



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

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Greetings:

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board is pleased to release a proof of concept study on the state's Skill Panel program. The enclosed Executive Summary provides an overview of general findings and specific results on four model Skill Panels:

1. Manufacturing (Spokane Region)
2. Power Generation (Pacific Mountain)
3. Healthcare (Pierce County)
4. Marine Manufacturing (Northwest)

This project was undertaken to establish a new evaluation paradigm for Skill Panels and other industry-responsive workforce development initiatives. Washington's workforce development system has one of the nation's best regarded performance accountability systems, yet we realized that business specific programs should be treated differently. While we have evidence of the benefits for workers and job seekers, we were interested to see if we could evaluate the actual business impact of workforce development interventions, as well as to better understand what makes a public-private partnership successful.

This was a small study to help us shape our evaluation paradigm. However, I think the findings are worth sharing. Especially significant are the reports of the businesses and labor representatives involved. Across these four industry groups, each important to the economic fabric of their region, employers and workers tell us that the ability to engage directly in the design, planning, and delivery of specific workforce development interventions helped them solve critical business issues--issues for which there was no apparent solution until the Skill Panels came together.

At a time when our businesses are positioning themselves for economic recovery and to seize market opportunities as they arise, it is imperative that they can count on having workers with the right skill sets, or the ability to train for those skills when they are needed. For these four Skill Panels, the model proved not just to meet current employer needs, but to shape the talent development pipeline for the future, and to leverage employer and other contributions to support customized workforce development efforts.

I hope that you find the information reported in this study as useful as I have. To access the full report online, please go to: <http://www.wtb.wa.gov/IndustrySkillPanel.asp>.

Sincerely,

Eleni Papadakis
Executive Director



Evaluating Industry Skill Panels: A Model Framework

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

June 2008



Executive Summary

Industry skill panels are regional public-private partnerships of business, labor and education that work together to improve the workforce skills and talent pipeline of key Washington industries.

Since their introduction in 2000, Washington's skill panels have expanded across the state, serving a growing number of employers, employees, and potential employees. Skill panels help Washington's businesses grow and prosper by catalyzing investments and expanding collaborations that increase the quantity and quality of the state's skilled workforce.

Because skill panels are regional industry strategies, they should be evaluated for the distinct and unique value they create in their regions as well as the state. For this project, the State of Washington created an evaluation process from

an existing framework¹ developed jointly with ten other states to understand the ability to collect and aggregate data across key indicators. This new framework captures not only specific quantitative impacts and outcomes, but also the products and services produced and the overall evidence of progress.

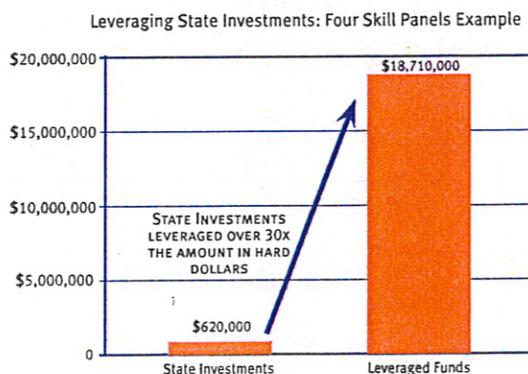
This report offers a Dashboard of Indicators against which future skills panels can describe their achievements. The tremendous value of the skills panels to the state's economy are apparent in the examples provided here.

IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES

Skills panels' impacts and outcomes are as impressive as they are diverse. For example, the panels have proven very adept at leveraging funding received through the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board into additional funds. The four skill panels reviewed for this study leveraged well over \$18,000,000 in hard dollars on approximately \$620,000 of state grant funding over the course of their work—*more than 30 times the amount of state investments in these four skill panels.*

Skill panels have also been effective at addressing specific workforce gaps. Invasive Cardiovascular Technicians have long been a difficult position to fill—and especially so for hospitals in Western Washington this decade. In fact, two Health Council member hospitals (Good Samaritan and MultiCare) had vacancy rates exceeding 50% in 2003. In response, the Health Council developed a two-year training program, which dropped the vacancy rate for invasive cardiovascular technicians to 0%. A conservative estimate of the cost savings to Multicare Health Systems is \$300,000 annually, and a pipeline

