

Workforce Development Council
Tacoma - Pierce County



Tacoma-Pierce County Workforce Development System

Strategic Plan

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Approved by: Tacoma-Pierce County Workforce Development Council

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Introduction

The last decade has witnessed dramatic swings in the area's economy, from the rapid inflation then deflation of the technology bubble, to Boeing's climb then fall following September 11th to the wholesale disassembly of middle management teams. These changes have profound implications for the Pierce County workforce. We now live in an uncertain time where security at home and abroad is the highest concern. Although the technology economy of the 90's generated tremendous paper wealth, the apparent wealth vanished quickly as technology was unable to add real value to the economy. Where economic disparities between the educated and the uneducated, and between urban and rural areas were a concern before, now the early retired find themselves back at work in lower wage jobs as their equity-based retirement plans have lost the inflated value of technology.

Now, more than ever, enhancing the skills of the workforce is critical to ensure a productive and secure future for all Pierce County residents. In an age of fierce global competition for jobs, the areas that thrive will be the places with the best educated, most innovative, and most productive workers. Few industries will be untouched by the forces of technology and globalization, as shown by the pervasiveness of layoffs in Appendix A.

In order to ensure economic prosperity, State and local workforce development agencies must close the gap between business' demand for skilled workers and the supply of workers. Agencies must also work for equal opportunities for women, persons with disabilities, and people of color. And most of all, agencies must prepare today's workers with a foundation to be able to negotiate a rapidly changing economy.

To address these challenges, Pierce County workforce development professionals have been developing an integrated service delivery system since 1997. We are currently implementing an integrated approach to service delivery. The following strategic plan details an integrated system for improved workforce development services for all who want them.

BACKGROUND

The Workforce Investment Act: A catalyst for action. Pierce County local elected officials, businesses, and public partners view the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) as a catalyst for organizing a broad workforce development system. Under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, local officials and Workforce Development Councils shape key policy affecting the workforce development system locally, increase efficiency and effectiveness, and streamline efforts.

PRINCIPLES

WIA is based on seven key reform principles:

- Streamlining services through a One-Stop delivery system;
- Empowering individuals to make informed choices;
- Developing universal access;
- Increasing accountability;
- Encouraging local boards and the private sector to take on more strategic roles;
- Fostering state and local flexibility; and
- Improving youth programs.

These principles guide all WIA-funded workforce development efforts, as well as all community workforce development programs. Successful workforce development requires strong partnerships among public and private sectors and all the various entities delivering services. To ensure a competitive workforce, this new approach stresses:

- A comprehensive focus beyond targeted populations and programs;
- Inclusion of all public workforce development programs;
- A commitment to monitoring labor exchange mechanisms;
- Inclusion of all public and private investments in industry-specific training;
- Inclusion of all youth and adults; and
- Inclusion of economic development factors.

The *business* of an integrated workforce development system. Effective workforce development systems respond to business’ demand for qualified workers. By integrating services locally, customers gain convenient access to jobs and training opportunities. In addition, an integrated service delivery system will:

- Ensure that the K – 12 education system equips students with the skills needed to excel;
- Encourage the post-secondary education system to work closely with businesses;
- Promote the importance of lifelong learning;
- Foster training services that respond effectively to business needs; and
- Increase business-sponsored training and education opportunities for workers.

RESULTS

Communities with strong, quality-driven workforce development systems improve the overall quality of life of their residents by:

- Attracting businesses looking for skilled workers;
- Increasing tax revenues;
- Stimulating consumer spending;
- Reducing poverty;
- Promoting job growth; and
- Moving welfare recipients and the working poor to jobs with a future.

THE PIERCE COUNTY WORKSOURCE PARTNERSHIP

The Pierce County WorkSource Partnership members include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Businesses and Business Associations ▪ Economic Development Organizations ▪ The departments of Social and Health Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vocational Rehabilitation ▪ Community Services ▪ Employment Security Department ▪ The Human Services Coalition ▪ Job Corps ▪ Organized Labor Organizations ▪ Pierce County K-12 School Districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bates Technical College ▪ Clover Park Technical College ▪ Pierce College District ▪ Tacoma Community College ▪ University of Washington ▪ Pacific Lutheran University ▪ University of Puget Sound ▪ Housing and Urban Development ▪ Faith based Organizations ▪ Department of Corrections
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In 2002, the partnership went through a comprehensive process to develop a Blueprint which identifies unified goals and a future workforce development system structure. The WDC adopted the following as a result:

VISION

The vision of the Workforce Development System is of a prosperous community that will include:

- Partnerships that foster economic development.
- The equal, active and deliberate development of value-added business services and a quality workforce.
- Responsive, convenient, valuable, efficient, customer-focused services.
- Efficient leveraging of existing resources.
- Effective communication within and outside of the workforce system.

MISSION

The Workforce Development System mission is to provide access to and enhance delivery of workforce development services for job seekers and businesses.

GOALS

Create an accountable, flexible, and integrated system that is demand-side led, accessible to everyone, based on economic and workplace needs, which offers customized services that are continuously improved.

- Create an accountable system that enables disadvantaged youth, persons with disabilities, new labor market entrants, recent immigrants, and dislocated and low wage workers to access education, training and jobs in response to ever-changing workforce needs and challenges.
- Create an accountable system to close the gap between businesses need for skilled workers and Pierce County residents' ability to meet that need.

OUR AUDIENCES

The workforce development system has two primary external customers-businesses and job seekers. Within this customer context, job seekers (emerging and transitional) and incumbent workers demand quality training and other workforce development services that meet the standards set forth by businesses. It is the charge of the supply side-education, training, and community based organizations (CBO's)-to respond to businesses' demand for workers whose skills keep pace with the changing economy.

WDC STRATEGIC GOALS

GOAL 1: *Deliberately manage a workforce development system based upon economic development priorities established by the business and employer community. (Blueprint Scope Statement)*

Past job training efforts have focused almost exclusively on the needs of job seekers, a system that operated on the assumption that if people were trained, jobs would follow. Our new integrated approach stresses the importance of training individuals for current and projected skill needs of the labor market.

GOAL 2: *Improve a system that promotes life-long learning, enabling disadvantaged youth, individuals with disabilities, new labor market entrants, recent immigrants, limited English speakers, older workers and low wage earners to access education, training and jobs in an ever changing workforce.*

The vision of this strategic plan is to promote learning opportunities for all throughout their working lives. Individuals will gain the portable skills and flexibility that will prepare them for career changes and rapid economic growth.

GOAL 3: *Close the gap between employer's need for skilled workers and Pierce County resident's ability to meet that need.*

The demand for skilled workers continues to grow and wages are higher than ever. Businesses at the national, state, and local levels continue to require workers with the skills and training needed to stay competitive in a global economy. These skills include occupation-specific skills and "soft skills," such as teamwork, interpersonal skills, customer service skills, and work ethic.

GOAL 4: *Integrate workforce development programs to improve customer service.*

The WIB and its partners plan to go beyond operational coordination, collaboration and integration as envisioned under WIA. Full integration of workforce development system partners will require (1) adoption of a unified partnership based workforce development plan that includes both strategic and tactical details consistent with each partnered or organization's strategic and operational plans, and (2) long term resource alignment and investments from all partners to support and sustain full implementation of the unified workforce development plan.

ALIGNMENT WITH GOVERNOR'S GOALS FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board of the State of Washington established workforce training system goals that guide local board system development. The goals closely align with the WDC and its local partnership's strategic goals.

Goal 1: *Youth: Ensure all Washington youth receive the education, training and support they need for success in postsecondary education and/or work.*

Goal 2: *Adults: Provide Washington adults (including those with barriers to education and employment) with access to lifelong education, training, and employment services.*

Goal 3: *Industry: Meet the workforce needs of industry by preparing students, current workers, and dislocated workers with the skills employers need.*

Goal 4: *Integration: Integrate services provided by separately funded workforce development programs so that we provide the best possible services to our customers.*

SECTION I: TOMORROW'S ECONOMY

POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

Pierce County is located at the southern basin of Puget Sound, and shares contiguous boundaries with six counties, King, Thurston, Kitsap, Mason, Lewis, and Yakima. Its geopolitical landscape presents a complex picture of old and newly incorporated cities, growing unincorporated areas, large-scale federal military installations, and rural areas. Pierce County consists primarily of flat plains at or just above sea level. The division between western and eastern Pierce County marks the transition from the plains to the foothills of the Cascade Mountain Range. Prominent saltwater features include a large deep water port at Commencement Bay and the Narrows strait, which separates the county from the Kitsap Peninsula. Virtually all of Mt. Rainier National Park and parts of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest are within Pierce County's boundaries.

Pierce County is Washington State's second largest county, with over twelve percent of the state's population, labor force, and job base. The region is well-poised to assume a greater role in the state's economy in the next century.

- An excellent job-training and educational infrastructure, including colleges and vocational technology institutions;
- A prime Puget Sound location on the I-5 corridor;
- Close proximity to Sea-Tac, the region's major international airport;
- A highly developed railway and trucking web; and
- An excellent deep-water port with high volumes of truck and rail traffic and significant backup land including the Frederickson Industrial Area.

POPULATION

Pierce County covers 1,690 square miles and has a total population of approximately 805,400 which makes it Western Washington's second most populous county. Just over half (53%) of the County's population, 427,740 people, live in incorporated areas while the balance of the population live in unincorporated areas. This is much lower than in King County (82%), is similar to Snohomish County (53%) and Thurston County (43%) and is considerably higher than Kitsap County (31%). The County's population is heavily concentrated in Tacoma with 25% or 202,700 of the County's population, and cities southwest of Tacoma making up another 17% of the county's population. These major cities are Lakewood with 58,780 people; Puyallup with 36,930 people, and University Place with 31,440 people. Throughout central portions of the County and eastern portions of the urbanized area, however, many pockets or more densely populated areas exist. These areas include residents that drive smaller, local economies throughout the County. In addition to providing labor for the County's industrial areas, these residents support many retailers and services in small towns and in unincorporated business districts.

Pierce County has experienced population growth of 20% to 21% for each of the last two decades and an overall growth rate of 44% from 1980 – 2000. From 2000 – 2008, the Pierce County population increased approximately 15%, ranking as the 7th highest growing county population. Moreover, several cities have experienced even more substantial population growth from 2000 – 2008. DuPont

has grown by 4,938 people (201%) making it the 3rd fastest growing city in the state. Bonney Lake has grown by 6,533 (67%); Fife's population has increased by 2,741 (57%); Orting has grown by 2,144 (55%) and Eatonville has grown by 363 (18%).

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

There are seven Chambers of Commerce in Pierce County and they are important participants and partners in economic development efforts. The Tacoma-Pierce County Economic Development Board (EDB) coordinates regional economic development with public and private sector membership and support. The EDB and the County's Economic Development Division are now co-located downtown Tacoma and frequently collaborate on business growth efforts, along with the Port of Tacoma and the City of Tacoma Economic Development Department. The Workforce Development Council (WDC) integrates and coordinates workforce development strategies and investments in partnership with these economic development partners. The ability of the various economic development entities and the WDC to work effectively together is one of Pierce County's distinguishing features and is a major strength.

According to the 2008—2009 Pierce County Economic Index (PCEI), Tacoma-Pierce County will most likely avoid the worst effects of the national economic downturn. Despite the challenges faced nationally, The Pierce County Economic Index gained 2.8% for 2008 reaching an all-time high. However, the index is forecasted to drop 1.4% for 2009.

Total personal income increased in 2007 by 4.8% over 2006 and in 2008 is expected to increase by 7.6% over 2007. However, the outlook for 2009 is weaker, with a forecasted increase of just 3.9%. One of the smallest increases in the past thirty years, Pierce County residents will see their incomes increase by just \$1.2 billion. According to the PCEI, most of this growth will be due to inflationary effects, not new jobs or improved productivity.

Both in terms of growth rate and dollar amount, 2009 will be the weakest per capital income growth in thirty years. The 2008 per capital level was \$39,500. The average income in 2009 will move up by just \$500 to \$40,000. This equates to a real per capital income decline by 1.9% since the inflation rate will exceed the growth in per capital income.

Economic shifts: Like the U.S. economy, Pierce County's economy has seen a shift of jobs away from manufacturing sectors and into services sectors. In 2008, services jobs total more than 143,000, representing 45.7% of all jobs in the County. Government jobs are also more dominant in Pierce County than region-wide, with 56,751 jobs because of the strong military presence. Over half of Pierce County's jobs are derived from the following six sectors:

- Healthcare and social assistance
- Retail trade
- Manufacturing
- Accommodation and food services
- Construction
- Other services

When compared to the region and state, Pierce County employment is more heavily concentrated in utilities, agriculture, healthcare and social assistance, government, other services, construction, accommodation and food services, and educational services.

Weakened economic growth: The Pierce County Economic Index predicts weak, but positive economic growth in the Pierce County area. The Pierce County economy's main workforce clusters, military and health care, will remain fairly strong and provide support to offset the negative national forces. In 2007 and 2008, the annual gain in workers was 3.2% (12,000 new workers) and 2.75% (10,500 new workers) respectively. However, the downturn in economic activity will slow the labor force growth dramatically in 2009. For the year, the labor force will increase by just 0.6% or just 2,400 new workers.

In 2000, Pierce County's unemployment rate was just under 5%. However, things looked far different in 2008, with a 6.0% unemployment rate. The 2009 projected unemployment rate will be about 7%.

