# WASHINGTON STATE
# WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
**MEETING NO. 127**
**JULY 10, 2008**

## High Skills, High Wages 2008 – 2018

This tab contains the first draft of *High Skills, High Wages 2008 – 2018: The State Strategic Plan for Workforce Development.* The draft is based upon the input of the workgroups for each of the three goals (youth, adults and industry), the Interagency Committee, and a review of the literature. It is a first draft. It is presented to the Board for the Board's review and direction. Following the July meeting, staff will complete the draft based upon the Board's direction and then disseminate it to obtain wider input electronically and via public forums across the state. Final adoption is planned for the September Board meeting.

**Board Action Requested:** Adoption of the Recommended Motion.

DRAFT

## RECOMMENDED MOTION

**WHEREAS,** RCW 28C.18.060 directs the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board to "Develop and maintain a state comprehensive plan for workforce training and education, including but not limited to, goals, objectives, and priorities for the state training system," and

**WHEREAS,** RCW 28C.18.080 directs that the "state comprehensive plan for work force training and education shall be updated every two years and presented to the governor and the appropriate legislative policy committees."

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** That the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board approves the dissemination of the draft *High Skills, High Wages: 2008 - 2018: The State Strategic Plan for Workforce Development,* with edits recommended at the July 10, 2008 Board meeting for public review and comment.

DRAFT

# *High Skill, High Wages: 2008 - 2018*
# *The State Strategic Plan for Workforce Development*

**Planning to Create a Highly Skilled Workforce**
As tomorrow's workforce will be older and more racially and ethnically diverse and tomorrow's workplace will be even-more technology and information driven, we need to upgrade skills of those with low or obsolete skills, and increase the educational attainment level of our residents. Now, more than ever, we must concentrate efforts on developing a highly skilled workforce. "High Skills, High Wages" our state's 10-year strategic plan for workforce development, contained in this report, provides our blueprint.

Leaders from across the state created this plan. Contributors included employers, labor, education, nonprofit and community-based organizations, state, local and tribal government, rural and urban areas, communities of color, and individuals with disabilities. We will achieve our three goals related to Youth, Adults and Industry by implementing 20 strategies, sticking to our vision for 2018, and tracking our progress.

**Responding to Economic and Demographic Changes**
Our economic and demographic outlook forms the context of our planning. Our economy shows signs of slowing down after a period of growth with unemployment rates beginning to climb in January 2008. Even in periods of economic downturn our employers report difficulty recruiting skilled workers, particularly those with mid-level education and training. Our 2007 gap analysis estimated that we are only filling 77 percent of the demand for skilled workers. This has serious consequences. Employers report that a lack of skilled workers has a direct impact on their ability to expand, on their profitability, and influences whether they decide to stay in the state. Support of our state and regional strategic industry clusters is one key method for improving our economy.

As Washington's workforce ages and begins to retire, our workforce is growing more slowly than in the past. In-migration from other states and abroad will contribute more than half of our future growth. In this context we need to implement strategies that enhance the skills of low-skilled adults, ensure that more youth graduate from high school and are on track to complete at least one year of postsecondary education, and reduce under-employment. We need to remove barriers in our workforce development system to ensure expanded access and success.[1]

**Opportunities for Enhancing Education and Training**
Past planning efforts have helped us to make great strides in meeting the workforce needs of our economy. Areas of progress include: improved access to career and technical education in high schools, developing the Building Bridges Initiative to reduce K-12 dropouts, providing High Demand funds to expand programs that prepare students for high employer demand occupations, increasing access to postsecondary education through breakthrough programs such as the Opportunity Grants, and expanding apprenticeship options, among many other strategies. In addition, industry skills panels that comprise education providers, employers and related public and non-profit entities from a strategic regional industry cluster, are a source of initiatives that have become prominent best practice examples, for both our state and nation.

[1] For more detailed information on our state's demographics and economy please see earlier chapter.

While we are making progress, we still have a gap between the supply and the demand for a skilled workforce. Moreover, some are concerned about the development of an "hourglass economy" and increasing polarization between high and low paying jobs.[2] Education and training is essential for the growth of middle-wage employment, and for helping individuals to move up career ladders.

**Key Issues**

In developing our plan we asked our stakeholders to first identify the key issues, and then to help us create a plan for the immediate future through 2018. Key issues for youth relate to the high rate of students dropping out between grades 9 and 12, the high unemployment rate among older youth (approximately 18 to 24 years of age), and youth leaving high school unprepared for further education and/or work.

For adults we are concerned about low skill attainment, with more than 1.6 million Washington adults who have a high school diploma or less as their highest level of educational attainment.[3] At the same time the average age for participants in programs serving adults is 29, reflecting a gap in serving young adults. Adults need pathways to self-sufficiency, they need financial support to access education and training options, and education policymakers and providers need to develop more options to bring education to the workplace through distance learning and other methods.

We also need to find ways to better serve adults from specific subpopulations. State and national research demonstrates that individuals from communities of color fare worse in our education system as a whole, but see better results in workforce programs. Many people with disabilities, who account for 16 percent of the state's working-age population, would like to work, but labor force participation for this population has declined over time. Veterans returning home often need to transition to the civilian workforce and can experience barriers in transferring their skills. Ex-offenders, particularly women, face reduced employment options. All these groups rely on further training and skill upgrades, as well as various support services, to improve opportunities for employment.

As we develop our economy, employers are calling for skilled workers. To achieve the greatest success, we need to align our workforce and economic development strategies. Limited public investments can achieve great gains if they are strategic. One proven method is supporting state and regional strategic industry clusters, by developing skill panels and establishing Centers of Excellence, among other key initiatives.

[2] Paul Sommers, Ph.D, Mark Gardner, Juliet Scarpa, "Skills Required: Preparing Puget Sound for Tomorrow's Middle-Wage Jobs," March 3, 2008, page 1.

[3] Conversation with David Prince, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges on calculations derived from 2000 Census Data, June 19, 2008.

**What's In This Plan?**
More detailed discussion to further outline the key issues, research, and rationale for the objectives and strategies follows. The plan is organized according to our three goals.

**OUR GOALS**

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

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

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

DRAFT

## Youth Goal and Summary of Objectives

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

**Objective 1** (For discussion see pages 7-8)
A K-12 Guidance and Counseling System provides students and their parents with a curriculum to individually plan their pathways and prepare for future education and/or work after high school.

- No later than 2018, all middle and high schools in the state have in place all five elements of the K-12 Guidance and Counseling System that includes community, business and labor collaboration.

**Objective 2** (For discussion see pages 10-11)
All students leave high school prepared for success in further education and/or work.

- No later than 2018 all high school students across Washington have the option to complete a career and technical education sequence that matches their career interests, articulates with postsecondary education and results in industry certification where applicable.

**Objective 3** (For discussion see pages 13-14)
All students graduate ~~on time~~ from high school.

- No later than 2018 every local community in the state will have an effective school/community partnership that provides a comprehensive dropout prevention, intervention and re-engagement system for ALL youth, including those who have dropped out or who are at risk of dropping out.

**Objective 4** (For discussion see pages 16-19)
Reduce unemployment rates among older youth, and improve their career prospects.

- No later than 2018, there is a comprehensive state strategy to help unemployed older youth reconnect with work and/or further education opportunities.

DRAFT

**The Need to Guide Youth**
All K-12 students need information and guidance to help them make decisions about their learning and understand how these decisions affect their postsecondary education and career opportunities. If students do not understand the relevance of what they learn, they may be at risk of dropping out.[4] Students who receive a high school diploma but leave school without a clear direction can experience grave difficulties. These young people often take more time to obtain postsecondary credentials because they have to take remedial college classes, they may drop out of college, they may spend many years in low-paid work, become unemployed for long periods of time, or even engage in criminal activity.

**What Are Our Options for Guiding Youth?**
The State Board of Education has been exploring changes for high school graduation requirements that could provide a connection with career guidance. One current policy that could be strengthened is the 13th year plan. This requirement can be most effective if connected with a variety of other activities such as work-based learning, conferences with parents, connections to classroom learning, and mentorship.

**Best Practice Guidance Model**
The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has been advocating that school districts institute a comprehensive Guidance and Counseling System. The best practice model *Navigation 101*, launched in the Franklin-Pierce School District, combines five major elements of personalizing, planning, demonstrating, empowering and evaluating that lead to better student outcomes and success in further education and/or work. *Navigation 101*:

- Teaches students the skills they need to chart their own courses through middle school, high school, postsecondary education and adult life.
- Provides students with an ongoing personal relationship with an adult that lasts throughout their middle and high school experience.
- Provides a meaningful way to keep parents involved in the decisions their teens are making.
- Requires commitment from the school and faculty to make changes such as adjusting schedules and classes to meet students' goals.

In 2006-2007, OSPI allocated $6,440,000 appropriated by the Legislature to increase the use of *Navigation 101* in school districts across the state. The *Navigation 101* curriculum is being implemented at 103 School Districts and 221 Schools. These include:

- 100-High Schools
- Fifteen 7-12 programs
- 18-Alternative Learning Experiences
- 77-Middle Schools
- 11-Elementary Schools

[4] John M. Bridgeland, John J. DiIulio, Jr., Karen Burke Morison, *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts*, Civic Enterprises in association with Peter D. Hart Research Associates for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, March 2006.