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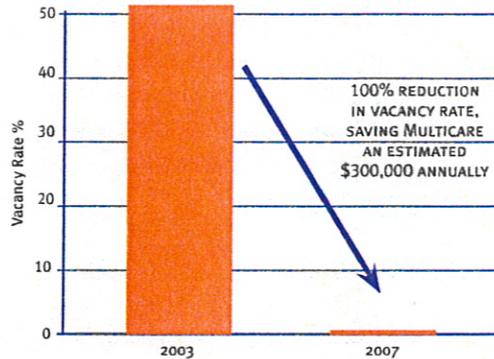
¹ An Evaluation Framework for State Sector Strategies, National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, and National Network of Sector Partners, May 2008. <http://www.sectorstrategies.org/uploads/File/EvaluationFrameworkWhitePaper.pdf>

IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES Continued

of trained and certified technicians has been created for other hospitals across Western Washington.

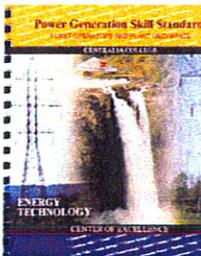
Employees as well as employers are benefiting from skill panels' successes. For example, students from Centralia College's training programs use the industry skill standards the skill panel developed for plant operators and plant mechanics. Typically, new hires must complete a 6,000 hour or three year apprenticeship to become a certified journeyman. But through an agreement between Grand Coulee and IBEW 77, three recent Centralia graduates hired at Grand Coulee Dam were awarded credit for completing one-half of the apprenticeship program (3000 hours). These students were then able to enter employment at a higher pay rate than other new employees; one became a journeyman operator in May 2008 and two will start with Grand Coulee in August 2008. Concomitantly, Grand Coulee benefits from hiring more highly trained employees than would otherwise be the case.

Reduced Vacancy Rate of Invasive Cardiovascular Technicians in Tacoma-Pierce County



PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Skill Panels have developed numerous products and services to address critical skill gaps:



The Centralia Power Generation Skill Panel developed skill standards for plant operators and plant mechanics, and has just completed a workforce survey of employers in the electric sector. In addition, the panel, as part of the Pacific Mountain WIRED Initiative, is looking into creating an energy industry-training center at the Satsop facilities.



Spokane's Career Awareness Campaigns have reached over 5,000 students and 200 educators through career fairs, "teach-the-teachers" programs, and the use of social networking technologies.



Westport Yachts conducts a youth summer camp as part of its Marine Manufacturing Skill Panel. Called *Float Your Boat*, this one-week camp has been held each of the past two summers, and educated 27 students about the marine industry. The approach worked – the company already hired three of the first camp's 15 students.

EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS

Employers, workers, and training partners have to spend their time and resources efficiently and effectively. Partnerships that do not yield value will not long survive. Skill panels have proven to have consistent and dedicated memberships, sustainability, and continued utility.

Perhaps most telling is that industry partners are actively discussing a new, self-funded, skill panel for wind farm technicians. This discussion is based on a high-degree of satisfaction with the existing power-generation skill panel and its work on essential skill standards.



“The Power Generation Skill Panel has effectively met the needs of employers, workers, and the training system through collaboration and focused work on critical issues. By meeting demand driven skills of industry we are all more competitive.”

— Bob Guenther, IBEW Local 77



“The value of the [Manufacturing] Roundtable to me is that they don't whine and they do stuff. The mission of the Roundtable is to help improve competitiveness of local business and increase the number and/or wages of employees. I see results from the Roundtable—we're making progress.

— John Crow, CEO, Lloyd Industries



“We leapt into (developing) skills standards for certain occupations where we were all feeling some challenges. This led to training and was part of a new arrangement for an apprenticeship program that directly feeds our need for skills at the Dam. Part of the key to success was having labor endorse the skills standards, in addition to us as employers. Why do we continue? It's our only prayer. We're going to lose half our workforce to retirements in 5 years.”

— Dale Singer, Grand Coulee Dam

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The contents of this report and the opinions and recommendations herein are those of the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce and PAROS Group, and the respective authors.



Washington State
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