



Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Marina.Parr@wtb.wa.gov | 360-709-4607

\$1.6M UPSKILL-BACKFILL INITIATIVE TO HELP HUNDREDS OF WORKERS MOVE AHEAD

New initiative to skill up workers in multiple sectors, will open up jobs across the state

OLYMPIA—The Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board has awarded \$1.6 million in competitive grants to seven different projects designed to “upskill” entry- and mid-level employees through additional education and training that moves them ahead in their careers, while “backfilling” their open positions with new workers.

An estimated 550 workers will be provided additional training to advance their careers, with another 300 new hires backfilling projected openings. Three of the seven projects are in King County. Read more at: http://www.wtb.wa.gov/TAPAccelerator_phase1.asp

The Upskill Backfill Initiative is one of several partnerships between the state’s Workforce Board and the Governor’s Office aimed at advancing the state’s workforce plan “Talent and Prosperity for All,” or TAP. Earlier this year, Gov. Inslee invested \$3 million in federal workforce funding to accelerate implementation of the TAP plan, with a little over half of that going toward Upskill Backfill projects.

The seven projects join public and private resources to focus on a wide range of industries and occupations, including: Healthcare, Building Engineers in the Construction Industry, Construction and Highway Workers, Manufacturing, and Aerospace. Each project is headed up by a regional Workforce Development Council in conjunction with area businesses within a particular sector. This public-private partnership brings businesses to the table to help shape the training their workers receive, while also co-investing their own resources into targeted training programs. The goal is to move more Washington workers into needed, higher skilled positions, with a focus on populations facing barriers to employment.

“This initiative will provide many new opportunities for career connected learning,” Gov. Jay Inslee said. “By providing on-the-job training and certification in high-demand industries, workers will advance their careers and strengthen the economy for all Washingtonians.”

In addition to the state’s \$1.6 million investment in these projects, nearly \$1.6 million in additional funding was leveraged through matching grants and business investment, for a total of \$3.1 million in targeted job training.

King County’s three projects are outlined on the following page.

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Project Focus – Building Engineers in the Construction Industry **Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County**

The demand for building engineers is expected to increase 14 percent over the next 10 years in the greater Seattle area, according to Economic Modeling Specialists. An added challenge is an aging workforce at the Senior Building Engineer level. This project will upskill potential leaders, enabling them to operate HVAC, electrical, plumbing and mechanical systems in high-performance buildings and backfill with new employees. The project is intended to: engage 10 businesses; train 100 current workers (with 50 receiving wage increases); and bring 30 new hires into the newly opened positions. **Partners:** Renton Technical College, Construction Center of Excellence, TRIO, NW Business Solutions Inc., ANEW, Emerald Cities Seattle, WBEC Steering Committee (Wright Runstad/Western WA Stationary Engineers), Associated General Contractors (AGC) Education Foundation, and Western Washington Stationary Engineers. **Grant Amount:** \$226,855 (with \$171,257 leveraged, totaling \$398,112)

Project Focus – Manufacturing

Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County

Skilled workers are in great demand from the manufacturing industry. Right now, the limited supply has employers poaching talent from one another in the region. This project will upskill manufacturing workers into leadership positions and backfill with entry-level workers, with a focus on populations with barriers including those with disabilities. The project is designed to: provide advanced training to 250 current workers (of which 175 will receive wage increases); bring in 100 new hires to the industry, with an estimated 10 employers increasing their overall FTE counts. **Partners:** Genie (Terex brand), Astronics AES and Spectralux, Everett Community College Corporate and Continuing Education Center, Lake Washington Institute of Technology, Seattle Goodwill Industries, and Seattle Housing Authority. **Grant Amount:** \$275,000 (with \$248,900 leveraged totaling \$523,900)

Project Focus – Healthcare

Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County

King County faces an ongoing need for healthcare workers. To help meet this demand, area employers would like to tap promising talent from entry-level positions to fill critical clinical openings. This project will upskill current workers in positions such as environmental services, food services, and customer service to move into clinical roles such as nursing assistant and medical assistant, and backfill entry-level positions with jobseekers, with a special focus on populations facing barriers to employment. The project is designed to: engage two employers; support advancement training for 20 current workers; and facilitate 20 new hires to replace the workers who have advanced into new positions. **Partners:** Neighborhood House, Kaiser Permanente, Harborview Medical Center, the Washington Federation of State Employees, and other labor entities. **Grant Amount:** \$241,480 (with \$163,170 leveraged totaling \$404,650)

The Workforce Board is a state agency that monitors and evaluates the state's key workforce programs and also provides leadership on policies that help all Washington residents get the education and training they need to obtain living-wage jobs. The Workforce Board is also the state licensing agency for private career schools.

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