

Tab 8C: Workplace-Based Learning Demonstrations

What is the Purpose of the Workplace-Based Learning Demonstrations?

Project partners will create a state framework to expand delivery of education and training opportunities to low income adult workers. From a review of the research, the best way to reach workers who cannot find the time or resources to go to school is in the workplace, with the support of their employers. Our postsecondary education system is expanding online learning opportunities, but low-wage, under-skilled adults are not taking advantage because they are unaware of their options, don't have (or know how to) access to the technology, can't afford, or can't make the time for school.

Without a post-secondary credential, many workers will be unable to achieve economic self-sufficiency (for this project: 200 percent of F.P.L.) or long-term labor market success. This initiative will allow three demonstration projects to be established (130 workers trained), evaluated, and the lessons documented to inform better deployment of the state's postsecondary education resources.

Each of the pilots will be lead by a postsecondary education institution, in partnership with employer sites, labor organizations, and a Workforce Development Council. Priority will be given to established partnerships, including labor-management training partnerships. At least two projects will be in rural locations, and at least two will involve immigrant or Limited English Proficient workers and integrate basic skills and occupational training, and at least one project will take place in a healthcare setting.

All projects will be designed to enhance worker prospects for job and wage progress, as well as meet a specific employer need.

This initiative is expected to reach at least 10,000 workers over ten years. The Washington framework will be created for use by any state, regional or federal policy-makers seeking to address the issues of under-skilled working adults.

Better Access and Success for Low-Wage Adult Workers

The overarching goal of this initiative is to establish a framework for restructuring higher education for better access and success outcomes for low-wage adult workers—moving Washington towards an infrastructure that supports life-long learning and long-term economic mobility and success.

While we will be starting small, expecting about 45 trainees at each of three sites, we are designing for scalability, aiming reach at least 10,000 workers in 10 years.

Results of research-based demonstrations will instruct postsecondary education, the employer and labor communities, and state policy-makers on policy, technical, and financial promising practices.

The evaluation of the three partnership sites, our learning laboratories, will test for effective partnership structures, including design, delivery, and performance

accountability; co-investment strategies; technological and other delivery mechanisms; support strategies for educational and personal needs of adult workers, and business and participant impact. At the regional project level, over a two-year period, our objectives include, at a minimum:

1. One hundred thirty low-wage, low-skilled workers complete at least two credit-bearing or apprenticeship-track courses, if assessed as academically ready, or two college preparatory, remedial, or preapprenticeship courses, if assessed to need such educational enhancement to enter a post-secondary program of study and if courses are either integrated with or contextualized for an occupational track.
2. One hundred eighty low-wage, low-skilled workers complete an “Orientation to Distance Learning” Course.
3. A model for identifying and training “faculty extenders” will be developed. (“Faculty extenders” are supervisors or other skilled employees at the worksite who serve as coaches, mentors, or instructors to support participant learning.)



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