



# Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **\$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.

It includes a multi-region healthcare project that includes Centralia, Olympia-Tumwater, and Morton. In rural parts of this region the focus will be on upskilling homecare workers to certified nursing assistants (CNAs) and backfilling with entry-level workers, with a focus on populations with barriers. In the region’s urban areas, the project will upskill CNAs to acute care CNAs. Together, the project will train 65 people, including: 40 CNAs; 23 lower-skilled long-term care workers (home care aides); and two home care aide community instructors.

Read about the Lewis-Thurston counties project at:

[http://www.wtb.wa.gov/TAPAccelerator\\_phase1.asp](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.

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"These grants will help workers fulfill their potential by helping them get to the next level," Gov. Jay Inslee said. "This promising practice will help us create a stronger, more competitive workforce."

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.

**Project Focus – Healthcare**  
**Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council**  
**(Thurston, Mason, Lewis, Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties)**

This region has a high demand for healthcare services and workers. In rural parts of this region the focus will be on upskilling homecare workers to certified nursing assistants (CNAs) and backfilling with entry-level workers, with a focus on populations with barriers. In the region's urban areas, the project will upskill CNAs to acute care CNAs. Together, the project will train 65 people, including: 40 CNAs; 23 lower-skilled long-term care workers (home care aides); and two home care aide community instructors. **Partners:** Centralia College, DSHS Aging and Long Term Support Administration (AL TSA), Morton General Hospital, South Puget Sound Community College in Olympia, Providence St. Peter Hospital in Olympia, Providence Mother Joseph Care Center, New Market Skills Center, Aging and Long-Term Support Administration (AL TSA), SEIU and the Washington Association of Community and Migrant Health Centers. **Grant Amount:** \$275,000 (with \$160,000 leveraged totaling \$435,000)

*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.*

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