

Public-Private Partnership

Pre-employment training program fuels growth

PARTNERS:

- Heath Tecna
- Northwest Workforce Council
- Washington Department of Commerce
- Northwest Economic Council
- Impact Washington
- Bellingham Technical College
- WorkSource Whatcom Career Center
- Employment Security Department
- Manpower
- Kelly Services
- Bellingham Waterfront Innovation Partnership

Nearly 400 Whatcom and Skagit County residents have good paying jobs today due, in part, to the efficient way workforce and economic development professionals responded to the needs of a local aerospace manufacturer to recruit and train new production workers.

The story begins late in 2009 when staff from the state's Department of Commerce and the Northwest Economic Council discovered that Heath Tecna, a producer of passenger aircraft interiors headquartered in Bellingham, needed to quickly increase production to fill new international orders. They brought in the Northwest Workforce Council, which led an effort that has helped keep production humming.

Working together, the project's partners created a pre-employment screening and training program that made it possible for the area's unemployed and underemployed to rapidly fill these living-wage jobs. This, in turn, allowed the company to expand global sales and exports through a consistent supply of qualified workers capable of working in a newly reengineered LEAN production environment.

Screening started at the WorkSource Whatcom Career Center. Suitable candidates were then referred to Heath Tecna's staffing service providers (Manpower and Kelly Services) for additional screening. Applicants who completed that process then undertook a two week pre-employment training developed by the company and Bellingham Technical College. The training is funded by the Governor's discretionary portion of federal Workforce Investment Act training dollars. Approval by the Employment Security Department made it possible for laid-off workers to train without looking for work during training or losing their Unemployment Insurance benefits.

During the initial training summer of 2010, 380 of 449 students passed testing and began work as temporary hires (via the two private staffing services). After 90 days, they were hired by the employer with a wage bump and benefits. Production employee retention rates at the plant soared to 67%. Newly hired employees weren't the only ones to benefit from the training program's quick turnaround time. Heath Tecna executives estimate the program supported a 60% increase in export activity from June 2010 to December 2011.

By assembling a Dream Team of professionals, the Heath Tecna Aerospace Pre-Employment Screening and Training program has set a model of private and public investments that gets laid off workers back to work quickly and efficiently, helping local families and a local company thrive.



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Governor's 2011 Best Practices Award Winner

Youth work experience

Program nurtures Seattle's industry pipeline

PARTNERS:

- King County Work Training
- Manufacturing Industrial Council of Seattle
- South Seattle Community College Apprenticeship and Education Center
- Puget Sound Industrial Excellence Center
- Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County

Since the summer of 2009, the Seeking Opportunities Developing Occupations (SODO) Inc. program has helped disadvantaged youth move past joblessness and low-wage employment into a solid career path that leads to the manufacturing sector. At the same time, the program has helped Seattle's manufacturers recognize the benefit of cultivating a talent pipeline from the ground up.

Located at South Seattle Community College Georgetown Campus, SODO Inc. is a partnership between the college, King County Work Training Program, the Manufacturing Industrial Council of Seattle and the Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council (WDC). Started originally as a summer youth employment program with federal stimulus funds, the program currently operates year-round under a federal Department of Labor Pathways out of Poverty grant managed by the WDC. Participants come from disadvantaged backgrounds and are between the ages of 18 and 24. Many lack a high school diploma, speak English as a second language or are ex-offenders.

SODO calls for a significant commitment on the part of participants. Before entering an internship, all participating youth are required to complete a four-week South Seattle Community College introductory industrial training class. Those who

successfully complete the course move on to a four-week internship through the King County Work Training Program, which places them in a worksite usually arranged by the Manufacturing Industrial Council. Employer concerns about liability are reduced as the youth are paid by the County during their internships.

Since June of 2010, when SODO Inc.'s Pathways out of Poverty grant began, 122 participants have completed the training, 115 have entered into paid work experience and 71 have completed the internship successfully. Of that number, 39 have found unsubsidized employment (including 12 who were hired by the internship employer) and five others have gone on to further education or work experience programs. Another class of 21 youth started their internships in October, 2011.

The SODO Inc. program has been instrumental in building support among area manufacturers, Seattle officials, community-based organizations and educators--all working toward a more comprehensive program that makes it possible for students to earn post-high school credentials with a career progression into Seattle's manufacturing sector.



