



Workforce Training and
Education Coordinating Board

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New report shines light on performance of state's workforce programs *Workforce Training Results 2008 tracks public's return on investment*

OLYMPIA, Wash. - A new report measures how well Washington is doing in educating and training its workers for the future. For the most part, it's good news.

The vast majority of programs provided a significant return on taxpayer dollars, with participants becoming employed in greater numbers, earning higher wages and requiring fewer social services.

"By spending our dollars wisely and continuously striving to improve results, these programs provide taxpayers with a substantial return on investment while steering more Washingtonians into family-wage careers," said Eleni Papadakis, executive director of the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board), which issued the report.

The Workforce Board publishes Workforce Training Results every two years, measuring the performance of 12 of the state's largest workforce programs. These programs account for over 90 percent of the federal and state dollars spent on Washington's workforce development system and involve participants ranging from high school career and technical education students, to workers with disabilities, to workers who have been laid off.

Apprenticeship programs performed particularly well with those who completed programs earning an average \$58,500 per year in the most recent report. All participants received a combination of classroom instruction with paid, on-the-job training under the supervision of a journey-level craft person or trade professional. Many participants focused on higher-wage construction trades. Apprenticeships are governed by the Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council and administered by the state's Department of Labor and Industries.

But even in apprenticeships, where employment and wages are high, there is room for improvement. For example, the higher-paying trades attracted relatively few women, while lower-paying occupations, such as early childhood education, were overwhelmingly female. Also, too many participants did not complete apprenticeships, with those who did not

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complete leaving after an average of 17 months-less than midway through a typical 43-month program.

These shortcomings were typical of the majority of workforce programs, with men earning more than women, and whites earning more than minorities. Also an average of 34 percent of participants-or one out of three-did not complete their workforce program.

Another area for improvement is providing more information about job openings. An average of 20 percent of program participants said they needed more information about available employment.

Overall, however, the workforce programs measured in this report recorded positive results in employment, earnings, job skills, participant satisfaction and employer satisfaction. Even among populations with significant barriers-such as low education levels and high poverty-these programs made a difference.

For example, the results for the Workforce Investment Act program aimed at low-income adults saw average incomes rise from \$14,400 in 1995-96 to \$20,375 in 2005-06, adjusted for inflation. Employment rates also rose during those same years from 61 percent in 1995-96 to 74 percent in 2005-06.

To view the Workforce Training Results 2008 summary online or get more detailed study results for individual programs, go to <http://www.wtb.wa.gov/wtr2008>.

The Workforce Board was established by the Legislature to create a coordinated and accountable workforce training system. The board is a partnership of business, labor and government, dedicated to helping Washington state residents obtain and succeed in family-wage jobs, while meeting employers' needs for skilled workers.

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