A preliminary evaluation the *Navigation 101* program has found that schools that implement *Navigation 101* have improved their students' on-time graduation rates by about two percentage points. Other indicators show increased course-taking in challenging math and science courses and increased participation of parents in student-led conferences.[5]

DRAFT

[5] Conversation with Kyra Kester, Social and Economic Science Research Center, Washington State University, March 2008.

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

**Objective 1**
A K-12 Guidance and Counseling System provides students and their parents with a curriculum to individually plan their pathways and prepare for future education and/or work after high school.

- No later than 2018, all middle and high schools in the state have implemented all five elements of the K-12 Guidance and Counseling System that includes community, business and labor collaboration.

**Steps To Get Us There**
- Expand implementation of the best practice guidance system, "Navigation 101" across the K-12 system including establishing goals for expansion each year.
- Integrate the Individual Education Plan with the 13th year plan required for graduation.
- Work with the State Board of Education to create policy links to comprehensive career guidance.
- Support the College Board Scholarship Program that provides an incentive for low-income students to complete high school.

DRAFT

**Relevant Learning Through Career and Technical Education**
Career and technical education (CTE) plays a vital role in connecting students to the relevance of what they are learning. CTE helps different students in different ways. It prepares students for success in postsecondary education and also provides those who go straight into work after high school with better employment and earning outcomes.

**Recent Enrollments Decline Despite Lasting Benefits of Taking CTE**
Washington State University's graduate follow-up study shows that students who complete CTE sequences continue on to postsecondary education at about the same rate as do other students.[6] The Workforce Board's evaluations of CTE programs find that students who complete a CTE sequence have better employment and earnings outcomes than students with similar demographic characteristics who do not complete a CTE sequence.[7] Despite these successes, student enrollment in CTE has been flat since 2008.[8] Moreover, 57 school districts in Washington offer no career and technical education courses. Rural and remote districts offer limited choices, if any.

**Strengthening CTE**
Since many more students could benefit from CTE it is important that we develop policies that strengthen it. We need to enhance capacity for students to take CTE through developing and expanding programs at middle school, comprehensive high schools, and Skills Centers.

We need to strengthen transitions to postsecondary learning for CTE students by ensuring more students receive academic credit through CTE coursework and by developing stronger articulation and transfer of credits. OSPI and the Workforce Board are convening a Task Force to establish course equivalency criteria for use by school districts so that the academic content of CTE courses are fully recognized by postsecondary institutions.

2008 state legislation (SB 6337) launched critical changes to strengthen CTE including defining programs of study. See Figure 1. In 2007, the Workforce Board convened a stakeholder work group to develop a five-year plan for Washington following the reauthorization of the Carl Perkins Act. The plan focuses on strengthening career and technical education at the secondary and postsecondary levels with a key emphasis on developing stronger articulation and transfer.

Figure 1

2008 state legislation (2SSB6377, consistent with the federal Perkins Act) defines programs of study as:

(a) Incorporate secondary and postsecondary education elements;
(b) Include coherent and rigorous academic content aligned with state learning standards and relevant career and technical content in a coordinated, non-duplicative progression of courses that are aligned with postsecondary education in a related field;
(c) Include opportunities for students to earn dual high school and college credit; and
(d) Lead to an industry-recognized credential or certificate at the postsecondary level, or an associate or baccalaureate degree.

[6] See the Graduate Follow Up Study at http://www.sesrc.wsu.edu/gfs/GFS_Reports/gfs_reports_page.asp
[7] Workforce Board, *Workforce Training Results*, 2008.
[8] Office of Financial Management, Washington State, 2007 Data Book, "Enrollment Trends in Workforce Education Programs" http://www.ofm.wa.gov/databook/education/et26.asp

**Serving Immigrant Students**

As the population of Washington becomes more diverse and more immigrants are projected to settle here, we need to develop better ways of assisting immigrant students who come with various academic skill levels and various levels of English language proficiency. Integrating English language learning with career and technical education programs is one way of accelerating both types of learning.

DRAFT

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

**Objective 2**
All students leave high school prepared for success in further education and/or work.

- No later than 2018 all high school students across Washington have the option to complete a career and technical education sequence that matches their career interests, articulates with postsecondary education and results in industry certification where applicable.

**Steps To Get Us There**

- Increase the number of students who complete a CTE sequence and/or course requirements for admission to a four-year college or university or enrollment in college-level classes at a community or technical college by:
    - Identifying targets for increases.
    - Conducting an ongoing campaign to increase awareness of teachers, counselors, students, parents, and the general public of the opportunities of rigorous CTE programs, using multiple strategies.
    - Establishing criteria for setting academic course equivalencies.
    - Increasing the number of CTE courses that provide credit for math or science.
    - Providing new opportunities for students in rural areas to complete a CTE sequence.
    - Expanding CTE offerings offered via distance learning options.
    - Identifying high employer demand programs and expand these offerings in secondary CTE sequences.
    - Expanding Grades 7-12 CTE sequences for students.
    - Developing model statewide CTE articulation agreements that provide a program of sequenced courses and ensure all students have access to dual enrollment options.
    - Working with the State Board of Education to ensure high school graduation requirements contain a viable option for students to pursue a CTE sequence.
- Expand pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities for youth.
- Provide opportunities for all youth to connect to the workplace, including mentorships, job shadows, internships and a variety of other strategies including:
    - Building upon the mentorship component of the In-Demand Scholars program.
- Develop and implement best practice models to help basic skills deficient immigrant youth succeed in high school including.
    - Developing I-BEST programs for use in middle schools and high schools (basic skills and English language programs that are integrated with occupational skills training.)

DRAFT

## High Dropout Rates

A high school diploma or its equivalent is a vital step to successfully entering postsecondary education and training, and, often a pre-requisite for many types of entry-level work. Even so, only 70 percent of students graduated on time (within four years of starting grade 9) in 2005-2006.[9] Even when considering students that graduate after the expected year of graduation, the graduation rate for all students rose to only 75 percent. Graduation rates for students with disabilities or from racial and ethnic minorities are lower than for the general population. See Figure 2.

Figure 2.

| **On-Time Graduation Rates for Class of 2005-2006**[10] | |
|---|---|
| All Students | 70.4.3% |
| American Indian or Alaska Native (Non-Hispanic) | 48.0% |
| Asian Pacific Islander | 76.5% |
| Black / African-American | 53.6% |
| White | 74.1% |
| Hispanic (may be of any race) | 57.5% |
| Special education | 54.3% |
| Limited English | 55.5% |
| Low income | 58.0% |
| Female | 73.9% |
| Male | 67.1% |

**Source:** Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, www.k12.wa.us?DataAdmin/default.aspx (2001-2002 though 2004-2005) and reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us (2005-2006)

## Damaging Effects of Dropping Out

Dropping out of high school is likely to seriously diminish a person's earning and employment potential. According to a seminal national report on dropping out, *The Silent Epidemic*,[11] high school dropouts:

- Earn $9,200 less per year than high school graduates, and about $1 million less over a lifetime than college graduates on average.
- Are often unable to support themselves.
- Are three times more likely than college graduates to be unemployed.
- Are twice as likely as high school graduates to slip into poverty from one year to the next.

## Initiatives Focus on Partnerships, Prevention and Re-Engagement

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction implemented the Building Bridges Prevention and Retrieval Program supported by a $5 million Legislative appropriation in 2007. In 2007, the Workforce Board recommended and the Governor directed an additional $550,000 of state's discretionary dollars received from the federal Workforce Investment Act (10 Percent Fund) to support dropout prevention and retrieval.

[9] Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, www.k12.wa.us?DataAdmin/default.aspx reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us (2005-2006)

[10] Class of 2005 are the most recent on-time graduation rates available from Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction at the time of printing of this report.

[11] John M. Bridgel and John J. DiIulio, Jr., Karen Burke Morison, *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts*, Civic Enterprises in association with Peter D. Hart Research Associates for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, March 2006.

The strength of this initiative lies in the partnerships between the various entities that serve young people including schools, community-based organizations, Workforce Development Councils, and social service organizations. These efforts need to be expanded to serve more youth: those at risk as well as those who have already dropped out.

While we would like to see more students graduate on time, what is most important is that students graduate. Some students need a little more time to prepare and the Building Bridges program is one method of providing students with alternatives for reconnecting students with an educational program and getting their high school diploma.

DRAFT

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

**Objective 3**
All students graduate ~~on time~~ from high school.

- No later than 2018 every community in the state will have an effective school/community partnership that provides a comprehensive dropout prevention, intervention and re-engagement system for ALL youth, including those who have dropped out or who are at risk of dropping out.