Pierce County Workforce and Labor Market Profile 2008

Civilian Labor Force and Unemployment Rate

Area	Year	Time Period	Labor Force	No. of Employed	No. of Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
Pierce County	2008	Dec	411,160	380,790	30,360	7.4

Fast Growing Occupations

Occupation	Employment Projections			% Change	Growth Rate
	2006	2016	Change		
Medical Scientists, Except Epidemiologists	87	130	43	49.4	4.1
Ambulance Drivers and Attendants, Except Emergency	153	225	72	47.1	3.9
Interior Designers	97	141	44	45.4	3.8
Chemical Technicians	107	153	46	43.0	3.7
Farmworkers and Labs, Crop, Nurseries, and Greenhouse	80	113	33	41.3	3.5

High Wage Occupations

Occupation	Year	Time Period	Percentiles					Hourly Average
			10th	25th	Median	75th	90th	
Physicians and Surgeons, All Other	2008	Mar	\$57.55	\$69.90	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$91.98
Internists, General	2008	Mar	\$61.97	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$90.86
Family and General Practitioners	2008	Mar	\$55.94	\$69.43	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$84.04
Chief Executives	2008	Mar	\$55.58	\$63.66	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$81.86
Psychiatrists	2008	Mar	\$44.85	\$69.63	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$78.30

Current Industry Employment

Year	Time Period	CES Industry Title	No. of Employed
2008	Dec	Total Nonfarm	276,900
2008	Dec	Service-Providing	235,400
2008	Dec	Total Private	219,000
2008	Dec	Government	57,900
2008	Dec	Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	56,900

Covered Employment by Sector, 2006

Source: [Employment Security Department](#)

AVERAGE MONTHLY EMPLOYMENT AND TOTAL WAGES IN COVERED EMPLOYMENT CY 2006					
Industry	Employers	Average Number of Employees	Percent of Total	Wages Paid	Percent of Total
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	167	1,332	0.5	\$34,205,092	0.3
Mining	8	230	0.1	12,147,825	0.1
Utilities	24	634	0.2	39,532,664	0.4
Construction	2,580	21,298	8.0	935,410,449	9.3
Manufacturing	643	19,793	7.4	978,620,753	9.8
Wholesale/Retail Trade	2,451	41,334	15.6	1,321,658,183	13.2
Transportation & Warehousing	422	10,179	3.8	456,643,521	4.6
Information	115	3,532	1.3	170,858,117	1.7
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	1,300	14,242	5.4	737,778,767	7.4
Professional & Technical Services	1,130	8,151	3.1	402,704,205	4.0
Management of Companies & Enterprises	48	1,204	0.5	73,773,429	0.7
Administrative & Waste Services	843	14,070	5.3	370,543,239	3.7
Educational Services	152	3,587	1.3	122,892,825	1.2
Health Care & Social Assistance	1,441	33,099	12.5	1,297,818,941	13.0
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	207	3,745	1.4	77,274,756	0.8
Accommodation & Food Services	1,233	22,300	8.4	311,196,827	3.1
Other Services, except Public Administration	5,429	13,185	5.0	279,660,266	2.8
Government	170	53,813	20.3	2,391,484,925	23.9
Not Elsewhere Classified	--	--	--	--	--
Total	18,356	265,719	100.0	\$10,014,204,784	100.0

LOCATIONS OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY WITHIN THE COUNTY

Pierce County economic activity is dispersed throughout the entire urbanized area of the County, with clear concentrations in and around Tacoma. Nearly 100,000 (43%) of the County's 234,200 jobs were in Tacoma in 2002. Unincorporated jobs totaled 51,150, accounting for an additional 22% of County wide employment. Lakewood, adjacent to Tacoma to the South, had the second most jobs among Pierce cities, with 22,500 jobs (10%). Government jobs in Lakewood stand out as unusually high. These jobs include Western State Hospital, the largest employer in this sector in Lakewood. Puyallup was third with 18,400 jobs (8%). The next tier of employment centers among cities that include Sumner with 6,250 jobs (3%); Gig Harbor with 5,700 jobs (2%); and University Place with 5,400 jobs (2%).

SIGNIFICANT EMPLOYERS

Pierce County's industry: According to the Washington Prospector 2008 Business and Workforce report, Pierce County is home to 24,623 firms employing 312,795 individuals (does not include self employment):

Number of Employees	Number of Firms	Percent of Firms
1 – 9	19,433	78.9%
10 – 99	4,758	19.3%
100 – 1,000+	432	1.8%
TOTAL	24,623	100.0%

Military: Pierce County is known throughout the nation for its military bases, in particular the U.S. Army's Fort Lewis and the adjacent McChord Air Force Base south of Tacoma. Other military installations include Madigan Army Medical Center and Camp Murray (National Guard), also concentrated in and around Fort Lewis. The military's presence results in more than 76,000 people living in Pierce County who draw compensation and benefits from the military, infusing more than \$1 billion in wages and salaries into the local economy. Military contracting amounts to more than \$53 million, according to the Economic Impact of Military Bases in WA (2004) by the State Office of Financial Management. The annual payroll earned by civilian and military workers is \$1.876 billion, nearly 20 percent of countrywide labor earnings. The military employs nearly 53,207 personnel in Pierce County as enlisted and civilian personnel. More than 30,500 enlisted people are stationed in Pierce County, most of who are stationed at Fort Lewis.

Compensation for military positions varies. The average wages for Fort Lewis enlisted personnel was \$26,873 in 2002 and civilian wages are lower at \$14,006, reflecting many part time positions. Retirees are paid similar to the average wages as for enlisted personnel. Wages at McChord Airforce Base are higher, averaging \$47,337 for active duty and \$36,468 for civilian personnel. Madigan Army Hospital wages are higher, as expected for medical institutions, at \$65,029 for enlisted personnel and \$49,631 for civilians. For the most part, the military has higher compensation than the average wage and salary

workers in the County averaging \$37,200 in 2006. Military compensation includes housing or subsidies, healthcare, retirement programs, inexpensive staple goods allow military personnel to retain a larger share of their wages for discretionary spending. Pierce County's military presence has consistently aided the local economy during recessionary times, providing positive stimulus and growth.

Port of Tacoma: The Port of Tacoma is a vibrant leader in the Pierce County economy. The Port directly creates nearly 7,000 jobs and indirectly connects 21,000 more jobs in the County. The Port's primary identity relates to its marine cargo support role, but the Port also facilitates real estate and industrial development. Companies rely on the Port to facilitate shipment of their supplies and products and to assist in development of industrial land and facilities.

The Port of Tacoma is considered an "economic engine" for the region. A study released in 2006 highlighted the Port's economic impact at both the local and state level that includes \$637 million in annual wages generated in Pierce County and \$90 million annually in state and local taxes in Washington State. In addition 43,100 jobs in Pierce County and over 113,000 jobs in Washington State are related to Port activity. In 2005, Tacoma was the fastest growing major port on the West Coast with 17% growth in container traffic from 2002 – 2003. The Port's container grew additional 2% in 2006 after a robust 15% in 2005. Over the past 5 years, the Port's container traffic has grown 59%.

The Port of Tacoma continues to expand with the global economy. The plan to develop the east side of the Blair Waterway on Tacoma's Tideflats is moving forward. The area will eventually house up to four additional efficient container terminals. In 2007, Japanese carrier NYK Line and the Port announced plans for a container terminal opening in 2012. The NYK terminal construction is projected to generate about 3,000 jobs and about \$4.8 million in local level taxes. The terminal itself is projected to create about 1,800 new direct, family-wage jobs in Pierce County and 1,400 new jobs outside of Pierce County in Washington State.

The Port's auto business remains strong, Auto Warehousing Inc., a Fife based auto processing company along with its five auto shipping customers, moved into a new \$40 million, 146 acre facility. About 175,000 autos moved through the Port in 2007, marking the second best year ever. The Port is busy preparing for the future, making capital investments which will total \$417 million between 2003 and 2008. These investments targeted transportation infrastructure needed to accommodate future growth, coordination of rail activities, application of new technologies for improving freight mobility, navigation improvements and workforce development.

Healthcare and Social Assistance: Healthcare and Social Assistance is the County's number one cluster in terms of employment and wages paid, and is the fourth largest sector in terms of number of employers. In all, this sector employs approximately 60,000 workers, nearly 20% of the workforce. Earnings top \$264 million in wages per quarter, or about \$1 billion annually in wages paid. The healthcare and social assistance cluster represents over 10% of the total number of businesses operating in the county. There are over 2500 Hospitals, Health and Medical Services businesses in Pierce County. The top private healthcare employers are MultiCare Health System, Good Samaritan Hospital and Franciscan Health System with around 15,000 total employees. Good Samaritan Hospital became affiliated with MultiCare Health System in 2006. Pierce County's superior healthcare services attract people from outside the immediate area, including a large retired population who spend a significant share of their income on healthcare.

Although Pierce County's healthcare institutions employ a significant portion of the workforce, they still report a critical demand for workers. According to MultiCare Health System's human resources staff, Pierce County is facing one of the worst shortages of health services workers in its history—its system alone has over 500 job openings at any given time (includes vacancies at Good Samaritan), with 200 comprised of nursing vacancies. Shortages are further compounded by low nursing program capacities, an aging workforce, and increased need for services.

Health services sector workers perform jobs from laundry worker and registered nurse to information specialist and coding analyst. Many healthcare occupations provide a family wage. For instance, registered nursing positions start at around \$25.00 per hour, while the medical clerical and support workers typically earn from \$13.00 per hour to \$17.00 per hour.

Construction: The Construction industry has seen significant growth over the last five years. The housing boom and numerous commercial developments project throughout the county have contributed to this growth. The current problems in the housing industry will slow growth and construction activity through 2009, but should remain positive due to commercial and industrial development. Construction jobs makeup 8.1% of the County's economy, including 22,269 jobs in 2008. The sector includes specialty trade contractors, which includes 14,176 jobs. Average wages in Pierce County in construction in 2006 were \$43,804.

A weighted average of the forecasts suggest 3.2% annual growth in construction jobs in local companies for at least the next two years. This equates to 1,700 jobs per year. Construction jobs in Pierce County grew by 34% from 1995 to 2002; specialty contractor jobs make up 61% of all construction jobs. Areas of greatest employment within construction include; areas of heavy construction (general contractors, sewer, cable, other infrastructure installers), and specialty trade contractors (especially in plumbing and electrical work)

Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Services (FIRES): FIRES show a much broader distribution than the industrial jobs, with thousands of jobs forecasted to go in many individual areas throughout the County. Moving from Northwest to Southeast Gig Harbor, Tacoma, South Tacoma, Lakewood, Fife, Puyallup, Sumner and Frederickson all rank high with more than 1,000 or more jobs going into each of those areas. Percentage growth rates show the areas in the Southeast County are expected to see the most rapid increase in FIRES jobs through 2020. Areas growing rapidly include Puyallup, Sumner, Bonney Lake and unincorporated areas.

Retail: Retail employment, the second largest sector in the County, measured by jobs and wages. In 2008, the County was home to 1,559 retail businesses, providing about 32,244 jobs. As can be expected, retail firms and employment are spread broadly across Pierce County, and are particularly correlated to major transportation corridors.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Pierce County, the City of Tacoma, Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce and the Economic development Board all have well-developed economic development functions. Tacoma-Pierce County WDC supports the Prosperity Partnership clusters as Pierce is a part of the regional approach. (see page 21) Smaller authorities like the Tacoma Dome, Convention and Visitor Bureau and the Thea Foss Development Authority play supporting parts in developing and maintaining a job base. One area of

development is tourism. Several developments have recently been completed and others are scheduled in Tacoma's downtown area. The list includes:

- Thea Foss Waterway Esplanade (retail and condominium sites)
- Foss Waterway Marina
- Foss Waterway Building – Neil Walter Company and Korsmo Construction
- Inn on the Foss
- Thea's Landing
- Nineteen Thirty-Three at Dock Street
- Renaissance at Old City Hall
- Albert Mill Lofts
- New Convention Center
- New Tacoma Art Museum
- UW Tacoma Expansion
- International Glass Museum and Chihuly Bridges of Glass
- LeMay Transportation Museum
- Tacoma Light Rail Link
- New Sheraton Hotel Tower
- Columbia Bank Headquarters
- New Marriott Courtyard Hotel

Potential for Future Development: Tacoma's real estate market can attract customers away from the King County and Seattle area, where space is scarce and expensive. For example, waterfront property closer to Seattle costs about \$1000 a square foot, while Tacoma's property is about \$25 a square foot. Likewise, the average downtown rent in Seattle is \$33.43 per square foot, while the average in Tacoma is \$14.84. Tacoma can, therefore, establish itself as a very attractive secondary market for all types of corporations. The Puyallup Indian Tribe has recently constructed a new casino just east of Tacoma.

Tacoma is also marketing itself as an exceptional site for technology companies. A new public 600 miles fiber optic cable system that provides cable TV, broadband width, and cable modem capacity to businesses and homes called the Click! Network is in place.

University of Washington: The University of Washington Tacoma 46 acre campus covering 500,000 square feet continues its expansion. It has added classrooms, computer labs, faculty and staff offices, and academic support space for more than 1,200 additional students. Currently the campus has more than 2,000 students and the student body continues to grow. The University now accepts four year students. The growth of a local academic institution like the University of Washington's Tacoma campus produces a skilled workforce and encourages local economic development.

Destination Downtown: Destination Downtown is a strategic initiative to ensure that Tacoma will become a major urban center in the Puget Sound region. The plan calls for development of more employment opportunities, shopping centers, educational institutions, cultural and tourist attractions, entertainment opportunities, and housing. In addition, the plan outlines the importance of choices in transportation, places to live, and parking. Destination Downtown calls for replacing outdated plans and studies, creating four new zoning districts, adding new development regulations, and modifying sign regulations. Also detailed in the plan are strategies to attract business to the area, including a less cumbersome regulatory environment, incentives, infrastructure investments, information partnerships,

and property disposition within the limitations, information partnerships, and property disposition within the limitations of state and federal laws (General Policy No. 11).

