal goals; monitors progress toward goals and motivates self; exhibits self-control (responds unemotionally and non-defensively).
- Integrity and Honesty**
 - Can be trusted; recognizes when faced with making an honest or dishonest decision based on values; understands the impact of violating organizational beliefs and chooses an ethical course of action.

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WORKFORCE SKILL STANDARDS

Employers Hire People Who Have These Skills:

RESOURCES

- Time**
 - Articulates the organization's expectations for attendance and punctuality & adheres to them.
- Money**
 - Uses or prepares budgets.
- Materials & Facilities**
 - Acquire, store and distribute materials, supplies, parts equipment, space or final products efficiently.
- Human Resources**
 - Distributes work, evaluates performance and provides feedback.

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

- Participates as a Team Member**
 - Works Cooperatively with others.
 - Contributes to group with ideas and suggestions.
 - Encourages and motivates an individual or group.
 - Demonstrates speaking, listening, writing and interacting skills sufficient to participate as an effective team member.
 - Communicates thoughts, feelings and ideas to justify a position.
- Teaches Others**
 - Effectively organizes and presents information to teach others.
- Serves Customers / Clients**
 - Works and communicates with clients and customers to satisfy their expectations.
 - Presents self in a positive manner.
- Exercises Leadership**
 - Encourages, negotiates, and motivates an individual or group.
 - Responsibly challenges existing procedures, policies or authority.
- Negotiates to Arrive at a Decision**
 - Works cooperatively with others to arrive at a decision.
 - Communicates thoughts, feelings and ideas to justify a position.
- Works With Cultural Diversity**
 - Works well with men and women and with a variety of ethnic, social or educational backgrounds.

TECHNOLOGY & TOOLS

- Selects Technology**
 - Understands various technologies to select which set of procedures, tools and/or machines produce desired results.
- Applies Technology to Task**
 - Selects and analyzes information and communicates the results to others.
 - Selects and applies the most effective technologies to accomplish a task.
- Maintains & Troubleshoots Technology**
 - Prevents, identifies and solves problems related to maintaining and troubleshooting technology.

SYSTEMS

- Understands Systems**
 - Organizes, processes and maintains written or computerized records and other forms of information to better function within the system.
 - Articulates expectation for functioning within the social or organizational systems.
 - Identifies employer expectations and acceptable work behaviors and their effects.
- Monitors & Corrects Performance**
 - Distinguishes trends.
 - Predicts impact of actions on system operations.
 - Analyzes problems within the system or organization and takes necessary action to correct performance.
- Improves & Designs Systems**
 - Makes suggestions to modify existing systems to improve products or services.
 - Develops new or alternative systems.

INFORMATION

- Acquires & Evaluates Information**
 - Identifies employer expectations and acceptable work behaviors.
 - Acquires community resources to achieve personal needs.
 - Identifies employer expectations for safe, efficient and productive use of equipment.
- Organizes & Maintains Information**
 - Organizes, processes and maintains written or computerized records and other forms of information in a systematic fashion.
- Interprets & Communicates Information**
 - Selects and analyzes information to make decisions and/ or to use forms and/or documents.
 - Communicates thoughts, feelings and ideas to justify a position.
 - Selects and analyzes information and communicates the results to others.
 - Effectively interprets and presents information during interviews and while teaching others.
- Uses Computers to Process Information**
 - Employs computers to analyze and communicate information.
 - Organizes, processes and maintains computerized records and other forms of information.
 - Selects and analyzes information and communicates the results to others using computers.

WorkSource
Northwest is a partnership of equal opportunity organizations that provide employment and training services. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to persons with disabilities.

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Revision 10/12/2010