**Steps To Get Us There**

- Expand the Building Bridges Grant Program to serve more youth at-risk of dropping out and to re-engage youth who have dropped out of school.
- Collaborate with education partners to develop state-level performance measures and targets for reducing the dropout rate, increasing the on-time graduation rate and increasing successful re-entry and achievement for students who have dropped out.
- Establish a process for identification, development and replication of best practices statewide.
- Explore changes in school funding that will give schools an incentive to serve at-risk youth.
- Identify and make recommendations to reduce the fiscal, legal and regulatory barriers that prevent coordination of program resources across agencies and community-based organizations to support the development of sustainable dropout prevention, intervention and retrieval partnerships.
- Create stronger program links between Job Corps, and Skills Centers to ensure more Job Corps students receive a high school diploma.
- Identify support services for at-risk youth and their parents, and implement action steps.

DRAFT

**Washington Youth Experience High Unemployment Rates**
Youth in Washington have significantly higher unemployment rates than the general population.[12] Youth from low-income families and from racial and ethnic minorities are the most likely to be unemployed. This is a cause of great concern because of the long-term impacts on an individual's life:

- Experiencing unemployment early in life is more likely to lead to long-term withdrawal from the labor force.[13]
- It is harder to get a job without an established employment history.
- Unemployed youth have fewer opportunities for training that is often obtained on-the job.
- There is evidence that not working during secondary school is associated with lower high school graduation rates and with lower employment rates and earning levels after secondary school.[14]

In Washington state, the unemployment rate for 20-24 year olds was 10.6 percent which was significantly higher than the 6.4 percent unemployment rate of the general population.[15] In this regard, Washington is like most other states and OECD nations.

One might think that due to economic need, youth from lower income families might be more likely to work than youth from middle or upper income families, but the opposite is true, and is compounded by racial disparities. For example, nationwide "only 19 percent of low income black teens worked during 2007 versus nearly one-half of their more affluent white counterparts living in families with incomes above $60,000."[16]

**Why are There so Many Unemployed Youth?**
The high rates of job turnover that are naturally associated with new market entrants could be one factor contributing to high unemployment rates but the majority of youth job "separations" are involuntary, and natural turnover does not explain why youth unemployment tends to be concentrated among certain groups.[17] Another factor could be the lack of desirable job opportunities for youth.[18] The lack of a well-developed system for transitioning youth from school to work contributes to the high unemployment rate for youth.

---

[12] There is no standard definition of "youth" in research on youth unemployment. Generally the term is used to refer to young people approximately 18 to 24 years of age.
[13] OECD Employment Outlook, 1983, Chapter 6.
[14] Sum, Khatiwada, McLaughlin, and Tobar, "The Educational Attainment of the Nation's Young Black Men and their Recent Labor Market Experiences," February 2007.
[15] *American Community Survey, 2006, //factfinder.census.gov* The unemployment rate may understate the problem since it includes only those actively seeking work, please refer to Clark and Summers, "The Dynamics of Youth Unemployment," National Bureau of Economic Research, 1982 and the work of Andrew Sum, Director of the Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University.
[16] Sum, Khatiwada, and Mclaughlin, "The Collapse of the National Teen Job Market and the Case for An Immediate Summer and Year Round Youth Jobs Creation Program," March 2008.
[17] Federal Reserve Board of San Francisco Economic Letter, 2005-15; July 15, 2005, *Age and Education Effects on the Unemployment Rate* and OECD Employment Outlook, 1983, Chapter 6.
[18] Clark and Summers, "The Dynamics of Youth Unemployment," National Bureau of Economic Research, 1982

**How Can We Reduce Youth Unemployment?**
Public education and labor policies can reduce unemployment rates among youth. The 1990 report of the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, *America's Choice: high skills or low wages*!, helped to create public awareness of the youth unemployment issue and spurred the development of a wide number of school-to-work initiatives. Policy initiatives include:

- **Youth apprenticeship** pilots have begun in Washington through the creation of pre-apprenticeship programs in secondary schools. In Washington the average age of an apprentice is approximately 30. We have taken the lead from Germany and other nations with strong apprenticeship systems and relatively low youth unemployment.

- **Career academies** are secondary schools programs that link academic and vocational education to an occupational cluster, such as the aviation high school in Highline. Career academies have been found to be associated with higher employment and earnings after secondary school.[19]

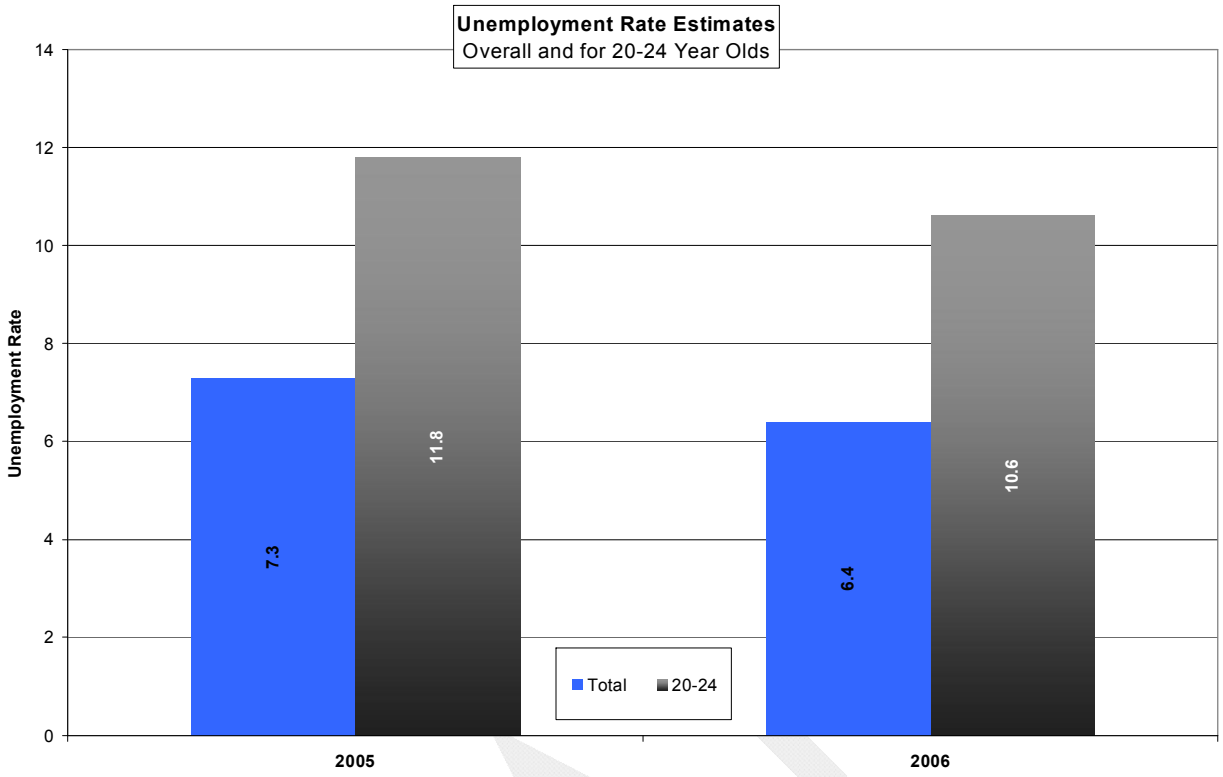
- **Summer employment programs** of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) used to provide 600,000 to 700,000 jobs for primarily economically disadvantaged teens during the summer months. JTPA preceded the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), and earlier federal employment and training acts included a program that provided summer job opportunities to low-income youth. The program was discontinued under WIA in 1998.

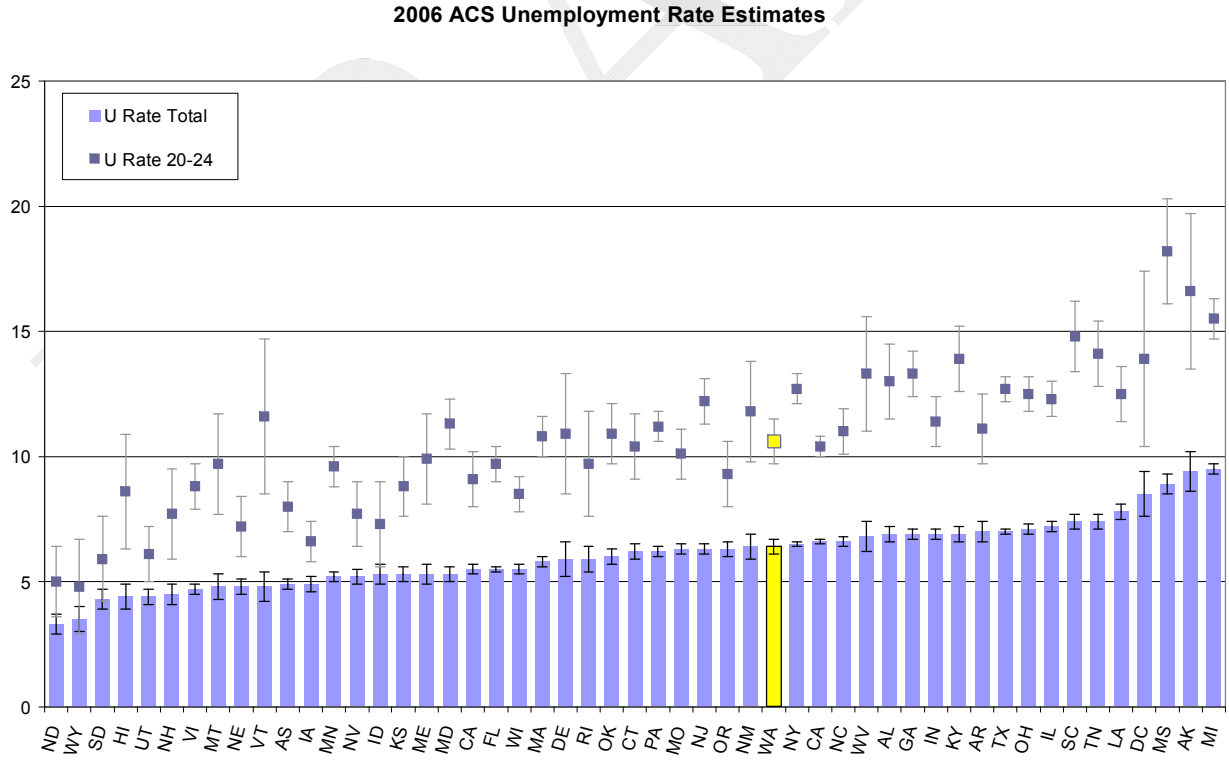
- **Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth Program** is based on a holistic youth development theory that emphasizes treating all aspects of the barriers to employment faced by disadvantaged youth. The Workforce Board's net impact evaluation of the state program, conducted by the Upjohn Institute, found that WIA youth participants had 10 percentage point higher employment and $1,200 more in annual earnings three years after being in the program than similar youth who did not participate in WIA.[20] National funding for the WIA youth program has decreased from $1 billion in 2000 to $940 million in 2007 in nominal dollars.