Incentives and Regulatory Climate: The city government has taken steps to attract more business to the area by streamlining the permit process. The city guarantees that permits will be issued in a timely fashion. If the city fails to issue a permit within the specified time frame, permit fees will be remitted, and the permit will be issued the next day. In addition, the city offers a ten-year tax abatement for mixed use development. It also grants tax incentives, regulatory relief, infrastructure assistance, and support for workforce training to financial services companies.

Working in Partnership: Local economic development efforts are facilitated by the participation of many organizations. The various organizations providing workforce development services must align their goals to ensure that overall economic development efforts are successful. Members of the workforce development community collaborate frequently, often serving on multiple boards and forming consortia to address specific needs and issues.

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SECTION II: OUR WORKFORCE – DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CURRENT WORKFORCE

SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE

Median Household Income: Portions of the County with lower median incomes are clustered in the center of the County, with higher median incomes located along the shorelines and away from more densely populated areas. Pierce County’s 2006 median household income was \$53,923 (workforce explorer) and per capita income of \$35,054. Per capita income differs from media household income in that it considers variations in household size. Block groups containing many larger households with few wage earners, like children, have a lower per capita income than block groups with small households and many wage earners, like double income households with no children.

Per Capita Income, 2006

King	\$52,655
Kitsap	\$39,353
Pierce	\$35,054
Snohomish	\$37,115
Thurston	\$35,903

Five County (Regional) Average \$40,016

Pierce County’s workforce is growing steadily: In 1998, the civilian labor force totaled 332,500, with a 4.5 percent unemployment rate. The 2008 labor force totals 398,700 workers, with an unemployment rate of 6.0 percent. Pierce County’s per capita earnings are below the averages for the state and neighboring counties. According to the Pierce County Economic Development Action Plan, the lower earnings in this region are due in part to lower-than-average levels of education, a younger workforce, and higher levels of poverty than neighboring King and Snohomish Counties.

Population growth trends: Pierce County has experienced population growth of 20% to 21% for each of the last two decades and an overall rate of 44% from 1980 – 2000. From 2000 – 2008, the Pierce County population increased approximately 15%, ranking as the 7th highest growing county population. In the last twenty-five years, Pierce County’s population growth has mirrored the state’s. The pattern is not surprising given that Pierce County is an integral part of the central Puget Sound region-a region that supplies the major thrust for overall state growth. The 2008 population estimate for Pierce County is 805,400. According to the U. S. Census (2000) 25.2% of the County’s population is under 18 years of age, 55% are between 18 – 54 and 18% are 55 years and older. Region wide, Pierce County has a larger share of those 18 years old and younger and a larger share of 18 – 54 year olds.

8.1% of the County’s population or 60,264 are foreign born according to the 2000 census. The Asian populations comprise of the largest shares of the foreign born population. Tacoma and Lakewood comprise of the largest share of this population. Approximately 12% of the County’s population, 89,280 people, speak a language other than English.

AGE DEMOGRAPHICS

The Office of Financial Management forecast the county's population through 2020, revealing that Pierce County's population is "graying" due to the aging Baby Boomers (people born between 1946 and 1964). Within the next several years, the 65+ age group will increase nearly five percent, rising to 15 percent of Pierce County's population in 2020. The 45 – 64 age group will also hold a larger proportion of the county populace, while the younger worker proportion will decrease.

Age distribution: Population distributions among various groups as well as the changes in this distribution over time reveals implications for the future of the labor market. In 2008:

- 20.9 percent were aged 1 – 14
- 7.5 percent were prospective entrants to the labor force, aged 15 – 19
- 7.4 percent were those just entering the workforce, aged 20 -24
- 28.1 percent were workers in the prime of their productivity, aged 25 – 44
- 25.3 percent were more mature workers, aged 45 – 64
- 10.8 percent were retirees over age 65

Age implications: The aging of our population has many implications for Pierce County's workforce needs. As the Baby Boomer population moves to retirement, the Pierce County workforce will experience changes, including:

- A diminishing pool of younger workers will be supporting the Social Security benefits of the ever-increasing pool of retirees—younger workers will need to be employed at the highest level of their skills and earning capacity.
- Fewer workers will be entering the labor force, and businesses will increasingly need to retrain older workers to meet emerging skill needs.
- Older workers will regard learning as a lifelong pursuit beyond formal education, and will be able to profit from new training opportunities. Thus, public and private training programs will need to serve the needs of older workers returning for retraining.
- New work arrangements to encourage retired workers to return or remain in the workforce as part-time employees.
- An increase in the number of employees supporting aging parents will demand more family – friendly policies in the workplace.

Educational Attainment: 23.4% of Pierce County's 25 years and older population has attained a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 27.4% in Kitsap County, 27.6% in Snohomish County, 33.6% in Thurston County and 46.1% in King County. From 1990 to 2000, the number of people over 25 with a bachelor's degree or higher rose 3%. From 2000 to 2008 this number rose by 3.4%. However, Pierce County trails the regional average of 31.6% and Washington State with 30%.

In Pierce County only 7.6% have obtained a graduate degree, as compared with 10.9% for the region and 10.6% for Washington State. The percent having a high school diploma in Pierce County is 32.1% in 2008. Enrollment in elementary and high school has increased by 39.4% giving Pierce County 40,000 more students.

The following table shows the educational attainment levels for Pierce County residents age 25 and older, compared with the region and Washington State for 2007/2008.

	Pierce	Region	Washington
No Diploma	9.7%	7.9%	11.1%
High School	32.1%	26.1%	25.6%
Some College, no degree	23.9%	23.8%	24.0%
Associates Degree	10.9%	10.6%	9.3%
Bachelors Degree	15.8%	20.7%	19.4%
Graduate Degree	7.6%	10.9%	10.6%

Sources: www.choosewashington.com, U.S. Census Bureau

Migration: About one quarter of the County’s resident workforce travels to King County for work, and 7% of the jobs located in the County are worked by King County residents. This translates to around 80,700 workers commuting to King County for work and approximately 18,500 King County residents working in Pierce County. The County exchanges workers with other neighboring counties, too, especially Thurston and Kitsap. About 14,300 Thurston County residents and 5100 Kitsap County residents work in Pierce County. In turn, approximately 4900 and 3400 Pierce County residents travel to Thurston County and Kitsap County respectively.

GENDER

The gender makeup of Pierce County will remain virtually unchanged from 1995 to 2020. Although the ratio of males to females in the county remains approximately 50 -50, the labor force is not divided equally by gender. According to the 2000 Census, 54% of the national workforce was male, while 46% was female. In Washington State, males have a 55% majority position in the workforce. Yet comparisons between the 1980 and 1990 censuses show that the county is following the national trend of increased female participation in the workforce. In Pierce County, 45 % of women work, up from 42%. The number of women working full-time in Pierce County increased 63% over the decade, while the number of men working full-time increased on 23%.

Uneven progress: Women’s progress in the workforce has fallen behind that of men. Women have entered the labor force in vast numbers over the last 25 years. In 1975, about 47% of working-age women in Pierce County were in the labor market. By 2000, that number reached approximately 59%. Although more women are now working than ever before and there are fewer barriers to entering male-dominated fields, women’s progress is uneven:

- Women are still concentrated in clerical, sales, service, and light manufacturing jobs.
- Some occupations traditionally held by women lack career ladders and upward mobility.
- When women and men are in the same occupation, men still tend to be paid higher salaries.
- Women make up a mere 14% of the participants in state-approved apprenticeship programs.

LABOR FORCE COMPOSITION

Racial demographics have shifted slightly in recent years. Whites constituted 88% of the county’s population in 1980, but by 2007, whites made up 77.7% of the total population. According to 2007 data, blacks represented 7.0% of the county’s population, while statewide they accounted for 3.4%. Asian and Pacific Islanders constituted 6.8% and Native Americans made up 1.3% of the total population in the county, while statewide, they represented 7.0% and 1.4% of the population,

respectively. People of Hispanic origin, (who can be any race and are counted separately), made up 7.0% of Pierce County’s population compared to 9.1% of the state’s population.

Diversity: Pierce County’s population is gradually becoming more racially diverse. While the entire population is growing, the number of color is growing at a faster rate. Workforce development initiatives must be sensitive to diversity. For a variety of reasons, some people of color have obtained less education on average than whites and experience higher unemployment levels. As a result, this growing population has a large, unmet need for education and training. Pierce County must satisfy this need.

Unemployment: In 2008, the county’s overall unemployment rate was 6%. However, unemployment does not affect all races equally. The 2000 unemployment rates among various racial groups were:

▪ Native Americans:	10.5%	▪ African-Americans:	9.5%
▪ Hispanics:	10.9%	▪ Asian/Pacific Islanders:	7.8%
▪ Whites:	5.8%		

Unemployment among women (3.9 percent) was less than among men (4.3 percent).

Pierce County Youth Demographics: For the 2005-2006 academic school year, 39,793 students were enrolled in high school. During the 2005-2006 year, 5.0% of 9th grade, 5.1% of 10th grade, 6.4% of 11th grade and 8.3% of 12th grade students dropped out. Overall, Pierce County experienced a 6.0% drop out rate, compared with 6.2% in King County, 3.8% in Kitsap County, 5.5% in Snohomish County and 5.3% in Thurston County.

Pierce County has had slightly higher high school drop out rate than Washington State since 2003:

Year	Pierce	Washington
2005/2006	6.0%	5.7%
2004/2005	5.5%	5.1%
2003/2004	7.1%	5.8%

Source: Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

Pierce County’s Rapidly Growing Clusters and Industries: This section identifies clusters and industries growing rapidly in Pierce County – more rapidly than would be expected given recent trends in the national economy and within each industry. The findings draw from the Cluster Development Analysis for Pierce County. The report identified 14 clusters in Pierce County: Military, Other Aircraft Parts Manufacturing, Plastic Bottle Manufacturing, Concrete Pipe and Gypsum Products, Forest Products, Fishing and Seafood Products, Confections, Other Computer Services, Other State and Local Government Enterprises, Warehousing, Construction, Physicians Offices, Other Ambulatory Health Care, and Office Administrative Services.

Most of the clusters Pierce County has substantial growth from 2001-2007. The military cluster stands out as being both relatively large and having a quite high growth rate. However, several other clusters grew much more rapidly, including office administration, warehousing, other computer services and confectionary manufacturing. The growth projections for all identified clusters through 2016 are very positive, with only one sector projected to shed employees (forest products). Pierce County also has a diverse set of industrial clusters, with forest products, fishing, manufacturing and computer services.

Similar to King County, Pierce County has a relatively low number of clusters with a higher percentage of jobs within the middle wage range, and a relatively high number of clusters with a higher percentage of high wage jobs than the regional average.

Industries with Critical Skill Shortage Occupations

Healthcare Industry Background

- Healthcare is one of the largest industries in Washington State, providing \$6.2 billion in wages annually.
- In Pierce County, this cluster employs approximately 60,000 workers, nearly 20% of the workforce and represents over 10% of the total number of businesses operating in the county.
- Between 2002 and 2008 it is projected that 6,600 jobs available annually
- Pierce County's economy depends on the healthcare industry – largest private employers are Good Samaritan Community Healthcare, MultiCare Health System and Franciscan Health System

Critical healthcare Workforce Shortages Across Occupations and Adverse Effects if not Adequately Addressed

- Shortages experience not only in nursing, but across all occupations. Includes imaging techs, lab techs, pharmacists, physicians, coders, etc.
- 15% - 20% vacancy in some high demand occupations at any given time
- Demand for healthcare will continue to increase – by 2020 Washington State's over 65 population is expected to grow 93%
- Shortages will result in lack of or delayed access to care; increased spending on staffing agencies which charge three to four times the wages of a permanent employee; recruitment from overseas; etc.
 - Affects healthcare businesses in terms of productivity, competitiveness and needed growth to meet demand
 - Affects the community in terms of delayed access to quality care and employment opportunities.

Solution

LEADERSHIP REQUIRED

- State and federal governments must provide for the health, safety and welfare of the people by taking action to avert a public health crisis caused by a lack of qualified healthcare professionals
- Healthcare Systems must increase retention of its personnel and continue to provide quality care in the midst of this shortage
- Local community must collaborate and target public and private resources toward comprehensive health workforce development. In Pierce County, the Workforce Development Council has taken a leadership role in convening and supporting local stakeholders to address this shortage.

Health of the Pierce County Health Services Careers Council:

Summer 2000, the WDC targeted the healthcare sector to integrate economic and workforce development.

- Partnership is business-led – includes three largest private employers in Pierce, Franciscan Health System, MultiCare Health System, Good Samaritan Community Healthcare – PLUS
- Tacoma Lutheran Retirement Community, Madigan Army Medical Center, Western State Hospital and Group Health Cooperative
- Partnership works on behalf of the WDC to deliberately manage workforce development efforts based upon economic development priorities established by the healthcare industry partners.
- To date, the partnership has collectively leveraged approximately \$15 million in public funds and private resources to **Develop, Implement, and oversee strategies which ensure:**
 - A sufficient supply of trained healthcare workers
 - Healthcare workers have the skill sets to provide quality care
 - Pierce County residents have access to industry specific training that results in employment and career progression in health services
 - Healthcare industry is assisted in its ability to retain staff
 - Awareness of healthcare careers and training opportunities

Impact on the system:

- **Increased healthcare workforce entering the labor market** through increased training capacity and graduation rates in high demand training:
 - *Examples:* ADN increased graduation rate through training retention strategies; additional ADN programs initiated; Imaging tech training capacity increased and sustained at increased levels; LPN capacity increased; baccalaureate to MSN program; Cardiovascular tech training program developed; Health Unit Coordinator apprenticeship program developed.
- **Increased retention of healthcare professionals and increase healthcare workforce** through incumbent worker training investments:
 - Partnership with WorkSource to have co-funded and co-located Career Specialists-career guidance, assessments, access to scholarships/financial aid information, access to WIA funds, coaching, establish training plans.
 - Partnership with the WDC to make available WIA funds for eligible incumbent workers requiring up front tuition and supportive services to access and complete high demand training to advance up career ladders.
 - Industry partners contribute to a training fund to continue to assist incumbent workers with high demand training.