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Governor's 2011 Best Practices Award Winner

Workplace Readiness

WorkSource enhances region's competitiveness

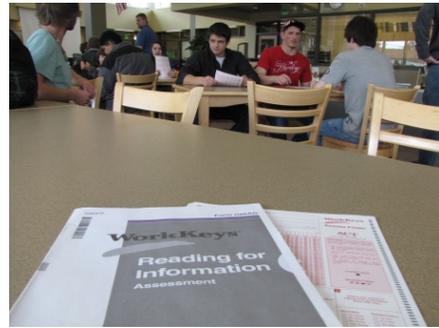
PARTNERS:

- Spokane Area Workforce Development Council
- Greater Spokane Incorporated
- Triumph Composite Systems
- Goodrich Corporation
- Kaiser Aluminum
- Community Colleges of Spokane
- Spokane Public Schools
- Medical Lake High School
- WorkSource Spokane
- Next Generation Zone

Spokane area companies looking to hire, now have a fast, effective way to measure an applicant's potential. At the same time, jobseekers can more quickly prove their value and land the job. The solution is a nationally recognized career-readiness credential that's part of the Work Ready Spokane initiative, launched by the Spokane Area Workforce Development Council in April 2011.

By encouraging the adoption of a standard assessment tool, the Work Ready initiative is creating a comprehensive workforce picture of the region recognized by potential employers across the nation, helpful to current and potential employees, and informative to the region's education and training system.

The WorkKeys assessment is a workplace skills test created by ACT—a national non-profit organization best known for its college-readiness assessment. The tests measure aptitude at reading, math and information gathering and can rate the test taker in terms of national performance. Scorers are able to earn a nationally recognized career readiness certificate, recognized and endorsed by industry authorities such as the National Association of Manufacturers.



Currently, three employers have contracted to have their job applicants tested at WorkSource, bringing jobseekers into the local employment office where additional services and training are available, including the free test-compatible KeyTrain remediation program. This close employer relationship is getting unemployed workers back into good paying jobs quickly while helping others connect with the training and placement services they'll need to be competitive for future job openings.

Between July 2010 and June 2011, WorkSource Spokane conducted WorkKeys job readiness assessments for more than 230 applicants, resulting in 42 job placements at Triumph Composite Systems. Many of these people were unemployed and would not have otherwise landed the job.

Spokane Skills Center and Medical Lake High School also are beginning to use the tests to help high school students measure their career readiness.

With help from Greater Spokane Incorporated, which brings together the Spokane Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Council, along with the Spokane Area Workforce Development Council, Work Ready Spokane is working to expand employer use of the assessment tools.

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Farm Field to Truck Cab

Big Bend Community College Upskills Rural Workers

PARTNERS:

- Big Bend Community College
- State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
- North Central Washington Workforce Development Council
- The Opportunity Industrialization Center of Washington

Big Bend Community College in Moses Lake is strengthening the region's rural economy by helping farm workers move from the field to behind the wheel of a commercial truck. This vocational program for adults who may lack basic reading, writing or language skills has prepared over 150 low-wage workers for high-wage, in-demand transportation jobs needed by the region's agribusinesses.

The college's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) for Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Program uses the highly effective and nationally recognized I-BEST model of two instructors in the classroom—one teaching the professional-technical content while the other supports the development of basic skills in reading, math or language skills. Many of the participants are low-skilled, Spanish-speaking agricultural workers.

What sets Big Bend Community College's program apart is how well it targets adult workers. The course is not scheduled on traditional college quarters but instead meets three evenings each week and all day Saturday and Sunday for a 10-week period. This allows students to continue working as they prepare for new careers. Students completing the program have a 98 percent pass rate on the CDL exam and almost all get jobs in trucking and in their communities.



Launched with federal adult basic education and workforce development grant funds from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the program later received a High Demand Workforce Development grant to refine the program.

Most of the employers produce agricultural products (J.R. Simplot, National Frozen Foods, Wilbur-Ellis, Harvest Transport Inc., among others). They need drivers to be able to move products and raw materials to and from their facilities. Average annual earnings for students who participate in the program exceed \$27,000. Even during this recession, graduates are getting hired. A recent survey of the most recent graduates reached 12 out of 15 participants, all of whom were employed in the trucking industry.

The North Central Workforce Development Council and the Opportunity Industrialization Center have contributed to the program's success through student referrals, tuition support for eligible participants, and by addressing other barriers to completion and job placement.

Big Bend Community College's I-BEST Commercial Driver's License program has helped a traditionally underserved population move from seasonal, low-wage work into more year-round, living-wage jobs. By upskilling workers into high employer demand positions critical to the region's key industry, this program has helped strengthen the economy.

POST-TRAINING SUCCESS:

Median income of 2007-2008 participants before and after completion (three quarters before and after) indicate a 40 percent increase in annual wages or an increase of over \$8,000.

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