- **Career and Technical Education** is the oldest and largest youth program dating back to the early part of the 20th century and was formerly known as vocational education. The Workforce Board's net impact evaluation, conducted by the Upjohn Institute, found that completers of career and technical education have a 5 percentage point higher employment rate and $1,600 more in annual earnings three years after graduation than similar students who did not complete career and technical education. Before 2000 the number of students in secondary CTE in Washington rose steadily in keeping with student population growth. However, after 2000, student enrollment in CTE remained flat, and in 2006 student enrollment declined. This shows that since 2000 the number of students enrolling in CTE has been declining on a per capita basis.[21]

---

[19] Kemple, "Career Academies: Impacts on Labor Market Outcomes and Educational Attainment" Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 2004.
[20] "Workforce Training Results: 2006."
[21] Washington State Office of Financial Management, *2007 Data Book*, "Enrollment Trends in Workforce Education Programs" http://www.ofm.wa.gov/databook/education/et26.asp


Unemployment Rate Estimates
Overall and for 20-24 Year Olds
Unemployment Rate
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0
7.3
11.8
6.4
10.6
Total
20-24
2005
2006


2006 ACS Unemployment Rate Estimates
U Rate Total
U Rate 20-24
25
20
15
10
5
0
ND WY SD HI UT NH VI MT NE VT AS IA MN NV ID KS ME MD CA FL WI MA DE RI OK CT PA MO NJ OR NM WA NY CA NC WV AL GA IN KY AR TX OH IL SC TN LA DC MS AK MI

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

**Objective 4**
Reduce unemployment rates among older youth, and improve their career prospects.

- No later than 2018, there is a comprehensive state system to help unemployed older youth reconnect with work and/or further education opportunities.

**Steps To Get Us There**

- Create summer youth employment programs.
- Connect unemployed youth to expert "navigators" who can guide them to postsecondary resources and work experience opportunities.
- Seek a WIA I-B Youth waiver or WIA Adult 18-24 waiver for the maximum age eligibility and supplement these resources with state funds.
- Develop I-BEST opportunities specifically for older youth.
- Ensure the Building Bridges Grant programs includes a strong component for re-engaging youth 21 years of age and under to reconnect with education to obtain a high school diploma.
- Connect disadvantaged youth to AmeriCorps and Service Corps opportunities.

DRAFT

## Adult Goal and Summary of Objectives

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

**Objective 1** (See discussion on pages 21 – 24)
Increase the number of adults who have at least one year of postsecondary training.

No later than 2018:

- (Target to be determined) More adults attain at least one year of postsecondary training and a credential.
- Washington state covers the tuition costs for the 13th year for workforce education students.
- (Target to be determined) ~~Fewer individuals report leaving postsecondary training with unmet needs for support services.~~ More individuals receive the support services they need to enter and complete postsecondary training.
- (Insert Student Achievement target if appropriate.) More students achieve critical milestones at community and technical college programs as evidenced by the Student Achievement Initiative.

**Objective 2** (See discussion on pages 26-28)
Postsecondary education and training provides effective opportunities for going in and out of training over the course of life-long learning.

No later than 2018:

- The majority of working adults ~~are~~ engage~~d~~ in training each year, including workplace-based learning.

**Objective 3** (See discussion on pages 30 – 33, incomplete)
~~Adults with barriers to employment and training are provided with pathways into jobs that enable self-sufficiency.~~ Adults with barriers to employment and training enter education and career pathways that lead to self-sufficiency.

No later than 2018:

- (Target to be determined) More adults with barriers to employment and training become employed in middle and higher wage jobs.
- The majority of Adult Basic Education programs at community and technical colleges are integrated with occupational skills training.

**Objective 4** (See discussion on page 35, incomplete)
The WorkSource system provides integrated and effective customer service without barriers associated with ~~siloed~~ separate, individual programs.

No later than 2018:

- WorkSource is a functionally integrated service delivery system that measurably improves the employability of customers.

DRAFT

**More Adults Need Postsecondary Education and Training**

> *"For more than 40 years, the conventional wisdom has been that the best antipoverty strategy is to help the unemployed get jobs. And while work is a precondition to escaping poverty, getting a job is not the problem that it once was for most segments of the population, as the unemployment rate has remained historically low for a decade—between 4 percent and 6 percent. Rather, the key problems facing most poor people today are that they are working in jobs that don't pay enough and that they are not advancing up the career ladder."*[22]

The 2005 "Tipping Point" study found that people who complete at least one year of postsecondary education and obtain a certificate or credential have the best chance at supporting themselves and their families compared to those that do not have this level of education.[23] And yet, about 1.6 million adults in Washington have a high school degree or less as their highest level of educational attainment, and many of these adults have low literacy levels. These individuals have limited career opportunities. At the same time, our statewide employer surveys show that employers have difficulty recruiting qualified applicants, particularly those with mid-level education and training credentials.

**Increasing Education Attainment has Multiple Benefits**

Increased levels of educational attainment lead to increased earnings over a lifetime and increased tax revenues.[24] Workforce Board evaluations of workforce education programs consistently show that students participating in workforce education programs earn more during their lifetimes than similar individuals who do not participate in these programs, and tax receipts outweigh the public costs.

Conversely, individuals with the lowest skill educational levels have trouble obtaining and retaining employment. There are other serious consequences related to health, inequality and crime. Adult literacy surveys show that adults with the lowest levels of literacy "work fewer hours, earn lower wages, and are more likely to live in poverty than adults having higher literacy levels."[25] Education and health are linked. Studies show that educational background and opportunity is a "social determinant of health."[26] Since students who do not fare well in our education system are over-represented among racial and ethnic minorities, these racial and ethnic minorities are also at greater risk of poor health outcomes.

---

[22] Betsy L.Tessler and David Seith, "From Getting By to Getting Ahead: Navigating Career Advancement for Low-Wage Workers," October 2007, page xi.

[23] David Prince, "Building Pathways to Success for Low-Skill Adult Students: Lessons for Community College Policy and Practice from a Longitudinal Student Tracking Study *(The "Tipping Point" Research*)" Research Report No. 06-2 Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, April 2005.

[24] Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, "Education Pays," April 15, 2008 http://www.bls.gov/emp/emptab7.htm

[25] Debra B. Bragg, Christine Bremer, Marisa Castellano, Catherine Kirby, Ann Mavis, Donna Schaad, Judith Sunderman, "A Cross-Case Analysis of Career pathway Programs that Link Low-skilled Adults to Family-Sustaining Wage Careers," National Research Center for Career and Technical Education, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, May 9, 2007.

[26] Dr. Maxine Hayes, M.P.H, PowerPoint presentation "Every Student Successful Summit: Exploring Policies to Examine Health Disparities and the Academic Achievement Gap," May 18, 2007, found at: http://www.sboh.wa.gov/ESS/index.htm

Those in our state's prison system tend to have much lower levels of education than the general population. Eight-three percent of females and 71 percent of males that enter the Department of Corrections prisons have less than a 9th grade level education.[27] We need to ensure more low-skilled adults attain higher levels of education for their benefit and the well-being and safety of our society.