Continued Advocacy

- Continue to advocate for and acquire resources that can be leveraged locally to support these locally driven partnership based strategies.
- Advocate for and secure increased funding and support to the educational system to increase training capacity to produce a sufficient supply of trained workers and faculty in high demand occupations.
- Support local control to maximize resources to support strategies relevant to each local area.

SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Disabled Persons in Pierce County

Disabled Population Age 5 to 15 years	9,387 (7.9% of the population ages 5—15)
Disabled Population Aged 16 to 64	74,753 (15.3% of the population ages 16—64)
Disabled Population Aged 65 years and older	32,514 (42.5% of the population ages 65+)

U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

People with disabilities represent another underutilized human resource. Approximately 70,000 Pierce County residents have work-limiting disabilities. According to a 1996 survey of citizens with disabilities, many feel their skills are underutilized. Among the findings:

- Only 38 percent of people with disabilities have full or part-time jobs.
- Of those employed part-time, nearly half say they want full time work.
- About one-third of those employed say that their jobs do not use their skills well.
- When asked what keeps them from getting jobs that better utilize their skills, survey respondents cite transportation, family responsibilities, need for help in finding a job, and limitations due to their disabilities.

When we fail to fully employ people with disabilities, we are losing out on a very important resource. We must work to eliminate barriers that keep people from working to their fullest potential. The Tacoma Pierce County Employment and Training Consortium is currently contracting with two community service organizations that provide employment and training services to the disabled community.

Limited English-Speaking Proficiency

Language Spoken at Home (2005—2007)		
Population 5 years and over	709,838	Percent of population 5 years and over
Speak only English at home	620,440	87.4%
Language other than English	89,398	12.6%
Speak English less than “very well”	39,034	5.5%

U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Poverty: In 1999 the percentage of the population living below poverty level in Pierce County was 10.5 percent, slightly higher than the state, 10.6%. For 2008 the percentage living in poverty has increased to 11.4%, slightly lower than the state, 11.8%.

Poverty status from Census 2000 Demographic Profiles Sample Data

	# of families below poverty level	% of families	# of individuals below poverty level	% of individuals
Cities and Towns				
Bonney Lake	73	3.0	370	4.0
Buckley	34	3.6	335	8.3
Carbonado	3	1.4	31	4.0
DuPont	15	2.2	113	4.6
Eatonville	58	11.0	232	11.8
Edgewood	92	3.5	386	4.2
Fife	141	12.6	704	14.9
Fircrest	76	4.6	343	5.9
Gig Harbor	60	3.5	374	5.9
Lakewood	1894	12.5	8931	15.8
Milton	77	4.8	465	8.0
Orting	42	4.2	242	6.5
Puyallup	392	4.7	2155	6.7
Roy	5	6.8	28	10.8
Ruston	15	7.7	97	13.1
South Prairie	2	1.8	23	5.1
Steilacoom	119	6.9	481	8.1
Sumner	101	4.5	717	8.5
Tacoma	5297	11.4	29887	15.9
University Place	500	6.0	2176	7.3
Wilkeson	2	2.0	16	4.0

LITERACY

Ensuring a literate and skilled workforce is a paramount workforce development concern. According to the State Adult Literacy Survey, between 31 and 36 percent of Washington's adults perform at the lowest two levels of proficiency (out of five) in reading, math, and problem solving.

Basic skills: In the Pierce County Workforce Development Area, 15 percent of the participants served have less than a high school education. Yet even high school graduates often lack adequate basic skills for today's job market. Thousands of Pierce County residents lack high school level math and reading skills, as well as in the "new" basic skills of problem-solving, teamwork and communication. The state has required that students pass the WASL test in order to graduate. This requirement may raise the number of students without a high school diploma. The Tacoma-Pierce County Employment & Training Consortium is currently involved in funding WASL remedial academies for those students who have failed the WASL two times.

Economically disadvantaged populations in particular tend to lack basic skills. Twenty-three percent of adults receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) during an average month, lack a high school diploma or equivalent. Many TANF recipients completing their five year limitation are in dire need of training to gain employment in family wage jobs.

Employers' Skill Needs: In a Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board survey of 1,000 businesses, 73 percent reported difficulty finding qualified job applicants in the previous 12 months. Ninety-four percent had difficulty finding workers with job-specific skills, and 80 percent had trouble

finding workers able to adapt to change. Seventy five percent had difficulty finding workers skilled in teamwork, and 89 percent had trouble finding job applicants skilled in problem solving. Therefore, Pierce County's training programs must be designed to broaden the skill base of its workforce, stressing the importance of basic skills.

SUMMARY

Pierce County's population is aging. A growing segment will retire in 5 to 15 years. Because of lower birth rates, fewer new workers will be available to replace them in the workforce. Part of this plan is to develop the skills of people underutilized in the past, including women, people of color, older workers, disabled persons, and youth. Training program retention rates for all people should improve.

Vocational training: The shortage is most severe in the supply of workers with vocational training. While there are about 38,000 net job openings in the state for workers with two or three years of post-secondary training, the state's two year colleges, private career schools, and apprenticeship programs graduate only 19,340 per year.

The Tacoma-Pierce County Employment & Training Consortium is currently funding a Career Shadow Project where students, who are identified by school counselors, visit Clover Park and Bates Technical Colleges for a hands-on tour of the facilities and specific careers.

Post-secondary education: Now and for the next decade, the greatest number of family wage job opportunities will be in occupations that require some post secondary education. It is expected that between 2002-2012, 37% of jobs will require some post-secondary education and training but not a four year degree. Over the next decade, there will be approximately 380,000 job openings (statewide) for technicians, paralegals, health care workers, sales people, and other occupations that require post-secondary education.

Workforce growth: Growth in the workforce is slowing, and an increasing percentage of new entrants to workforce will come from populations that traditionally have received less education. Growth in our working age populations was 23 percent during the 1990's. From 2000 to 2010, workforce growth is expected to slow to 17 percent, and from 2010 to 2020, it will fall to only 8 percent. Between 1990 and 2020, nearly 26 percent of the net additions to the workforce will be people of color, and more than half will be women.

With fewer skilled workers, Pierce County's future economic growth will be constrained. Pierce County leaders in government, business, labor, education, and citizen groups must coordinate and plan to use all available resources efficiently to respond to the needs of area businesses.

Most family-wage jobs created in Pierce County will require post-secondary education but not necessarily a four-year degree. A high school education will be insufficient for workers who may experience five to ten career changes during their working lives. Workers will need skills that allow them to react to changes, communicate effectively on the job, and follow instructions. They will need reading and computation skills that will allow them to comprehend technical material, and "people skills," such as teamwork.

For quality workforce development to occur the following should happen:

- *The K-12 school system must assure that all graduating students master basic skills to qualify them for high-skill, high-wage jobs. School systems should make every effort to recover dropouts and assist them in continuing their education. Schools should work with businesses to develop and maintain skill standards that lead to good jobs.*
- *Career guidance must be provided to K-12 students. Although much information is available for students and others to plan careers, significant barriers to effective resource use exists, including lack of staff training and the absence of clear, state-supported career preparation models. Special attention should be given to alternatives to a baccalaureate course of study.*
- *The number of students who enroll in and complete post-secondary career and technical programs must increase. Current state labor market annual growth projections are for 38,000 job openings requiring two or three years post-secondary training over the next five years. The state's two year colleges, private career schools, and apprenticeship programs produce only 19,340 graduates per year.*
- *Business and labor must communicate effectively with schools and other training institutions so that skill levels and foundation job skills are understood and mastered by pupils.*
- *Note: The above top three bullet points are the focus of youth services for the 2009 Youth Request for Proposals.*

Employers are especially interested in workers who can complete both job-specific and basic skills training and also:

- Adapt quickly to change;
- Perform more abstract work processes;
- Assume more decision making authority;
- Work in teams; and
- Understand system wide needs.

Job training and education programs should be available to the entire workforce and business community as part of a continuum of lifelong learning. At every stage of their lives, people should be able to equip themselves for productive work through school and work based learning.

For this system to expand and be successful, workforce development agencies and partners must provide convenient public access, relevant training and education, and must be dedicated to the development of assets and to generating both public and private investment. The Tacoma-Pierce County Workforce Development Council, made up of business, labor, education, government, and community groups is taking a leadership role.

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SECTION III: CURRENT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

INTRODUCTION

WorkSource Pierce provides an integrated approach to workforce development service delivery to job seekers and businesses. Three levels of services are available to job seekers. The first level includes comprehensive job search support to all Pierce County residents. Support includes access to office machines, internet based job information, employment and life management related group workshops, resume assistance, and employment networking. Access to these resources are available through any one of eleven community doors to the workforce development system, either the comprehensive Career Development Center (CDC) or any of the ten affiliate sites located throughout the county. WorkSource affiliate sites have additional specialty services beyond comprehensive job search support. For example, several affiliates provide services and outreach to persons with disabilities, those whose English is limited or individuals who have touched the criminal justice system.

The second level is more intensive, personalized services. WorkSource staff at the CDC or affiliate sites assists WorkSource Investment Act eligible job seekers who require individualized career coaching, specific labor market information, life planning and career workshops. These eligible individuals may receive the third level of services, training assistance, in order to gain industry specific technical skills required for employment. Millions of dollars are invested annually in individual training accounts that can be used with any of the state's certified training providers. WorkSource staff and job seekers work together to develop the most appropriate career training plan. WorkSource can accommodate individuals with language or accessibility challenges. Partners with demonstrated ability and capacity to provide services to individuals with special needs are available to assist job seekers access the three service levels.

In an effort to respond to the special needs of our youth, WorkSource has a network of youth organizations that provide work based learning, work experiences, On-the-Job training, internships, job shadows/career exploration activities with local businesses. Participating youth are also engaged in educational activities, leadership and work readiness workshops. Youth between the age of 16 and 22 and face challenges that include being connected to foster care, corrections system, teen parenthood, and are disabled receive individualized attention to complete secondary education, gain job specific skills, and obtain employment with career progression opportunities.

In addition to facilitating the job seeker's attachment to the labor market, WorkSource provides services to the business community. These services include applicant recruitment, job listings, job description development, labor market information, job assessments, and job fairs. Business services are provided on two levels, with the first level being more self directed with minimal staff intervention. The second level offers intensive staff support that offers customized solutions to businesses workforce development needs.

Coupled with WorkSource business services, growth industries are assisted with their need to address skills shortages industry wide. Over the past four years, \$15million has been leveraged between businesses and the public workforce development system to increase training capacity, increase awareness of growth industries and demand occupations, implement pre-apprenticeship and emerging apprenticeship programs, and implement new secondary career/technical education programs.

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT (WIA)

The Workforce Investment Act mandates coordination of planning and public access across a wide range of federally funded job training and education efforts. The Act specifically states that the Workforce Development Councils will carry out the following functions:

- Designation, certification, and oversight of WorkSource Career Development Center Operators and Affiliate Sites
- Identification of and recommendations to the state for eligible providers of training services
- Development of and entry into memoranda of understanding with Center and Affiliate partners
- Development of budget
- Establishment of local performance measures
- Program and system oversight and assistance in development of a statewide employment statistics system
- Coordination of employer linkages with workforce development activities and promotion of the participation of private employers with the statewide workforce development system
- Establishment of a youth council which operates as a subgroup within each board and is responsible for the selection and oversight of local youth programs
- Provision of grants for youth activities

WIA Funding: For the period of July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006, the Tacoma-Pierce County Workforce Development Council authorized more than \$7,000,000 to be invested in workforce services targeted to job seekers, youth and businesses. These funds provide services to approximately 11,000 job seekers, 800 youth, and 1,400 businesses annually. Millions of dollars in additional federal and state funds from the workforce development system partnership support education and training for thousands more job seekers and incumbent workers, and recruitment and dislocation aversion services to thousands more businesses in Pierce County.

Programs for Adults: The system provides core, intensive, and training services to adults in various modes, whether dislocated workers, recipients of public assistance or individuals needing to upgrade their skills for advancement or to avoid dislocation. Comprehensive services from the entire WorkSource Partnership are explained and offered to adults either through the internet, the WorkSource Career Development Center (CDC), the ten WorkSource Affiliate Sites or in other more specialized settings. Services are offered at scale appropriate to the needs of the population by providing self-service through use of on-line computer technology and at the CDC or intensive assistance from WorkSource staff. Individuals qualified for intensive services are thoroughly assessed for aptitudes and interests. Upon consultation with a trained, professional employment and training counselor, labor market research is conducted by participants for high demand occupations that will provide them with the greatest opportunity for successful employment after training. Research includes utilizing labor market tools such as WOIS, Plan Today for Tomorrow, WILMA, as well as contact with employers in the field of interest to assure jobs are available in the chosen field. Once training is deemed appropriate, an individual service strategy is developed and an individual training account is established to assist eligible adults access skills training at a certified training provider, which most often is a Pierce County community and technical college.

