



**Workforce Training and
Education Coordinating Board**

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

State funds public-private partnerships targeting skilled workforce gaps

OLYMPIA , Wash. -- The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board announced today the award of \$600,000 in start up grants for seven industry skill panels designed to bring together business, labor, education and other government resources necessary to respond to the need for skilled workers in key industries.

These grants are two-year awards targeting regional efforts to close the workforce skill gap.

Since 2000, the state has helped create roughly 50 public-private partnerships dedicated to closing the gap between an area's workforce and the skills needed to support regional industries. Skill panels have been particularly successful in working with community and technical colleges and private career colleges in developing new training programs and growing enrollment of existing programs.

"Skill panels bring together competing employers who might not otherwise work together to address their labor force needs. By sharing their issues and ideas with each other and with government, educators and labor, the group can find the root causes of their workforce problems and get a glimpse into the future of the industry. The aim of skill panels is not just to fill current vacancies, but also to build a pipeline for the future of the industry," said Eleni Papadakis, executive director of the Workforce Board.

Workers benefit by increasing their career opportunities with improved skills and training. Business benefits from greater efficiency and less employee turnover. Because of these benefits, the legislature provided additional funding in the state's two-year operating budget to underwrite the formation of new skill panels.

The seven skill panels receiving funding will operate in Spokane, Clark, Cowlitz, King, Pierce, Thurston, Lewis, Grays Harbor, Mason and Pacific counties.

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- The Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council will receive \$90,000 to start the Building Manufacturing Competitiveness Skill Panel to focus on manufacturing workforce needs for Thurston, Lewis, Grays Harbor, Mason and Pacific counties. Contact: John Loyle, (360) 570-4239.
- Highline Community College's Center of Excellence for International Trade, Transportation and Logistics will receive \$90,000 to start a skill panel that will help develop career pathways and new training programs in international trade, transportation and logistics. Contact Raegan Copeland, (206)870-4838.
- The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County will receive \$90,000 to launch a Construction, Green Design and Green Building Skill Panel that will focus on the workforce needs of this rapidly growing field. Contact: Laurie Black, (206) 448-0474 ext 3014.
- The Spokane Area Workforce Development Council will receive \$90,000 to increase awareness of construction trade careers among middle school and high school students. Contact: Mark Mattke, (509) 625-6214.
- Greater Spokane, Inc. (formerly the Spokane Regional Chamber of Commerce) will receive \$90,000 to start the Business and Professional Services Skill Panel to address training gaps, raise awareness among students and recruit recent college graduates and young professionals. Contact: Amy Johnson, (509) 459-4119.
- The Colville Tribal Enterprises Corporation will receive \$60,000 to establish a Colville Tribal Regional Industry Skills Panel to address the needs of the recreation and tourism industry of a five-county region in northeastern Washington. Contact: Kanie St. Paul, (509) 633-0891.
- The Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council will receive \$90,000 to establish the Southwest Washington Regional Advanced Manufacturing Skill Panel to work with Clark College and Lower Columbia College in defining skills gaps and develop training resources. Contact: Jerry Petrick, (360) 798-4110.

In addition to the seven new skill panels, the workforce board awarded state grants to eight existing skill panels listed below.

- The Rural Manufacturing Skill Panel is in its third year and will receive \$15,000. This panel assists manufacturers across Eastern Washington to train new and existing employees in soft skills, basic manufacturing, and technical job requirements. Partners include the Eastern Washington Partnership Workforce Development Council and the two Economic Development Councils working in Stevens, Ferry, Pend Oreille, Asotin, Whitman, and Garfield Counties. Contact: Tom O'Brien, (509) 684-8421.

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- A Skill Panel for Food Processing in its third year will receive \$10,000. The panel is now managed by the South Central Workforce Development Council serving Kittitas, Klickitat, Skamania and Yakima Counties. Contact: David Gonzales, (509) 574-1950.
- The Wood Products Manufacturing Skill Panel is in its third year and will receive \$25,000. This industry skill panel works with Northwest Washington employers to develop a more effective training program for this key industry. This collaboration of WorkSource partners includes Employment Security, the Northwest WDC, and Bellingham Technical College. Contact: Alex Kosmides, (360) 676-3207.
- The Maritime Industry Skill Panel is in its third year and will receive \$25,000. The Pacific Maritime Institute has partnering with Seattle Central Community College's Maritime Academy to address issues of demand for skilled workers. Contact: Alfred Griswold (206) 587-5482.
- The Homeland Security Skill Panel is in its fourth year and will receive \$30,000. The panel is a partnership with Pierce College's Homeland Security Center of Excellence and the state's Emergency Management Division. Contact: JoAnn Baria, (253) 964-6640.
- The Energy Production Technology Skill Panel is in its fourth year of establishing training standards for the energy industry, in particular those for instrumentation and control technician, the boiler/turbine operator, and hydro operator jobs. Based at Centralia College, the effort will receive \$25,000 for this year. Contact: Barbara Hins-Turner, (360) 736-9391.
- Spokane's Advanced Manufacturers Workforce Initiative in its third year of identifying manufacturing skill gaps and training needs will receive \$20,000. Contact: Richard Hadley, 509-624-1393.
- The Spokane Construction Skill Panel is in its third year of focusing on rejuvenating Spokane's aging construction workforce. The panel will receive \$20,000. Contact: Mark Mattke, (509) 625-6214.

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