**Serving Older, Career-Focused Students**

A number of adults have already recognized the need to return to school. The image of college campuses filled with students fresh out of high school does not compare with reality at most postsecondary campuses. In 2005 in Washington, 32 percent of students in four-year public baccalaureate institutions were 25 or older; with 42 percent at independent four-year institutions, and 52 percent at community and technical colleges.[28]

In 2006–2007 there were more than 450,000 students enrolled at community and technical colleges and over 45 percent of these students were enrolled in workforce education to either gain skills to obtain a job or upgrade skills to retain a job.[29]

*The term "**nontraditional student**" is not a precise one, although age and part-time status (which often go together) are common defining characteristics. Students may be considered non-traditional on a continuum basis, meaning they have one or more of the following characteristics:*

- *Delays enrollment (does not enter postsecondary education in the same calendar year that he or she finished high school).*
- *Attends part time for at least part of the academic year.*
- *Works full time (35 hours or more per week) while enrolled;*
- *Is considered financially independent for purposes of determining eligibility for financial aid.*
- *Has dependents other than a spouse (usually children, but sometimes others).*
- *Is a single parent (either not married or married but separated and has dependents).*
- *Does not have a high school diploma (completed high school with a GED or other high school completion certificate or did not finish high school).*

*According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) almost three-quarters of U.S. undergraduates are in some way "nontraditional."* [30]

Even though currently serving older students, our education system has not fully adjusted to meet their needs. These barriers can prevent students from completing their programs, transitioning to employment, and are likely to block enrollment for a number of potential students. Our evaluations of workforce programs have found that the major barriers to enrollment and completion are financial needs. Also Successful transition to employment might be hindered by insufficient information about job opening for graduates.[31]

If we are to increase the number of people who reach the "Tipping Point" and transition successfully to work (or better work) then we must concentrate efforts in these key areas:

---

[27] Department of Corrections, GMAP Presentation, November 1, 2006.
[28] HECB. Key Facts About Higher Education in Washington, February 2007.
[29] SBCTC, Annual Report on Enrollment and Student Demographic for 2006-2007.
[30] National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, "Special Analysis 2002: Nontraditional Undergraduates." http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2002/analyses/nontraditional/sa01.asp
[31] Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, *Workforce Training Results*, 2006.

- Communicate the long-term benefits of postsecondary education and training
- Provide financial aid and support services that overcome barriers to access and retention
- Develop a variety of educational delivery modes, such as expanding distance (or e-learning) and workplace learning options
- Expand apprenticeship programs so more students can "earn while they learn"
- Expand program capacity to meet the increased demand
- Work with targeted populations to overcome specific barriers to accessing and completing education and training
- Develop mechanisms to ensure the success of adults in completing their education and transitioning to work, or better work

**Student Achievement Initiative**
SBCTC has begun a major effort to measure and reward community and technical colleges for student improvements, the Student Achievement Initiative (STA). The STA will measure incremental gains and progress that focus on student achievement. The measures will quantify each college's annual improvement and help each college to develop and share with other colleges the practices and strategies that are most effective in advancing student achievement.

The STA examines six "momentum" points that represent critical steps in student progress. Two of the points directly measure first year college-level progress. They are gained for earning the first 15 and the first 30 college-level credits. Another point is earned for the first five college-level credits in a math class that meets the requirement for computation (applied degree) or quantitative reasoning (transfer degree). These points presume levels of college readiness. Since not all students are college-ready, two momentum points are measured for advancing through adult basic education and English as a Second Language and completing pre-college English and math to become college-ready.

"Start-up" funds will be allocated to the colleges in the first year and incentive funding will be awarded after 2008-2009. SBCTC will conduct an evaluation of the whole program to test its success.

**Financial Issues Pose the Greatest Barriers to Access and Completion**
A 2006 Workforce Board study found that the greatest barriers to access and completion for students in workforce education programs relate to financial issues associated with paying tuition, fees and books, and paying for services such as childcare and transportation. The study also found that when we total the various federal and state financial aid programs, there is still a significant amount of unmet student need. In 2006 unmet need for students in workforce education programs totaled $97 million. Even when we account for the $23 million in financial aid provided through the new Opportunity Grant program, we still fall far short of meeting students' financial needs.

Washington has a unique Opportunity Grant program that provides low-income workforce education entering high employer demand programs of study that prepare students for high-wage jobs. The program provides financial aid for tuition and support services in emergency circumstances. This program serves a large number of racial and ethnic minorities and students with disabilities. This is not surprising as these populations are over-represented among low-income students. Early results are favorable, showing increased student retention.

DRAFT

Following favorable results of a pilot program, the Legislature provided funds to expand eligibility of the State Need Grant to students who attend less than half time. Many working adults and those with dependents can often only participate in postsecondary education on a part-time basis. The expansion of aid is crucial to these types of students. The 2007 Legislature capped funding at $1 million.

Workforce Board evaluations of Adult Basic Education show that employment and earnings outcomes on average do not improve unless basic education is combined with occupational skills training. All community and technical colleges have started delivering I-BEST that combines basic skills with occupational skills, and there are very promising results. However, there are still many Adult Basic Education programs that provide few links and no integration with occupations skills training.

**Washington's Career Bridge**

The Workforce Board has created *Washington Career Bridge* (insert link). Career Bridge provides information on most workforce training programs in Washington, including programs at community and technical colleges, private career colleges, apprenticeship programs, and many four-year colleges and university programs as well. Information includes cost, length, student characteristics, and employment and earnings results. It also provides occupational information, and links to a variety of other information sources related to education and employment such as financial aid and occupational projections.

*Washington Career Bridge* is one part of a communication strategy to inform adults in Washington of the benefits of further education. In addition to web resources, stakeholders should band together to form a comprehensive communication campaign.

DRAFT

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

**Objective 1**
Increase the number of adults who have at least one year of postsecondary training.

No later than 2018:

- (Target to be determined) More adults attain at least one year of postsecondary training and a credential.
- Washington state covers the tuition costs for the 13th year for workforce education students.
- (Target to be determined) ~~Fewer individuals report leaving postsecondary training with unmet needs for support services.~~ More individuals receive the support services they need to enter and complete postsecondary training.
- (Insert Student Achievement target if appropriate.) More students achieve critical milestones at community and technical college programs as evidenced by the Student Achievement Initiative.

**Steps To Get Us There**

- Provide more financial aid and support services to enable students to enroll in and complete at least one year of postsecondary training and receive a credential, including:
    - Expand the Opportunity Grant program and include support services.
    - Provide the first five credits of postsecondary training free for workforce students who earn less than the median family income.
- Establish more industry-based credentials in occupational and general workplace skills demanded by employers for students that complete one-year of training and develop more one year certificated programs.
- Provide more workforce education students with access to work-based learning and career and labor market information.
- Create easy to navigate postsecondary education and training and career websites, including financial aid and support services.
- Conduct an ongoing marketing campaign to inform the general public about the employment and earnings benefits of postsecondary training, especially in high employer demand programs of study.

DRAFT

**Expanding Options for Lifelong Learning**
We need to develop a variety of options that make it easier to participate in postsecondary education and training programs. These options include distance learning and workplace-based learning. We also need to create incentives for adults to enter an educational program and for employers to support their employees along their lifelong learning path.

The Workforce Board's statewide employer survey indicates that 60 percent of employers in Washington provide at least four hours of education and training to one or more employer. While many employers provide training to some employees, they often concentrate on employees in higher positions, and training does not usually lead to a formal credential. A FutureWorks report outlines three facts related to adult education:[32]

- The number of working adults pursuing any type of training or education already outnumbers traditional students 6 to 1. (U.S.)
- Much adult education and training is focused on non-degree continuing education or occupational training that does not result in formal credentials.
- In the current employment market, recognized employment credentials are key.

The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) specializes in promoting and developing strategies that enhance education and training options for adult learners. CAEL notes that adult learners have unique needs including the needs for "institutional flexibility in curricular and support services, academic and motivational advising supportive of their life and career goals, and recognition of experience and work-based learning already obtained."[33]

**Lifelong Learning Accounts**
CAEL selected Washington to pilot a new system for funding education and training for working adults. Washington State Lifelong Learnings Accounts (LiLAs) provide a unique opportunity for employers and employees to work together to finance career-related education and training. LiLAs are employee-owned, employer-matched savings accounts. This type of co-investment makes education more affordable for both parties. The concept is similar to the 401(K) retirement accounts in that the employer matches the employee's contributions; however, LiLA funds are used for education and training.

The Workforce Board is leading the pilot with state and local partners. This is a wonderful recruitment tool for employers, with potential to support the development of a skilled workforce. The program could be strengthened if proposals in Congress to provide a tax credit to participating employers are successful.

[32] Brian Bosworth and Sylvia Choitz, "Held Back: How Student Aid Programs Fail Working Adults," FutureWorks, Belmont Massachusetts, April 2002.
[33] "Serving Adult Learners in Higher Education: Principles of Effectiveness," Council on Adult and Experiential Learning, 2000.

**Alternative Paths to Baccalaureate Degrees**
Washington's transfer and articulation system compares favorably to most other states. About 40 percent of students earning bachelors degrees from four-year public baccalaureate institutions in Washington transferred from a community and technical college.[34] However, there is room to improve efficiency by increasing the statewide transfer agreements, the number of transferrable credits, and getting information to students to help them make informed decisions.