WorkSource Pierce Affiliate Sites	
Bates Technical College 1101 Yakima Avenue Tacoma, WA 98405	Pierce College, Fort Steilacoom 9401 Farwest Drive S.W. Lakewood, WA 98498
Tacoma Goodwill Industries 714 South 27 th Street Tacoma, WA 98409	Tacoma Community House 1314 South L Street Tacoma, WA 98405
Washington State Department of Corrections, Community Justice Center 1016 South 28 th Street Tacoma, WA 98409	Clover Park Technical College 4500 Steilacoom Blvd. S.W. Lakewood, WA 98499
Tacoma Community College 6501 South 19 th Street Tacoma, WA 98466	Tacoma Housing Authority 1728 East 44 th Street Tacoma, WA 98404
Vadis 1701 Elm street Sumner, WA 98390	Washington State Employment Security Department, Lakewood Center 10107 South Tacoma Way Lakewood, WA 98499

WorkSource Career Development Center (CDC): The CDC offers the greatest array of choices for job seekers. The following partnered agencies provide easy access to many workforce development services in an integrated approach:

- Tacoma-Pierce County Employment and Training Consortium – WIA youth, WIA adult, WIA dislocated workers, YouthBuilding Tacoma (youth pre-apprenticeship), and GREAT (targets foster care youth), dislocated older worker program, and offender employment services.
- WA State Employment Security Department – Wagner-Peyser labor exchange activities which includes job readiness assessment and employment counseling, assist job seekers develop and post resumes, facilitate access to available job opportunities. In addition, veteran’s services are available, unemployment insurance, and National American Free Trade act/Trade Adjustment Act.
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Vocational rehabilitation services to persons with disability.
- Tacoma Goodwill Industries – youth and adult workforce development services targeted to persons with limited language proficiency and/or with a disability.
- Department of Social and Health Services – WorkFirst programs to include Community Jobs for recipients of public assistance.
- Community and Technical Colleges – Worker retraining, adult basic education, degree and certification programs, and WorkFirst training.
- Organized Labor – recruitment and outreach resulting in linkages to apprenticeship programs.

Community and Technical Colleges: Community and technical colleges and other certified training providers are a key part of the workforce development system. Employment that offers family wages often requires post-secondary education, but not always a four-year degree. Pierce County's institutions of higher learning, including Pierce College District (Fort Steilacoom and Puyallup), Clover Park Technical College, Bates Technical College, and Tacoma Community College, are positioned to develop a skilled workforce that meets the demands of businesses. Colleges "offer thoroughly comprehensive educational, training and service programs to meet the needs of both the communities and students served by combining, with equal emphasis, high standards of excellence in academic transfer courses; realistic and practical courses in occupational education, both graded and un-graded; community services of an educational, cultural and recreational nature; and adult education" (RCW 28B.50.020(2)).

According to WA State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, in 2007—2008 statewide, 47,993 students were enrolled in workforce training programs (post-secondary vocational and technical training, job preparation training, and apprenticeship programs) and 21,876 students enrolled in adult basic education programs. At our Pierce County community and technical colleges, 10,114 students were enrolled in workforce training and 1690 were enrolled in adult basic education programs.

The following is a brief description of the types of programs available at community and technical colleges:

- **Post-secondary vocational and technical training**—gives workers the technical and job-related skills needed for successful employment. Certificates and degrees emphasize practical, hands-on experience for the workplace.
- **Adult basic education**—develops adults' literacy skills and basic knowledge needed to obtain employment, be self sufficient.
- **English-as-a-Second Language**—provides English language skills and basic life skills to immigrants and refugees.
- **Job preparation training**—gives students an opportunity to assess their interests, aptitudes, and skills and to match them to career opportunities.
- **Worker Retraining**—offers training opportunities for dislocated workers and long-term unemployed workers. Programs prepare students for jobs that have a high demand for qualified workers and that lead to living wage occupations.
- **Skills upgrading for incumbent workers**—provides training for prospective employees before or during the opening of a new plant, and for current employees that require retraining in workplace behavior or technical skills. Upgrading training can assist employees to retain their jobs and seek promotion within an organization.

In addition, community and technical colleges work closely with the business community to identify and develop industry specific skills standards. These standards are used to:

- Assess training needs;
- Communicate performance expectations to employees;
- Clarify expectations among businesses, students and educators;
- Facilitate curriculum that matches workplace requirements and improves the employability and productivity of students; and
- Promote articulation to secondary programs.

Outside of the WorkSource Career Develop Center are three subcontracted programs that provide specialized services to the disabled and English as a Second Language population. These programs are:

Tacoma Community House – ESL population

Tacoma Goodwill Industries – Disabled population

VADIS – Disabled population

Dislocated Workers: WIA programs provide rapid response services for workers and businesses facing substantial layoffs. This program targets individuals who:

- Have been terminated or laid off or who have received a notice of termination or layoff from employment;
- Are eligible for or have exhausted their unemployment compensation and are unlikely to return to their previous industry or occupation;
- Have been laid off or will be laid off as a result of a plant, facility, or enterprise closure;
- Were self-employed, but are now unemployed as a result of general economic conditions in his/her community;
- Are displaced homemakers.

When a WARN (Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act) notice is filed by a qualifying company with the Employment & Training Division of the Employment Security Department, the State, in turn, notifies the affected workforce development area (WDA) of the impending layoff or closure via an official notice. The WDA, in turn, immediately contacts the designated point of contact with the affected company to arrange a meeting to provide the company with the array of services available to the workers through WorkSource Pierce. A tentative date is set for a labor-management meeting (if labor is involved) once the bargaining is completed. Invited to this meeting are management representatives of the affected company, labor officials, Washington State Labor Council, WorkSource Pierce, Unemployment Insurance Division of the Employment Security Department, local colleges and technical schools, shop stewards and representatives of the workforce. Services provided by WorkSource Pierce are explained and a date (or dates) for an employee orientation is scheduled, at which time the entire array of services are explained to the affected workers. Should the company desire, as the layoff date approaches, the UI Division of ESD will come on site to take mass applications for unemployment insurance, thus hastening the application process for each individual.

Individuals who qualify may access employment/career counseling, labor market information, comprehensive assessments, and job placement. In addition, qualified individuals may enroll at community and technical colleges or private schools to gain basic skills literacy, vocational training,

and supplemental instruction for apprenticeships. Financial assistance is available to offset tuition, transportation, childcare, and housing costs.

Incumbent Workers: As businesses continue to report a shortage of job applicants with the skills required to meet their needs, investments in incumbent worker training is critical to ensure current workers have the necessary skills to meet the demands of their changing work environment due to technological and structural changes. Incumbent worker training will decrease the likelihood of personnel dislocation due to outdated skills while increasing productivity and competitiveness of businesses. Over the past five years, the Workforce Development Council (WDC) in partnership with its healthcare partners, has invested funds to train incumbent healthcare professionals wishing to transition to high demand occupations in nursing or imaging specialties. In addition, incumbent worker training investments have been targeted to construction industry professionals identified as needing language competencies, managerial skills, leadership skills, and trade specific skills. The WDC will continue to support this investment strategy by targeting growth industries that significantly impact Pierce County's economy.

Workfirst: WorkFirst is the state's Welfare-to-Work program for recipients of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and other low-income individuals. Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is the lead agency for WorkFirst in partnership with Employment Security Department, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and Community Trade and Economic Development. WorkSource partners with the Community Jobs program, which provides comprehensive, paid work experience plus training opportunities for TANF recipients who have barriers that prevent them from entering the job market. Participants work for a minimum of 20 hours per week and have access to one-on-one mentoring support to resolve barriers to work. Participants remain in the program up to six months in order to gain both substantial work experience and fully prepare for unsubsidized employment. Pierce County partners operating Community Jobs program are:

- Tacoma-Pierce County Employment and Training Consortium
- Pierce County Community Action
- Tacoma Goodwill Industries
- Puget Sound Educational Service District
- Washington Women's Employment and Education
- Tacoma Community House

The Program serves about 250 participants per year in Pierce County. To further support WorkFirst participants, WA State Employment Security Department provides Post-Employment Labor Exchange services. Staff contacts employed TANF or former TANF recipients by telephone and assists them in linking to employment retention services, refers them to training required for career and wage progression, and/or refers them to higher paying positions for which they qualify.

Older Workers: Since 1973, the workforce development area has received funding for the Senior Aid Program through the Department of Labor Senior Community Services. Recently this funding ended. Older workers are now receiving services from the Tacoma Goodwill. Workforce Investment Act funds are leveraged to address the need to provide industry specific skills to a growing population of older Americans seeking to be engaged or reengaged with the labor market. According to the Office

of Financial Management (2005), 154,881 or 20% of the county's population is 55 years and older. With fewer younger workers entering the labor force, businesses will increasingly turn to hiring older workers. This will require increased attention and focus on retraining older workers to meet the continued demands of businesses for a sufficient supply of qualified workers. This population most often has better education and skills than today's high school graduates and are less likely to change jobs, making them desirable candidates businesses.

Programs for Youth: The Workforce Development Council and its Youth Council oversee a network of youth programs throughout the county. The Youth Council is comprised of members of local WDC and other youth representatives. Their primary role is to review assets and gaps of youth-related services in the county and make recommendations to the WDC as it relates to funding awards, policies, and strategic planning. Currently, there are eight WIA funded youth system providers. These contractors include Tacoma Community House, Centro Latino, VADIS Northwest, Tacoma Goodwill, Tacoma-Pierce County Employment and Training Consortium, My Service Mind, Metropolitan Development Council and Electrical Labor Management Cooperative Committee. These youth program operators reach out to both in school and out of school youth between the age of 14 and 21 years county wide, ensuring service access to a diverse population. Youth services include work-based learning opportunities, remedial education, pre-employment and work maturity skills training, mentoring, vocational exploration, vocational and occupational skills training, tutoring and study skills training, and job development and placement services. Every youth involved in WIA programs receives an assessment and individual service strategy that guides their success academically while in high school and facilitates their transition to post-secondary training and/or employment in high demand careers.

The youth program operators also work with a diverse employer base, school districts, and community agencies to provide work-based learning for their young customers who may or may not be attending school. Whenever possible, the agencies make the connection between school and career and either work out retention strategies or ways to encourage youth to return to and complete school. Each operator holds a specialty to accommodate the needs of all youth. Vadis and Tacoma Goodwill have expertise working with youth having physical and/or mental disabilities while Tacoma Community House provides extensive services to recent immigrants, especially related to language. Centro Latino serves Hispanic youth, plus coordinating with Tacoma Public Schools to offer an alternative high school site. My Service Mind targets Asian minorities and helps draw from Lakewood, one of Pierce County's larger cities. In Program Year 2007, 546 youth received WIA services.

In addition to providing WIA youth services, the WDC continues to partner with K-12 stakeholders to increase graduation rates and retrieve youth drop outs. The WDC is currently partnering with two school districts to provide dropout intervention and retrieval services, improve graduation rates and WASL scores. In 2006, 70.4% of Washington State's students graduated on time, placing the State 39th nationwide in the number of graduates it produces. In Pierce County, 72% of youth graduated in 2005, slightly lower than the state's rate. This lower than desired graduation rate must be addressed community wide. The WDC is currently partnering with three school districts with low graduation rates to implement prevention and retention strategies to increase their graduation rates. In addition, the WDC has partnered with Senator Murray and community businesses to launch an awareness campaign of high demand careers and training options to K-12 stakeholders and to make funds available to youth wishing to pursue these demand careers. We cannot afford to have our emerging

workforce lose their competitive edge by not transitioning to productive adulthood which would further exacerbate the current and projected labor/skills shortage experienced by industries.

Pre-Apprenticeship Training: Apprenticeship training, a model that incorporates both classroom and on-the-job training has been proven to be an effective way to prepare individuals for demand careers. These programs are reviewed regularly by industry and labor representatives to ensure training standards are up-to-date with changing workplace needs. Because entrance requirements can be rigorous, pre-apprenticeship programs are critical to ensure access of our youth into these programs. In Pierce County the Get Electrified Program, Frame Your Future, YouthBuilding Tacoma, Iron Worker, Sheet Metal, Carpenters, and Architecture/Construction/Engineering pre-apprenticeship programs provide opportunities in demand trades to Pierce County youth. The WDC and its Youth Council continues to support increased capacity of these programs that prepare high school students for immediate linkages to apprenticeship training upon graduation.

Secondary Vocational-Technical Education: Pierce County school districts have curriculum preparing students for post-high school education and training. Career and Technical Education programs provide secondary students with the motivation to achieve high standards for industry certification and as well as the skills and knowledge necessary to successfully transition to life beyond the high school. School districts are dedicated to improving student learning by giving all students the opportunity to explore educational pathways and prepare for future careers through career and technical education programs, thereby adding relevance to the student's high school experience. Career & Technical Education (CTE) programs meet the academic and career preparation needs of secondary students that will assist them in achieving the higher standards of education reform, including the state's Essential Academic Learning Requirements and Certificate of Mastery. CTE programs are also aligned with the U.S. Department of Education's Career Cluster Initiative, which is currently in its third year of development. The Career Cluster Initiative project was completed in June 2003 and implemented across the nation throughout the 2000's.

New CTE program standards, based on industry-defined skills, are currently being established for exploratory and preparatory CTE courses/programs. OSPI is working to align these CTE program standards with similar standards used in the state's community/technical college system to assure a seamless articulation between secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs. This includes advanced placement opportunities, high-end Information Technology certifications, a connection to the critical employment and instructional needs in various occupational areas such as Health Services, Construction, Information Technology, Agriculture, and Manufacturing.