**Applied Baccalaureate Degrees**
For students who obtain a two-year vocational degree, options for transferring these credits to count towards a bachelor's degree have been limited. While independent four-year schools have supplied a broader array of baccalaureate options that accept technical credits, public baccalaureate degree providers in Washington have been less likely to accept these credits. At the same time students and their employers attest to the need for further specialization or management skills that can be provided through a four-year degree. In response the state legislature has funded seven pilots to create baccalaureate degree options for students with technical degrees. Those under pilot are:

- Bellevue Community College – Bachelor of Applied Science in Radiation and Imaging Sciences
- Columbia Basin College - Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Management
- Lake Washington Technical College – Bachelor of Technology in Applied Design
- Peninsula College – Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Management
- Olympic College – Bachelor of Science in Nursing
- Seattle Central Community College - Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Behavioral Science
- South Seattle Community College – Bachelor of Applied Science in Hospitality Management

**Granting Credit for Prior Learning**
In addition to developing applied baccalaureate degrees, four-year institutions in Washington should consider expanding the type and quantify of credits that they grant for prior learning. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges proposes expanding prior learning credits to major courses of study, not just electives, and expanding the number of credits permitted from 15 to 22.

**Developing Web-Based Advising**
A major initiative of the Higher Education Coordinating Board results from the Master Plan for Higher Education is the development a web-based advising system, the *Academic GPS*. A significant number of transfer students often take extra, unnecessary classes to attain their degrees and this is a waste of time and money for the students and the schools. The aim for the *Academic GPS* is to guide students as they set their academic goals. It will accept a variety of external data (e.g., placement scores, degree audit results, course scheduling information) and facilitate degree planning.

[34] State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Role of Transfer in the Bachelor's Degree at Washington Public Baccalaureate Institutions, June 2003.

**Other Transfer and Efficiency Issues**

There are a variety of methods for improving the efficiency of students' postsecondary education experience. Issues that need further exploration include:

- Development of more modularized curricula with entry and exit points along a career preparation continuum
- Development of common core curricula and/or foundation courses that can serve more than one career preparation program at more than one school.
- Transfer of credits between two-year public and two-year private schools.
- Transfer of credits from apprenticeship programs to count towards associate and baccalaureate degrees.
- Transfer of credits towards postsecondary degrees for students in secondary career and technical education.

DRAFT

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

**Objective 2**
Postsecondary education and training provides effective opportunities for going in and out of training over the course of life-long learning.

No later than 2018:
- The majority of working adults ~~are~~ engage~~d~~ in training each year, including in workplace-based learning.

**Steps To Get Us There**
- Identify and implement best practice models for working adults to gain further education and training at the workplace, including through digital learning.
- Develop public/private financial aid support to assist working adults to gain further education and training credentials including:
  - Lifelong Learning Accounts (LiLas).
  - Increasing the number of part-time, working students who can receive the state-need grant.
- Develop more Applied Baccalaureate degrees to create four-year degree options for students that complete technical associate degrees.
- Develop more statewide direct transfer agreements and articulation agreements between two-year and four-year schools, and between private schools and public schools.

DRAFT

**Overcoming Barriers to Education and Employment for Target Populations**
Our workforce development system needs to serve all adults and that includes adults with barriers to further education and employment. Communities of color, people with disabilities, vets, older workers, women, and former inmates are over-represented among low-income populations and those with low educational attainment. We need to customize our programs to provide the best possible service to every person.

**Recognizing and Developing Skills for Refugees and Immigrants**
A study by the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County on career advancement for refugees and immigrants found that both language proficiency and an employee's drive and attitude are essential for job retention and promotion.[35] Employers also reported that other important factors are employees' sense of security, job skills, and their family support system. Within the education and training system, integrating English as a second language with occupational skills training, is one key strategy to overcome language deficiencies of many refugees and recent immigrants. Workforce programs need to improve soft skill development and forge stronger ties with community-based organizations that can help to provide or develop access to support services.

Highline Community College in partnership with BuRSST for Prosperity is developing the Gateway Center. This is a program to help immigrants with prior medical training become recertified to fill high-demand nursing and healthcare jobs in our state. The Center will provide short-term professional and ESL classes, career coaching, and assistance with recertification process. These efforts need to be expanded to assist refugees and immigrants to sustain living-wage careers.

**Retaining Older Adults**
The state's percentage of older adults age 55 and over is expected to increase from 16 percent in 2005 to 22 percent of the labor force in 2030. While many older workers wish to retire, others will wish to stay in the labor force a few more years. Some of these workers will need minor upgrading of skills while others will need substantial retraining to meet changing job requirements. Either way, as the growth in the labor force grows, employers and state and local agencies will need to work together to entice older workers to stay, and develop strategies for skill upgrades.

Examples of Washington companies that have programs to retain older workers:[36]

- Weyerhaeuser: Delayed-retirement program where employees may work part time while still accumulating a pension and enjoying company-paid health insurance.
- Group Health: Nurses who are five years from retirement have opportunities to mentor and teach, as well as do part-time work after retirement.
- Boeing: Offers job-sharing, telecommuting and contract work.

The 2008 report of the Taskforce on the Aging of the American Workforce at the U.S. Department of Labor outlines strategies in seven key areas that could form the basis for state and local initiatives to retain older workers:[37]

---

[35] Workforce Development Council of Seattle King-County by contract with the Athena Institute and the Refugee Resettlement Office, Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County Research Project: Employer Strategies for Retaining and Promoting Refugees and Immigrants," January 2004.
[36] Seattle Times article by Marsha King, "Companies Find Ways of Retaining Expertise of Older Workers," April 9, 2008.

- Legal and regulatory issues (e.g. pension plans, Social Security benefits, tax policy with respect to retirement savings, and unemployment programs).
- Expanding knowledge on older workers.
- Outreach and education efforts.
- Facilitating self-employment for older workers.
- Flexible work arrangements and customized employment for older workers.
- Tools and technical assistance to support older worker employment.
- Retirement and financial literacy education

**Smoothing Transitions for Veterans**
As veterans return from Iraq and Afghanistan and other military operations, there is an increasing need for workforce development services for veterans. Vets need to transfer their skills to the civilian workforce, and we need to help them by creating better crosswalks between military education and the general education and training system. We also need to partner with other agencies serving vets, to provide a seamless system and promote the best education and earnings outcomes for those that have served their country.

**Reducing Barriers to Employment for People with Disabilities**
Many people with disabilities, who account for 16 percent of the state's working-age population, would like to work, but labor force participation for this population has declined over time. The Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) made great strides in 2007 by eliminating the waiting list of customers. DVR's five-year plan details strategies for serving customers with disabilities. Some strategies are:

- Reaching out to more people with disabilities, not just the hardest to serve
- Reassessing when, where, and how they serve customers
- Creating more consistency in services.
- Enhancing partnerships with other state, local and private organizations that deliver services to individuals with disabilities.[38]

**Improving Education and Employment for Communities of Color**
Between 2000 and 2030, all non-white groups are expected to grow faster than whites.[39] With Washington's population becoming increasing racially and ethnically diverse we need to pay particular attention to educational levels of future workers. Those from non-white racial backgrounds and Hispanics tend to have lower educational levels than non-Hispanic whites. In 2006, while 92 percent of the non-Hispanic whites 25 years or older had completed high school or its equivalency, only 56 percent of Hispanics and 78 percent of persons from non-white racial backgrounds had done so.[40]

---

[37] U. S. Department of Labor, "Report of the Taskforce on Aging of the American Workforce," February 2008 found at: http://www.doleta.gov/reports/FINAL_Taskforce_Report_2-11-08.pdf
[38] Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, "A Strategic Plan for 2009-2013" see http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/hrsa/dvr/DVR%20Strategic%20Plan%202009-13.pdf
[39] OFM reported on five major race groups: White only, Black only, American Indian/Alaskan Native only, Asian/Pacific Islander only, and Two or More (i.e., multi-racial). Unless otherwise indicated people from the different racial groups can be either from Hispanic or non-Hispanic origin. Further, people of Hispanic origin can be of any race.
[40] American Community Survey for 2006, Table S0201 Selected Population Profile.

Lower levels of education and skills in addition to racial and ethnic discrimination have negatively affected the labor market experiences of large percentages of individuals from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds. They tend to earn less and are underrepresented in high level positions. These education and employment trends are likely to continue unless we instigate new policies that address issues of access, discrimination and success in workforce programs.

Another key issue for Asian Americans is the disaggregation of data for the "Asian and Pacific Islander" classification. This is necessary to interpret data accurately and develop policy solutions. As with all categories of race and ethnicity, there is great diversity in the Asian and Pacific Islander communities. While the "Asian" group does well in education outcomes according to national and state data, anecdotal information from immigrants of specific Asian countries often tell a different story. National and state policymakers should explore different types of data collection to better serve the needs of the Asian and Pacific Islander communities.