Even Start Family Literacy Program: Even Start Family Literacy Program is administered by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). This program provides interactive literacy activities between parents and children, literacy training for parents, and age-appropriate educational opportunities that prepare children for success in school. The goal of the program is to break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving educational opportunities for low-income families. Even Start is an education program for the nation's low-income families that is designed to improve the academic achievement of young children and their parents, especially in the area of reading. Researchers, teachers, and administrators alike now acknowledge the vital importance of high-quality early childhood education for all children. Young children who have good vocabularies and who are taught early reading skills before they start school are more likely to become good readers and to achieve academic success throughout their school careers. Education experts also acknowledge that parents

play a critical role in the language and intellectual development of their children. Children who have parents who talk and play with them and who read to them have an important advantage. And, parents who themselves are competent readers are more likely to have good jobs and be able to help their own children in school. Even Start provides educational services for the family, parents and children alike, so that adults and their children will be able to take advantage of and benefit from the tremendous opportunities available to them in this nation.

WORKSOURCE BUSINESS SERVICES

The Business Connection (WSBC)

Gone are the days when businesses had to visit multiple agencies to find answers. The Workforce Development Council has streamlined the process and aligned dedicated staff to provide business services. WSBC provides core, intensive and value added services primarily to industries and clusters that are included in the strategy for regional economic development; i.e.: Prosperity Partnership, Puget Sound Regional Council and WDC Strategic Industry Partnerships. To increase the quality and match between job seekers and employers in Pierce County, these include recruiting, screening, testing, applicant management and retention strategy services. The goal of these services is a better economic climate and business retention with growth in the region.

Business Connection/Economic Development Partnerships & Strategies

Economic development partners refer businesses to The Business Connection when employee retention or recruitment needs are discovered. We also have a representative at their table when labor market statistics and negotiations to recruit new business to this county. Conversely, WSBC representatives refer businesses to economic development when permitting, transportation, real estate and needs outside of those affecting their employees are discovered.

Pierce County Business Team (PCBT)

A collaborated business services plan between WorkSource Partners; WSBC and Employment Security Department (ESD) (including Wagner-Peyser, WorkFirst and Veterans Services) business outreach staff is designed to ensure that services are maximized for the greatest benefit and applicant pool quality to the employers of Pierce County. These coordinated efforts will result in better system-wide outcomes by increasing opportunities and retention rates for residents and program participants.

PCBT provides a range of business related services. They find and screen workers, schedule interviews, host and assist orientations, perform compensation and benefit reviews, provide information on training, and organize hiring events. In addition, they provide customized labor market information, assist businesses navigate government tax and labor laws, offer help with tax credits, and assist companies through employment transitions. Value-added services may be offered for a fee.

In PY '2007/2008, 22,000 qualified applicants were referred to local businesses which resulted in 6,600 hires at an average of \$15/hr. The average cost of recruitment is 10% of the annual salary and WorkSource provided the advertising and screening portion of this, making the value of these services over \$20 million. Even in a downturned economy, approximately 1500 businesses will access more than 4,000 services across Pierce County this year. PCBT services can save up to \$10,000 per recruitment and access up to \$12,000 in tax credits per hire for their customers.

The following are business services provided by the PCBT’s collaborative effort:

Level 1 - Core Services- Provided by all partners:

Core business services are available to all Pierce County businesses meeting the minimum qualifications¹. The majority of these services offer minimal staff involvement. Where staff is involved, it is to direct business customers to online and other resources currently available. These labor exchange services are provided at no additional cost to the business.

Employee Recruitment: Go2WorkSource.com

A) Self-serve; businesses write and manage their listings and applicant pool online. Staff does not have the ability to access or affect the outcome of this service, though they will help a business register and provide technical assistance.

B) Assisted Listing (“Level 1”); Staff writes and posts the listing for the business. Online, first come, first-served applicants are screened for minimum resume qualifications by any ES or Business Connection staff. Once the quantity of referrals requested is met, no other applications are referred. This offering does not refer the *best* applicants, just a quantity of minimally qualified people. No follow up is done except to find out if any of those referrals were hired, unless other services are provided at the same time.

C) Facilities at WorkSource for qualifying employers to give an orientation regarding their job opportunities. No advertising and low staff involvement is included in this ‘Core’ level service. Facilitated hiring events that are driven by local job seeker needs may also be available for easy employer access and provided at no charge.

D) Internships, work experience and tax credit matches, coordination and documentation assistance are provided when available.

Information and Referrals: Online and other available resources

The following information and services are also available to businesses at websites and/or contacts to pursue without WorkSource staff intervention.

Labor Market Information:	Business Assistance Information & Referrals:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupation descriptions • Job and industry growth patterns • Current skill requirements • Locally available skill sets • Economic trends and forecasts • Wage norms specific to industry, region, and job classifications • Economic information (regional and county) • Population and demographic information • Cost of living trends • Employment law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business registration/licensing/tax information • Fair labor practices • General employment regulatory requirements (OSHA, EEOC, etc.) • Employee training referrals • Human resource laws and practices • UI Benefit charging, experience rating, laws and regulations information • Tax information and incentives • WARN layoff & downsizing and referrals for ‘Rapid Response’ services.

Level 2 - Intensive Services: some by all partners, but most are WSBC provided.

These services are customized to specific business needs. Intensive services are preceded by workplace needs assessments and delivered by trained, qualified Business Connection staff. These

¹ Business minimum qualifiers include registered employer in the state, competitive wages for occupation, current taxes paid, consistently report results as agreed, adequate communication to complete requested services.

services, depending on the staff time required and business qualifiers, may be offered at no charge or for a fee. These may also be provided for the targeted hiring of supported WorkSource program participants.

Applicant Screening and Referral Methods; Intensive = staff facilitated services, hands-on

- Level 2 - Collect, screen, sort and deliver applications in a variety of ways (in person, telephone screen, resume and application)
- Schedule, coordinate, host and advertise events for interviews/orientations
- Facilitated, after hours business driven job/career fairs and recruiting events
- Applicant skills & behavioral testing

Outsourced Human Resources

- Standardized applications/hiring laws and information packages
- Human Resource Documentation: Legal forms/Job descriptions/Employee Handbooks – direction to examples-(free), development of resources-(fee based)
- Pre-hire document collection
- New employers/businesses can receive assistance with large scale, start up hiring needs/HR department setup and grand opening support

Customized Training: Match business needs with training resources

Employer ‘Transition’ Services:

- Transitional Planning: Staff assisted referrals and linkages to services to help businesses avoid layoffs (shared work options, employee buy-outs, etc), help locate potential re-employment opportunities for laid off workers and retain/engage employees following layoffs
- Expansion: Tools and consulting to expand workforce
- Match companies that are hiring with companies that are downsizing to avoid unnecessary unemployment and gain available, qualified, workers

Level 3 – Value-added, Fee-based Services: provided by WSBC

These incorporate products and services which are, in full or part, outsourced or brokered with other entities and businesses. They are designed to significantly enhance a businesses ability to attract, hire and retain successful employees. Most often, these services involve additional fees and significant staff time to accomplish.

‘JobFit’ is a behavior assessment and job applicant matching tool. Once set up, this tool is a way to electronically match applicants who fit the company culture and expectations at the same time as the resume is screened. It then offers legal, behavioral interview questions that address the needs of the specific job. This saves company’s significant time in the interviewing and selection process and facilitates excellent hiring practices. Companies using this resource report significantly improved interview-to-hire ratios and employee retention numbers.

Using a company’s star employees to determine hiring criteria, it can be used to screen applicants in the current database or direct new applicants to it at no additional charge or drain on valuable staff time.

JobFit will also serve company’s existing workforce well. It can be used to promote or organize employees for optimum performance, determine team composition, training or coaching needs.

Additional Hiring Resources/Services in this category;

- Applicant rating matrix
- Custom wage and benefit surveys (“Competitive Compensation Study”)
- Review and revisions of employer practices, job descriptions and manuals to improve worker retention
- Internet job board searches and proactive recruiting for qualified applicants
- Staff booths at external hiring events on behalf of business customers or provide extended hour hiring events
- Interviewing practices and documentation coaching
- Perform skill testing & assessments; administer tests, grade, compute results and prepare reports
- Manage event advertising, interview scheduling and provide company representation at events
- Verify candidate credentials and references
- Coordinate outsourced services such as education, medical and background checks
- Conduct new employee orientations

WorkSource System/Business Connection Strategies

Strategies that align WIA training benefits with current business recruitment needs are a priority. This includes efforts to identify and coordinate short term training and direct placement services for individuals enrolled in WIA programs that meet current Pierce County employer recruiting needs. Offering workshops from the interviewer’s perspective is also being researched for potential benefits.

SECTORAL INITIATIVES

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 provided an impetus for workforce development system stakeholders to strategically align efforts, maximize resources and deploy innovative approaches to expand economic opportunities for workers and job seekers and increase the competitiveness of key industries. The Tacoma-Pierce County Workforce Development Council and its business-led healthcare and construction partnerships have exemplified the power of true partnerships. Through full engagement of partners from industry, secondary education, community and technical colleges, public and private universities, government based health systems, labor, industry association, and WorkSource, \$15 million in private and public resources have been marshaled to develop, implement, and oversee partnership based strategies that have resulted in:

- Increased training capacity of high demand training at local community and technical colleges, and public and private universities
- Increased secondary career technical education programs that prepare youth for demand careers
- Incumbent worker training for healthcare and construction professionals
- Pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship training programs sustained by industry partners
- Increased awareness of healthcare and construction careers and training opportunities

Healthcare: National, statewide, and local research indicate that hospitals and other healthcare settings like home care, private practice, public healthcare, clinics, hospice, and extended care centers are experiencing shortages of qualified and competent health care workers. The workforce shortages are expected to worsen as existing health services personnel retire, as the aging population increases and needing intensive health care services, and as the pipeline of trained and skilled workers diminish.

Pierce County health services providers experience chronic workforce shortages, especially in nursing. In some jobs, a 20% vacancy rate is normal. The workforce shortages have a major impact in Pierce County because MultiCare, Good Samaritan, and Franciscan Health Systems are our largest non-government businesses. To add to the seriousness of the shortages, Pierce County has large government based health services providers that include Madigan Hospital, Veteran's Affairs Hospital, Puget Sound Hospital, and Western State.

Those who work in the health services sector perform a broad spectrum of jobs from laundry worker and registered nurse to information specialist and coding analyst. Many health care occupations provide a family wage. For instance, registered nursing positions start at \$25.00 per hour, while the medical, clerical, and support workers typically earn from \$13.00 per hour to \$17.00 per hour.

As 40% of healthcare employees are projected to retire within the next ten years and as the pool of younger workers diminish, it is critical that Pierce County partners develop and implement both short-term and long-term strategies to address the shortages to ensure that Pierce County health services providers have capacity to continue to provide quality healthcare to their customers.

In May of 2001, the WDC established a business led skills panel of senior level executives from industry, education, labor, workforce development, and government to identify and address current and future workforce needs within the health services sector. The mission of this partnership, the Pierce County Health Services Careers Council, is to develop, implement and oversee collaborative strategies that ensure:

- Awareness of health care careers and training opportunities;
- A sufficient supply of trained healthcare workers;
- Health services workers have the skill sets to provide quality care;
- Pierce County residents have access to industry specific training that results in employment and career progression in health services;
- Healthcare industry is assisted in its ability to retain employees

Results: To date, the following are examples of tangible outcomes achieved as a result of this public and private partnership:

- **New training programs developed for the following high demand healthcare careers:** Registered Nurse - 40, Diagnostic Medical Sonographer - 25, Invasive Cardiovascular Technologist - 15, Nurse Refresher - 25, and Bachelor of Science to Master of Science in Nursing Program – 20
- **Implementation of the first Registered Apprenticeship Program in Healthcare** in Washington State, for Health Unit Coordinators - To date, thirty apprentices have been registered
- **Development and implementation of two additional registered apprenticeship programs**, for Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Technologists and Computed Tomography (CT) Technologists - To date, seven apprentices have been registered and twenty-three more to be scheduled by 2006
- **Development of a healthcare pre-apprenticeship program** to provide training and employment opportunities for recipients of public assistance and youth – Implementation

scheduled for December 2004 of 8 pre-apprentices from public assistance system and a second group of Workforce Investment Act eligible youth apprentices scheduled for December 2005

- **Expansion of capacity in existing high demand healthcare career training programs:** Registered Nurse - 20, Radiologic Technologist - 8, Nuclear Medicine Technologist-4, Respiratory Therapist -8, Licensed Practical Nurse -40, Surgical Technologist -20, Master of Nursing -10, Nurse Educator -10, and Registered Health Information Technician -22
- **Implementation of a Student Retention Program for Registered Nurse Program** – To date, student retention has increased from 47% to 95%
- **Coordination of clinical training sites** for 14 regional nursing programs and over 300 healthcare organizations through Nursing Clinical Placement District #1
- **Develop a Healthcare Educator Network** to address shortages of faculty for nursing and other healthcare training programs through promotion of the healthcare educator role to targeted audiences, such as nurses seeking a career change, and help potential healthcare educators connect with employment opportunities at colleges, universities, and healthcare organizations – scheduled for implementation Fall 2004
- **Developed Pierce County Health Career Day** for high school students. 2007 marked the first annual Pierce County Health Career Day, hosted at the University of Puget Sound. Since then, over 1400 high school students have attended the event, including home schooled students, public, private and tribal high schools. Students attend seminars covering a myriad of health careers, from Polysomnography to Naturopathy to Nurse Midwifery. College and career preparation seminars are also offered. For many students, this is their first exposure to health care careers beyond doctors and nurses.