**Issues for Ex-Offenders**

According to the Department of Corrections (DOC), about 8,500 offenders return to the community from Washington prisons each year after completing their sentences. A study of the Washington State Institute of Public Policy estimates that approximately 54 percent of these offenders will commit a new felony within 13 years. Employment has a positive effect in terms of reducing recidivism for former prisoners, and yet they face multiple barriers to gaining employment. An MDRC report highlights some of the major issues:[41]

- Employers are reluctant to hire someone with a prison record
- Former prisoners often have low levels of educational attainment
- Former prisoners often have a limited work history
- Former prisoners often have competing demands from drug treatment programs and curfews or other restrictions on mobility.

There are also limited occupations to choose from as several occupations preclude hiring individuals with prison records such as most occupations in the health care industry.

Recognizing the need to increase efforts to help former prisoners' successful re-entry into the community, the 2007 Legislature passed ESSB 6157. In addition to requesting the Department of Corrections to create a long-term plan, the bill provided for four pilot programs to be administered by the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, and issued funds to counties with the purpose of identifying offenders' needs, and connecting offenders with needed resources and services that support successful transition to the community.

The grant programs are to include programs with proven. Education and training plays a large role. Career and technical education, basic education and correctional industries programs lead to reduced recidivism rates of 9 percent, 7.5 percent and 5.9 percent respectively, and have proven cost benefits to both the individual and the community.[42] It will be essential to continue cross agency work to best meet the workforce needs of ex-offenders and their communities.

---

[41] Dan Bloom , Cindy Redcross , Janine Zweig (Urban Institute), Gilda Azurdia, "Transitional Jobs for Ex-Prisoners: Early Impacts from a Random Assignment Evaluation of the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) Prisoner Reentry Program, MDRC, November 2007.

[42] Steve Aos, "Evidence-Based Public Policy Options to Reduce Future Prison Construction, Criminal Justice Costs, and Crime Rates, October 2006, page

**Using an Online Cost of Living Calculator to Promote Self-Sufficiency**
A new online resource is providing a way to help low-income customers in the WorkSource system help themselves. The Washington State Self-Sufficiency calculator links Washingtonians with valuable information regarding work support services including child care assistance, housing subsidies and food stamps. Launched in October 2007, the Washington State Self Sufficiency Calculator builds on a previous calculator developed by the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County. A $100,000 grant from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, and contributions from a partnership of Workforce Development Councils statewide and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges provided funds to develop the site. We need to promote wider use of the calculator among job-seekers and case managers to test different strategies for achieving financial, career and education goals. See: http://www.thecalculator.org/

By concentrating on how to improve outcomes for low-income populations, we will likely also be improving outcomes for targeted populations. This is because the targeted groups are over-represented in our low-income population.

DRAFT

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

**Objective 3**

~~Adults with barriers to employment and training are provided with pathways into jobs that enable self-sufficiency.~~
Adults with barriers to employment and training enter education and career pathways that lead to self-sufficiency.

No later than 2018:

- (Target to be determined) More adults with barriers to employment and training become employed in middle and higher wage jobs.
- The majority of Adult Basic Education programs at community and technical colleges are integrated with occupational skills training.

**Steps To Get Us There**

- Expand the use of the self-sufficiency calculator to all workforce development councils, and provide training for frontline staff.
- Expand the number of Adult Basic Education programs that integrate occupational skills training through the I-BEST model.
- Expand use of the Food Stamps Education and Training program for customers with the greatest barriers to employment.
- ~~Develop a tool box that identifies competencies~~ Enhance professional development and provide credentials for career coaching, mentoring, and instruction in life skills and employability skills for ~~use by~~ WorkSource staff, training institutions, community-based organizations, employers, and others.
- Enhance employment and training options for targeted populations (people of color, people with disabilities and women), ex-offenders, and veterans.
- Ensure that workforce development services are fully accessible for all adults with disabilities.
- Develop a system to provide post-employment services to adults to improve work retention and career advancement.

DRAFT

**Working Together to Serve Students and Job Seekers**

The Workforce Board adopted the Washington Workforce Compact in Bremerton on September 26, 2007. The *Compact* includes the following regarding barrier removal:

> Sometimes, the barriers that stand in the way of our customers achieving their goals are of our own making. Not that they are intentional. But sometimes, individual program objectives bump up against the policies or practices of another program in a way that is less than optimal for our customers. For example, the administrative rules of one program may make sense in the context of that program, but when put together with the administrative rules of another program, customers may be faced with conflicting sets of procedures.
>
> The partners to this *Compact* commit to a collective effort to identify and remove government or other barriers that stand in the way of serving our customers. Such barriers may include, but are not limited to policies, practices, regulations, or performance measures. What appear as barriers may exist for a good reason. This must be considered. But we commit to identifying and removing those barriers that don't make sense from the perspective of the goals we are trying to achieve for our customers.

Through interviews and surveys the Workforce Board has begun collecting information from state and local agencies, and their customers, to identify barriers and develop solutions to eliminate them. The initial barriers to be addressed are:

1. The Need for Streamlined "Co-Enrollment" Processes
2. The Need for Staff Cross-Training
3. The Value of Co-locating Staff Among Workforce Partners
4. The Need for Consistency in Performance Measures

DRAFT

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

**Objective 4**

The WorkSource system provides integrated and effective customer service without barriers associated with ~~siloed~~ separate, individual programs.

No later than 2018:
WorkSource is a functionally integrated service delivery system that measurably improves the employability of customers.

**Steps To Get Us There**

- Identify barriers to integrated customer service and implement solutions.
- Increase integration of WorkSource partner programs through methods such as co-enrollments and co-locations among WorkSource partner programs.
- Increase the use of consistent performance measures among WorkSource partner programs.
- Improve the integration of assessments, counseling, employment services, and training in the WorkSource system.
- Improve linkages with community-based organizations, especially those that serve target populations, ex-offenders, and veterans.
- Identify opportunities for partnership that will provide resources to serve more customers in the workforce development system.

DRAFT

## Industry Goal and Summary of Objectives

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

**Objective 1** (See discussion on page 38)
The workforce development system supplies the number of newly prepared workers needed to meet current and emerging employer needs.

No later than 2018:

- Raise mid-level degrees and certificates to 36,200 annually, an increase of 9,400 degrees and certificates annually.

**Objective 2** (See discussion on page 40 - 41)
The workforce development system strengthens Washington's economy, focusing on strategic industry clusters as a central organizing principle.

No later than 2018:

- Washington's workforce and economic development programs have established track records of effective service to the strategic industry clusters in Washington.
- Washington's workforce development system prepares the number of workers needed to fill job openings in strategic industry clusters.

**Objective 3** (See discussion on page 43, incomplete)
Current and dislocated workers, and job seekers receive education and training that builds competitive skills and businesses.

No later than 2018:

- A majority of mid- and lower-wage employees receive training from either their employers or the workforce development system.
- Dislocated worker programs are easy to navigate and enable good wage replacement results.

DRAFT

## Increasing Capacity in Mid-Level Training is a Must

> *"We must be second to no other nation in educational attainment and in discovery and innovation, or economic security and the quality of life in our communities will deteriorate."*
>
> White Paper for Presidential Candidates, State Higher Education Executive Officers 2008

Meeting the workforce needs of industry will require a significant expansion in the numbers of individuals who receive mid-level education and training, at least one year and up to but less than four years of postsecondary training. Consistent with previous surveys, the Workforce Board 2007 statewide survey of employers in Washington report that more employers have difficulty in recruiting people with mid-level training, specifically those with vocational certificates and degrees than any other type of education. (See Figure 3) Our gap analysis estimates that we are meeting only 77 percent of employer demand for workers with mid-level training. To meet our workforce need we must increase capacity in mid-level programs, inform potential students, youth and adults of benefits of such training, and encourage more employers to offer education and training to advance their employees.

Figure 3

**Number and Percent of Employers with Difficulty Hiring Qualified Workers, Results by Education Level**

| **Education Levels** | **Estimated Number of Employers With Difficulty Hiring** | **Percent of Employers With Difficulty Hiring** |
|---|---|---|
| | | **2007** |
| Neither a high school diploma or GED | 15,000 | 8% |
| High school diploma or GED | 25,600 | 13% |
| Some college course work | 43,400 | 22% |
| Vocational certificate | 36,000 | 18% |
| Vocational associate degree | 27,700 | 14% |
| Academic associate degree | 19,900 | 10% |
| Baccalaureate degree | 24,900 | 13% |
| Masters degree | 15,000 | 8% |
| Doctoral or professional degree | 10,700 | 6% |

The Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council and its administrative arm at the Department of Labor and Industries support registered apprenticeship training around the state. Although most of the current apprenticeship program in the state are in the construction trades, the apprenticeship training model has been successfully used in several other industry sectors and it could be a useful model of training for a wide variety of occupations.

The 2008 Legislature provided funds to expand apprenticeship training programs across the state. This is critical for meeting employers' needs for skilledworkers. Apprenticeships also suit many adult workers who would not enter a traditional education environment because of various reasons that could include: financial barriers such as the need to keep working to support dependents, and/or former negative experiences with traditional education systems.

DRAFT

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

**Objective 1**
The workforce development system supplies the number of newly prepared workers to meet current and emerging employer needs.

- No later than 2018, raise mid-level degrees and certificates to 36,200 annually, an increase of 9,400 degrees and certificates annually.

**Steps To Get Us There**
- Increase annual capacity in mid-level education and training programs (greater than one year but less than four years) by 9,400 degrees and certificates.
- Expand apprenticeship training opportunities and recruitment of employers who hire apprentices for traditional and non-traditional programs.

DRAFT

**Coordinating Workforce and Economic Development**
In addition to expanding mid-level training capacity, Governor Gregoire's action plan to grow Washington's jobs and economy, outlined in the "The Next Washington," called for improved partnerships among workforce and economic development at the state and regional levels. Working to strengthen industry clusters throughout Washington is one strategy that holds vast promise for strengthening our economy and offering our residents excellent job opportunities.

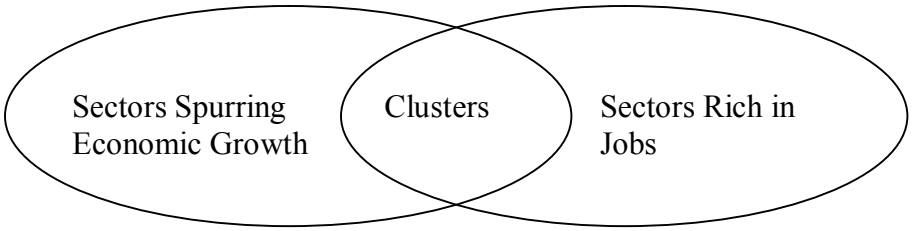
**What is an Industry Cluster?**
An Industry Cluster is the term for "a geographic concentration of interdependent competitive firms that do business with each other, including firms that sell inside and outside of the geographic region as well as support firms that supply new materials, components, and business services, and other institutions including government and education." It includes upstream suppliers of inputs—such as firms that supply materials and equipment, and downstream customers, including other firms. It also includes related entities that shape the environment within which the industry operates—such as government regulatory bodies. The key characteristic is inter-relatedness."[43]

Local, state, and national economies are characterized by prominent pockets of unusual economic success—entertainment in Los Angeles, shoes in Northern Italy, pharmaceuticals in Philadelphia. We have many such examples in Washington—wine in Walla Walla, software east of Lake Washington, aerospace in Snohomish and King counties. Much of the world's economic success is situated in such localized concentrations of economic star power.

Although we live in an increasingly global economy, location still matters. Different locations have different advantages and disadvantages for particular industries. Locations vary in factor inputs such as natural resources, human capital, and physical infrastructure, supporting institutions such as education and research institutions; and access to suppliers and to markets. Over time, economic concentrations emerge where these factors are particularly favorable for a given industry. Sometimes too, chance plays a role, such as the birthplace of a single visionary entrepreneur.[44]

We should focus on clusters because that is where economic growth is most likely to occur and where innovation is most likely to begin. Focusing on clusters also makes special sense for coordinating workforce and economic development since clusters are sectors of the economy where workforce and economic development overlap.

[43] In 2007, the Governor's Policy Office convened a work group that developed definitions for the terms "cluster," "sector," and related terms. This definition and discussion relies on the work of Michael E. Porter. E.g.; see, Clusters and Competition: New Agendas for Companies, Governments, and Institutions, Chapter 7 of On Competition, Michael E. Porter, Harvard Business School Press, Cambridge, MA, 1998.
[44] For further discussion see paper by Bryan Wilson, "Skills for the Next Washington" White Paper, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, 2008.




Government can assist clusters by helping to provide factors of production and alleviate bottlenecks, such as skill shortages, that impede cluster growth. Government can provide public goods, such as education, roads, and water and sewer systems, that are of value to many firms because their benefits are not limited to the particular firms or individuals that directly pay for the good or service. By focusing on providing public goods for clusters, rather than on resources for individual firms, government can avoid entering into unfair competition. Government can instead assist all firms that face similar needs.

In targeting clusters, there is no need for government to guess at which industry sector will emerge to be the next big thing. Cluster strategy directs government to target industry sectors that the private market has already identified as competitive for that geographic location. This is not to say that a focus on emerging industries or innovation has no place in cluster strategy; far from it. It suggests that a place to focus is on emerging industries and innovations that are inter-connected with a cluster's core industry. An example is building university research capacity in automotive technology in a geographic area with an existing automobile manufacturing cluster. Governments and others would be wise, however, to exercise caution before expending resources to build a cluster where one does not exist, potentially competing with other geographic areas where the market has already demonstrated a competitive advantage.

**Coordinating Workforce and Economic Development Around Clusters in Washington**
While some of the ways that government can assist industry clusters exist in Washington, others are missing. Also missing is an agreed upon framework that puts the pieces into place in a coherent manner. For state and local government to effectively coordinate workforce and economic development around clusters in Washington, certain steps should take place:

1. Clusters should be identified
2. Cluster partners should be brought together.
3. Programs and resources should be available to assist clusters.
4. State and regional workforce and economic plans should lay out how government will support clusters.
5. State and local government should implement programs and direct resource to assist cluster in a coordinated and strategic manner.

DRAFT

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

**Objective 2**
The workforce development system strengthens Washington's economy, focusing on strategic industry clusters as a central organizing principle.

No later than 2018:

- Washington's workforce and economic development programs have established track records of effective service to the state's strategic industry clusters.
- Washington's workforce development system prepares the number of workers needed to fill job openings in strategic industry clusters.

**Steps To Get Us There**

- Establish Industry Skill Panels that provide information on skill needs in strategic industry clusters in all workforce development areas.
- Establish Centers of Excellence that provide best practice support to education providers for all strategic industry clusters in the state.
- Expand High Employer Demand programs of study at all levels of postsecondary education and target under-represented labor pools to facilitate their entry to high demand occupations.
- Prepare more individuals to work in industry clusters that provide middle-wage and high-wage job opportunities.
- Coordinate workforce development and economic development planning efforts at the state level, including an emphasis on industry clusters.
- Provide the best possible services to support strategic industry clusters by:
    - Identifying and removing barriers to serving industry clusters.
    - Identifying and implementing best practices in industry cluster development Identifying and implementing best practices in unified business services at WorkSource Centers.
    - Providing incentives to regions and local areas to convene and support industry clusters through programs and resources.
- Establish a state initiative modeled after the WIRED grant program.
- Convene an annual conference for workforce and economic development.

DRAFT

**Closing Skill Gaps, "High Demand Programs," Centers of Excellence**
The community and technical colleges have established Centers of Excellence in 12 Washington clusters. These centers are sources of expertise on how colleges can assist in closing skill gaps in their regional clusters and in the core industry sectors throughout the state. The designated colleges develop expertise, curriculum, faculty, and partnerships related to a particular industry cluster. The critical feature is that the centers really know and understand their industry cluster and are lasting resources for the cluster. Working closely with their related Skill Panel, the centers provide technical assistance to colleges around the state so that their services are fashioned to meet industry needs.

The community and technical colleges and the four-year institutions receive "high demand funds" from the Legislature to increase student enrollments in fields where employer demand exceeds the number of students coming out of in-state colleges and universities. The institutions can use these funds to address the skill gaps in clusters. High employer demand programs of study are not always the same as clusters, though they often support clusters.

The community and technical colleges also receive Workforce Development Funds. These are fairly flexible funds used to start up, expand, or update workforce education programs. These funds can also be directed toward programs in industry clusters.

There are also several state programs that provide support for customized training (although Washington still ranks near the bottom among states in funding for customized training). Customized training is directed to the unique needs of an employer or a small group of employers. The three programs are: the Job Skills Program, the Customized Training Program, and the WIA Incumbent Worker program. Here again is the possibility of directing or prioritizing resources toward meeting the workforce needs of clusters.

**Providing Training At the Workplace**
In 2007, 60 percent of employers in Washington reported providing or paying for four or more hours of classroom training for their employees. Further research indicates that this type of training is usually concentrated on higher level workers and in certain industries. This type of training usually does not lead to a credential. We need to communicate a message to employers and employees across Washington. It pays to engage in further education and training, and where possible we want to see employees raise their level of education at least to one year of postsecondary education and a credential.

DRAFT

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

**Objective 3**
Current and dislocated workers, and job seekers receive education and training that builds competitive skills and businesses.

No later than 2018:

- A majority of mid- and lower-wage employees receive training from either their employers or the workforce development system.
- Dislocated worker programs are easy to navigate and provide good wage replacement.

**Steps To Get Us There**

- Increase the level of public and private support for customized training for current workers, recruit more workers and employers to participate, and improve program design to best suit their needs. (Also see strategies in the Adult section of this plan.)
- ~~Expand worksite learning including distance learning, integrated Adult Basic English / English language and occupational skills, and other methods.~~ Increase the number of working adults gaining further education and training at the workplace through distance learning and other methods including the integration of Adult Basic English / English language and occupational skills. (Also see strategies in the Adult section of this plan.)
- Expand the availability of Lifelong Learning Accounts to fund worker training.
- Align eligibility criteria for dislocated worker programs. (Also see strategies in the Adult section of this plan.)
- Establish a toolbox of work-ready assessments and promote their use in a variety of settings.
- Meet the skill and training needs of businesses by developing workplace training options.

DRAFT