Construction: According to the data gathered in the “2008 Washington State Green Economy Jobs” prepared by Alan Hardcastle, Ph.D., growth rates for architects and several engineering occupations are expected to exceed the statewide average for all occupations. The average number of opening for some occupations with low growth rates (carpenters, for instance) are estimated to be substantial due to the large size of the existing employment base, and because total annual openings forecasts combine growth rates and the estimated replacement of employees due to attrition and retirements.

Pierce County construction industry accounts for approximately 10% of the state’s construction related employment. This translates to 16,056 construction related occupations with projected growth of 8.2% between 2005 and 2010 according to Sommers’ research. This projection is conservative because it does not account for major projects undertaken by the United States military installations that are located in Pierce County.

These installations, Fort Lewis, Madigan Army Medical Center and McChord Air Force Base, provide approximately 35,000 jobs. In April 2002, Fort Lewis began its housing initiative, a fifty-year, multi-million dollar investment. This initiative calls for the demolition of 6,000 housing units, renovation of 3,000 and building of 1,600 new family support services and centers. Most of this work will be completed by local contractors with the local labor force.

The construction industry has major impact on Pierce County’s employment and economy. According to a 2000 report conducted by the University of Washington and Associated General Contractors

(AGC), for every \$1 spent on new construction, \$2.25 in economic activity is generated. In addition, household earnings are increased by \$.70 for each \$1 invested. Pierce County currently has numerous multi-million dollar long term projects and many more in the pipeline that offer craft and non-craft employment opportunities.

Local construction companies report difficulty attracting a sufficient supply of professionals, especially carpenters, electricians, and supervisors, who are qualified and competent to ensure that projects like the Tacoma Art Museum, Puyallup Tribe Casino, Sound Transit, Tacoma Narrows Bridge, Tacoma Housing Revitalization, Tacoma School District K-12 remodeling/building, and other large scale commercial, residential and civil projects are completed according to schedule and building codes. This difficulty is expected to worsen as current construction professionals retire within the next five to ten years, depleting the industry of vast knowledge and expertise.

To exacerbate the situation, the pipeline of trainees and trained professionals, especially the younger population, has diminished due to the following reasons:

- Lack of awareness and misperceptions of the industry
- Cyclical nature of the industry
- Working conditions
- Physical and mental demands

Another challenge that construction industry partners face is the demographic shifts during the past ten years, with Pierce County experiencing increases in every ethnic and racial group, and the most significant gains coming from persons of Hispanic origin. The county's Hispanic population nearly doubled between 1990 and 2000, from around 20,000 to nearly 39,000 residents, representing the largest percentage increase of any single ethnic group in the county. In 2008, the Hispanic population in Pierce County was 58,884, or 7.4% of the population.

The WDC began addressing these challenges in the Spring of 2002 by sponsoring an industry led partnership of local construction businesses, business associations, labor, apprenticeship, government, economic development, education and other workforce development partners. This partnership has achieved the following:

- Collectively leverage \$1 million private resources and \$1.6 public resources to forward partnership workforce development priorities.
- Commissioned and Completed a county wide and regional labor market study in 2003
- Launched a marketing campaign targeting students, teachers, advisors, parents, general public in 2003
- Conducted Applied Spanish training to supervisors, foremen, superintendents, human resources specialists, project manager
- Developed and implemented a pre-apprenticeship program that provides high school youth paid on the job and classroom training with special consideration into the electrical apprenticeship program upon graduation
 - Currently planning replication of this model with the carpentry trade
- Implemented an architecture, construction and engineering magnet school in September 2003. Program attracts youth from 11 high schools and capacity will double in Fall 2004
 - Currently planning to replicate in Fife school district
- Plan to implement a Construction Trades Career Pathway Program in Tacoma, largest school district, in Fall 2004

- Provide industry specific skills training to incumbent construction workers
 - Trade specific
 - Leadership and management
 - Project management
 - Sales and marketing
 - Estimating

- Providing Management/Applied English Training targeting Spanish speaking construction workers positioned for management roles
- Launched first annual Construction Reception to showcase Pierce County secondary programs that expose, prepare and connect youth to the industry and to increase industry commitment to sustain, enhance, and replicate programs
 - Provided an educational event “Pathways to Apprenticeship” for area educators and administrators to learn more about the trades
 - Hosted 1st Annual Construction Career Day for High School students at the Western Washington Fair Grounds with over 950 students in attendance from schools around the Puget Sound Region
 - Launched a new website providing relevant industry resources and information to students, teachers, advisors, parents, employers, tradesmen and women, and the general public in 2009
 - Provided construction safety training through the “Youth Construction Incident Prevention Program” (L&I SHIP Grant) to over 1,300 high school students
 - Plan to host 1st Annual Apprenticeship Conference in Spring 2010

In addition to healthcare and construction, the WDC partners with Pierce County Careers Connection and Pierce College Fort Steilacoom on their **Information technology and homeland security** sectoral partnerships. Over the past several years, the IT industry has experience a nation-wide decline, shedding 15% of its workforce. However, Pierce County industry partners report that less severe continuing shortages in some job classifications. Technical support workers are less in demand currently but network design and administration, programming and software engineering continue to be needed. In addition, demand has increased for network security specialists, certified information security professionals and firewall engineers.

National and state reports claim that the industry will rebound despite the significant decrease in new investment and restructuring. When the industry rebounds, a shortage of a skilled IT workforce is expected. Although Pierce County has not yet attracted a large number of technology firms, several hardware companies are leading area employers. Intel remains Pierce County’s largest IT employer, employing over 1,300 high wage engineers and technicians.

Homeland Security is an emerging industry cluster brought on by the events of September 11th. The Department of Justice, Office of Homeland Security and the Office of Domestic Preparedness (ODP) have increased national infrastructure security requirements for public agencies and private industries. The ODP has recognized 10 disciplines that have training, equipment, organization and exercise requirements. Industries include Public Works, Public Health, Health Care, Emergency Communications, Emergency Management, Special Teams (HAZMAT), Government agencies, Fire, Police and Emergency Medical services. In addition, Transportation, Ports, Technical industries, agricultural, and numerous other private and public agencies need to increase their risk management and business continuity programs. All these disciplines are part of state and regional economic base.

This emerging industry cluster has experienced increased funding and the need for standardization and coordination among the various participants. In the State of Washington current industry integration is facilitated by the Emergency Management’s Committee on Homeland Security (CHS), which is a cross-discipline organization that meets monthly in Pierce County (Camp Murray). The regions within the state have the same requirements to establish homeland security agencies to train, exercise, organize and equip their first responders and the private industries within their region. Homeland Security has been organized using a nine-region model with funding and training needs being allocated by region. Priorities discussed at the Sub-Committee meeting on training focused on the increased need for trained and credentialed employees who meet nationally defined standards and the need to begin to “professionalize” this industry cluster. Previous strategy in these discipline areas has been to train incumbent workers in Homeland Security related areas; however, as security requirements grow, the current specialist inventory shrinks and outside sources for trained specialists will be needed.

WORKFIRST AND WORKSOURCE SERVICE INTEGRATION

The Workforce Development Council and its WorkFirst partners, Department of Social and Health Services Region V (DSHS), WA State Employment Security Department West Region (ESD), Community and Technical Colleges (CTC), and Community Trade and Economic Development (CTED) have forged and sustained a strong relationship that is demonstrated through multiple joint activities and outcomes. WorkFirst partners have been and continue to be integral in the planning and service delivery of the workforce development system. An example of this is through WorkFirst Community Jobs Program that is administered by the WDC. This program provides workforce development services to recipients of public assistance and requires close planning and coordination with DSHS, ESD, and CTED partners to ensure smooth implementation from referrals to enrollments to co-enrollments across partnered agencies.

The WDC is active on the Local Area Planning Committee and WorkFirst partners are active on the WDC, its committees and its sectoral partnerships. Discussions are underway and will continue locally to increase co-location of WorkFirst staff at the WorkSource Career Development Center and affiliate sites that will result in further integration of the following core services for job seekers and business customers:

Job Seekers

- Eligibility determination including evaluation of the need for intensive services including barriers to employment
- Outreach, intake and orientation for the various programs including training options and providers
- Initial assessment identifies customer needs and evaluates skills and job readiness
- Information and referral provides information about other needed services
- Job search and referral: provides job seekers access to job openings
- Job/Career counseling including showing customers how to use one-stop services and the availability of non-traditional training
- Translation services: available in the customer’s first language when possible
- Provision of program performance and employment statistics information
- Information on Community Resources.

- Unemployment Insurance access: phone accessibility for filing UI claims
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for WorkFirst and financial aid

Businesses

Labor Market Information: Occupation descriptions

- Job and industry growth patterns
- Current skill requirements
- Available skill sets
- Economic trends and forecasts
- Wage norms specific to industry, region, and job classifications
- Economic information (regional and county)
- Population and demographic information

Business Assistance Information & Referrals:

- Business registration/licensing
- Fair labor practices
- General employment regulatory requirements (OSHA, EEOC, etc.)
- Employee training referrals
- Business and marketing plan software; self-serve
- Employee handbook software; self-serve
- Human resource laws and practices
- UI Benefit charging, experience rating, laws and regulations information
- Tax information and incentives
- WARN layoff & downsizing and referrals for 'Rapid Response' services.

In addition to substantial integration possibilities of core services described above, the WDC and WorkFirst partners will develop and implement strategies to integrate intensive services where appropriate. Co-enrollments between WorkFirst and WorkSource customers meeting each partner's eligibility requirements can be increased significantly as a result. Further planning in this area will be needed to systemically integrate intensive services to ensure each partner comply with federal and state regulations.

Agreements have been established to co-locate WorkFirst staff with WorkSource staff at the Career Development Center as of July 1, 2005. It is not yet known if some will remain at the Career Development Center once transition occurs to the Pierce South CSO. In addition, WorkFirst and WorkSource partners are exploring the possibility of the Puyallup WorkFirst CSO applying for WorkSource affiliate site certification. The WDC and its WorkFirst partners have diligently implemented strategies to integrate services since the passage of WIA and will continue toward further integration over the next two years and beyond.

SECTION IV: OUR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

A. System performance Information

System Performance Information: The Tacoma-Pierce County Workforce Development Council uses area workforce program performance information to inform strategic planning. Since the passage of WIA, the WDC has met and exceeded all of its state and federal performance measures.

The state Workforce Board provides major area workforce development programs results to the local council. Workforce development programs participant data is matched with administrative records to measure PMCI common indicators related to employment, earnings, and education outcomes. The Workforce Board conducts workforce development programs' participant and employer sample surveys, including questions measuring the PMCI customer satisfaction indicators, and provides regional breakdowns of the results. Section IV (A) performance information is provided by the State Workforce Board and Employment Security. Pierce County's common core indicators are as follows:

State Core Targeted Indicators for Program Year 2008

Adult Credentials	Adult Employment	Adult Earnings	Adult Satisfaction
62.5%	76.1%	\$20,391	90%
Dislocated Credentials	Dislocated Employment	Dislocated Earnings	Dislocated Satisfaction
77.4.5%	87%	\$33,220	91%
Youth Credentials	Youth Employment	Youth Earnings	Youth Satisfaction
74.8%	79.7%	\$10,806	95%

Federal Performance Indicators for Program Year 2008

Employer Satisfaction	Participant Satisfaction	Adult Credentials	Adult Employment	Adult Earning Gain	Adult Retention Rate
69.5%	78%	73.3%	80.9%	\$12,794	85.3%
		Dislocated Credentials	Dislocated Employment	Dislocated Earnings	Dislocated Retention Rate
		70.9%	88.2 %	\$21,547	92%
		Older Youth Credentials	Older Youth Employment	Older Youth Earnings Gain	Older Youth Retention Rate
		41.3%	76.9%	\$4,871	83.7%
		Younger Youth Skill Gains	Younger Youth Diploma	Younger Youth Retention	
		88%	61.4%	71.3%	

B. Data Collection

The Services, Knowledge, and Information Exchange System (SKIES) serves all WIA Title I and WorkSource performance accountability, information collection and reporting needs for local councils. It records common WorkSource data elements adopted by the Workforce Board. It also collects program participants' service record data and any immediate placement activities data for local WorkSource managers. Only participants who receive intensive or training services must register and count toward the WIA Title I-B or WorkSource accountability indicators, other than WorkSource volume counts. A swipe card system has been developed statewide for WorkSource CDCs by the Washington Membership System (WMS).

C. WorkSource and WIA I-B Performance Information

The Workforce Board ensures that SKIES participant data matches with administrative records to evaluate employment, earnings, and education performance. These include federal DOL core indicators needed for the state's annual report, and the PMCI indicators. The Workforce Board also administers individual participants and employers surveys for DOL's customer satisfaction indicators. The Board's surveys include sufficient respondents' numbers to provide statistically valid results for each WIA Title I and WorkSource local area. The Workforce Board provides indicator results to Local Councils and DOL as required.

D. Performance-based Intervention

WIA authorizes incentive funding for states that exceed the "adjusted levels of performance" in WIA Title I, adult education and family literacy, and vocational education. 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."

If Washington receives such an incentive award, the Workforce Board will allocate the funds to local areas that exceeded their expected level of performance in these programs. Washington will use the same 100 percent formula for determining whether or not areas have exceeded their expected levels of performance, except that Washington will include performance on the state core indicators as well as the federal core indicators. While the local councils may use the funds for any purpose authorized under any of the acts, the funds must be used for system-building activities, not activities that pertain only to a particular program, i.e., WIA Title I-B, Adult Education and Family Literacy, or Vocational Education.

For WIA Title I-B, the state will 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. ESD will allocate these funds to local areas.

If the state fails to meet the "adjusted levels of performance" on the federal core indicators for WIA Title I-B for two consecutive years, DOL will withhold up to 5 percent of the state's WIA Title I-B funds. DOL will consider states to have failed to meet the levels if the average level of performance across the indicators falls below 80 percent.

If a local area fails to achieve 80 percent average performance across the state and federal core indicators for WIA Title I, ESD will require the local council to submit either a performance improvement plan or a modified local plan to the state. If such failure continues for a second

consecutive year, the Governor may require the development of reorganization plan. If the state is sanctioned by DOL for poor performance, ESD will withhold a proportional amount of funds from local areas based on their average performance across the state and federal core indicators.

E. Performance Targeted for Improvement

For the year beginning July 1, 2000: Public community and technical colleges and universities, registered apprenticeship programs, as well as private vocational schools licensed by the Workforce Board, the Higher Education Coordinating Board, or the Department of Licensing, or by a comparable agency within another state, were presumed eligible to provide training. Also, private colleges and universities that are eligible to receive federal funds under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 are presumed eligible for WIA Title I-B funding.

Since then, provider eligibility has depended on meeting new performance standards. The Workforce Board (on behalf of the Governor) will identify performance levels that must be achieved in order for a provider to be eligible to receive WIA Title I-B “individual training accounts.” The measures used for these standards will be consistent with the measures required under the Act.

The Workforce Board collected data from community and technical colleges and private career schools to set training provider performance standards and determine provider performance. Local Workforce Development Councils notify any other training providers that show interest in being eligible for WIA Title I funding that they should submit an application and participant data to the Workforce Board. Training providers that want to offer training funded through Individual Training Accounts authorized under WIA Title I-B are required to submit cost and participant data to the Workforce Board before their eligibility is determined. Because of the lag between the time that training participants exit and the time that outcome data is available, training providers should begin sharing participant data with the Workforce Board as soon as feasible.

F. Continuous Quality Improvement

The WDC has provided training to managers and staff within the system in how to use continuous improvement procedures for performance improvement. The framework for a sustainable continuous quality improvement system follows:

- **Quality is meeting customer expectations.** The quality improvement system is a set of principles, policies, practices, and support structures designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization in meeting customer requirements.
- **Continuous quality improvement is a way of doing business that focuses the organization on quality as a key business strategy.** To insure a CQI process is efficacious and sustainable, quality must become a key business strategy. Quality is not a sprint—it is a long distance event that takes management long-term attention
- **An organization’s quality initiative must address its own unique needs.** Off-the-shelf, canned quality solutions do not generate commitment within an organization needed to succeed. Currently the CDC and Affiliate Sites conduct surveys to monitor continuous quality improvement. The results of these surveys are studied by the CDC and Affiliate Sites to make adjustments to customer service.

SECTION V: AGENDA FOR ACTION

WDC Strategic Goals, Objectives, Strategies

Goal 1

Deliberately manage a workforce development system based upon economic development priorities established by the business and employer community. (Blueprint Scope Statement)

A demand-led system is based upon economic and workplace needs and must satisfy businesses’ demand for a sufficient supply of highly skilled workers. Such a system helps individuals attain the skills necessary for employability. It connects skilled workers to high wage, high demand jobs through high quality, consistent matching procedures. Consequently, it helps employers become more competitive in the global market through a first class workforce.

The key differences from today will be:

- The structure formalizes the process of system building and its top leaders are partner neutral
- The system members recognize that business is a customer and sufficient resources are always available to satisfy business’ needs
- The system members advocate equally for job seekers and employers and the demand – supply pipeline is the frame of reference
- The WorkSource identity exists physically and culturally within each system partner ensuring a consistent, seamless customer experience

Objectives	Strategies
<p>1. Continuously improve strategies to provide a continuum of quality, competency-based core, intensive and training services for job seekers</p>	<p>a. Expand our focus on crucial industry clusters: financial services, retail trade, construction, health care, international trade, transportation and logistics, hospitality and tourism</p> <p>b. Provide high-quality labor market information and analyses of local economic conditions to enable job seekers them to make informed choices about career opportunities</p> <p>c. Ensure job seekers are prepared to enter training by providing basic skills and employability competencies</p> <p>d. Provide tuition assistance, supportive services and coordinate benefits with other system resources to enable job seekers to acquire job specific skills needed by the region’s employers and aligned with our cluster strategies</p> <p>e. Assist system partners with expanding training capacity and developing curricula to meet the requirements of emerging occupations</p>

Objectives	Strategies
<p>2. Add value to our business customers</p>	<p>a. Standardize effective and efficient processes followed to match job seeker and jobs available</p> <p>b. Develop and analyze useful measures of business services to continuously improve service delivery</p> <p>c. Expand the intensity and scope of business services to develop long-term relationships with business customers</p> <p>d. Create a seamless, single point of contact for business to access the public employment system</p> <p>e. Align the delivery of services with industry sectors identified in the strategic plan and local economic development strategies</p> <p>f. Establish a market driven fee for services structure to supplement public investments in the WorkSource Business Connection</p>

Goal 2

Improve a system that promotes life-long learning, enabling disadvantaged youth, individuals with disabilities, new labor market entrants, recent immigrants, limited English speakers, older workers and low wage earners to access education, training and jobs in an ever changing workforce

The aging of our current workforce and reduction in new entrants to the labor force have serious economic implications for the future of Pierce County. We must continue to invest in programs and services to increase the choices people with barriers to employment have that will lead them to achieve economic sustainability.

Objectives	Strategies
<p>1. Assist youth in obtaining quality education that prepares them to transition from school to high wage, high skilled jobs and/or post secondary education and training</p>	<p>a. Design and establish a community-wide youth workforce development model that provides all youth with access to resources leading to jobs or training</p> <p>b. Integrate current programs and funding around agencies' core competencies and agreed upon one-stop principles</p> <p>c. Seek youth participation and input in the design and evaluation of services</p> <p>d. Coordinate training resources within the system to provide tuition assistance, scholarships and other support to enroll in post secondary training</p> <p>e. Align program services with the four P requirements: portfolio,</p>

	<p>culminating project, pathway, post secondary (13th year) plan</p> <p>f. Advocate the for expansion of career and technical education and work[place relevant career guidance in the k-12 system</p> <p>g. Expand drop-out intervention and retrieval services through collaboration with K-12 and youth providers</p> <p>h. Expand summer youth employment programs that provide work experience and remedial education</p>
<p>2. Provide opportunities to citizens with barriers to employment</p>	<p>a. Provide core services that teach workplace skills such as work habits, teamwork, problem solving and leadership</p> <p>b. Provide access to financial assistance for ESL, literacy based skill training, post secondary training and apprenticeships</p> <p>c. Educate employers about the benefits of hiring individuals from targeted populations</p>
<p>3. Assist workers with wages below self-sufficiency to achieve wage progression and advancement in their employment</p>	<p>a. Expand customized training, pre-apprenticeship activities and apprenticeships for entry level workers creating career ladders within high demand industries</p> <p>b. Identify existing financial incentives and support new initiatives that encourage employers to invest in their workforce</p> <p>c. Expand training opportunities after work hours and in the workplace for upward mobility</p>

Goal 3

Close the gap between employer’s need for skilled workers and Pierce County residents’ ability to meet that need

The last decade has witnessed dramatic swings in the area’s economy, from the rapid inflation then deflation of the technology bubble, to Boeing’s climb then fall following September 11th to the wholesale disassembly of middle management teams. These changes have profound implications for the Pierce County workforce. Now, more than ever, enhancing the skills of the workforce is critical to ensure a productive and secure future for all Pierce County residents. In an age of fierce global competition for jobs, the areas that thrive will be the places with the best educated, most innovative, and most productive workers. In order to ensure economic prosperity, State and local workforce development agencies must close the gap between business’ demand for skilled workers and the supply of workers.

Objectives	Strategies
<p>1. Involve both the public and private sectors in solving the skills gap</p>	<p>a. Seek continued financial support for established partnerships in health services and construction</p> <p>b. Expand the industry sectors to a cluster strategy including suppliers, subcontractors and other businesses supporting identified sectors</p> <p>c. Extend the strategy to international trade, transportation and distribution and hospitality and tourism</p>
<p>2. Increase the number of young people who understand and act on career opportunities available through vocational-technical education and training programs.</p>	<p>a. Increase the number of adult mentors, who interact with youth on a regular basis.</p> <p>b. Increase the number and variety of work experience opportunities for youth to strengthen the connection between school and work.</p> <p>c. Increase retention of high school students through support of alternative learning models at community and technical colleges, like Freshstart.</p> <p>d. Expand partnerships with industries to market their career opportunities to youth and their parents, stressing high demand, high wage, and non-traditional careers.</p> <p>e. Develop individual career plans for all youth to ensure awareness of links between learning and employment.</p> <p>f. Enhance educational attainment of career and technical education students with limited English proficiency.</p>
<p>3. Increase the capacity of high schools, community and technical colleges, and pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs to provide high quality workforce education and training programs.</p>	<p>a. Pursue grants & other funds to support & leverage WIA funds in providing youth development opportunities for all students.</p> <p>b. Work with employers and the educational system to strengthen the skill content of training programs to more closely match businesses' needs.</p> <p>c. Continue working with labor organizations to place participants in high demand high wage apprenticeship programs, including new and emerging fields.</p> <p>d. Expand specialized and/or customized training in high wage, high demand sectors such as: financial services, construction, health care, transportation/warehouse, and retail sales.</p>

	<p>e. Develop new programs and increase student enrollments in workforce training especially in high demand industry clusters.</p> <p>f. Partner with industries to provide facilities, faculty, and equipment in high wage, high demand fields.</p> <p>g. Expand apprenticeship training in emerging fields and expand preparation programs for apprenticeship in high demand clusters.</p>
<p>4. Increase education and training for older workers and retired individuals who want to return to work.</p>	<p>a. Encourage and assist older workers and retired individuals who want to return to work, to pursue education and specialized training, and improve access for seniors to take advantage of opportunities.</p> <p>b. Coordinate and leverage existing workforce development programs that target older workers and retired individuals to increase service availability and access.</p>

Goal 4

Integrate workforce development programs to improve customer service

The Workforce Investment Act has provided an opportunity to convene, engage and sustain partners from business, labor, community-based organizations, education, private foundations, criminal justice, TANF, Employment Security, vocational rehabilitation, faith-based organizations and many more to realize a customer-focused, seamless and comprehensive local operation. However, the WDC and its partners recognize that their work is far from complete. The need to realize *full integration* at the highest level still remains. This means going beyond operational coordination, collaboration and integration as envisioned under WIA. Full integration of partners requires (1) adoption of a unified partnership based workforce development plan that includes both strategic and tactical details consistent with each partnered organization’s strategic and operational plans, and (2) long term resource alignment and investments from all partners to support and sustain full implementation of the unified workforce development plan. The WDC plans to move toward full integration over the next several years to ensure increased system efficiency, and a sustained, viable, and robust workforce development system that is responsive to the global economy and workforce needs of its customers.

Objectives	Strategies
<p>1. Establish a county-wide, partnership-based, unified and virtual organization to proactively guide, manage, operate and sustain the workforce development system.</p>	<p>a. Convene leaders around the concept of creating and sustaining an organizational structure that supports the full integration of services.</p> <p>b. Obtain formal commitments from workforce development system leaders to commit resources to identify common integration points.</p> <p>c. Establish work teams dedicated to marketing, fundraising, information management, and service</p>

	delivery that offer a broad portfolio of services for job seekers/students and employers/businesses.
2. Improve WorkSource services to customers, including target populations by bringing together individual partner programs to craft comprehensive solutions.	<p>a. Understand and respond to the needs of business customers and implement a coordinated, comprehensive strategy among WorkSource partners.</p> <p>b. Improve customer service by collecting and using customer feedback, providing electronic services, and sharing information on customer service best practices.</p> <p>c. Include all WorkSource partners in customer service training, including training in serving target populations</p>
3. Develop and maintain service delivery capacity that is flexible and responsive.	<p>a. Provide statewide information system (SKIES) for case management that is shared by WorkSource partners.</p> <p>b. Develop systems to track and report core WorkSource services.</p> <p>c. Find financial resources to sustain the WorkSource service delivery system infrastructure.</p>
4. Reach out to individuals from target populations in order to increase their use of WorkSource services, and provide services that meet their unique needs.	<p>a. Provide individuals with disabilities with equal opportunities to benefit from WorkSource services.</p> <p>b. Increase outreach, recruitment, and marketing activities conducted in partnership with tribes and community based organizations serving targeted populations.</p> <p>c. Encourage diversity among the membership of local Workforce Development Councils and WorkSource staff to reflect the diversity of the community being served.</p>
5. Facilitate the integration of workforce development programs serving youth.	<p>a. Facilitate the transfer of information among workforce development programs serving youth.</p> <p>b. Develop and sustain mutually beneficial partnerships among youth stakeholders.</p>

Appendix A

The 2007-2009 Strategic plan was reviewed by the WDC Executive Committee which is comprised of partners from labor, community and technical college, K-12, community based organization, businesses, and WDC staff. Once approved, the Executive Committee will forward a recommendation for approval to the WDC and local elected officials.

A public announcement was issued in the Tacoma News Tribune 2 times over a two week period informing the public of a forty-five day comment period and a time to meet physically to solicit comments that can be incorporated in the plan prior to submission to the state. Comments were requested to be in writing for documentation. During the public comment period, no comments were received by the WDC.