

High Skills High Wages

Annual Progress Report

A four-year summary of progress on Washington's workforce development strategic plan that was developed in 2008.



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Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

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2012 Annual Report on Washington's Workforce Development Strategic Plan

This report provides examples of the progress Washington has made over the past four years in achieving the three goals of Washington's 10-year strategic plan for workforce development, [High Skills, High Wages 2008 – 2018](#).

After significant stakeholder work, the Workforce Board has adopted a new 10-year plan. Understanding the structural changes in the workforce development environment will provide context for the updates provided in this final report of the 2008 plan, as well as for the transition to the new goals established in this year's [High Skills, High Wages strategic plan for workforce development](#).

While the Great Recession and reductions in state and federal funds have hampered progress toward the state's ultimate goals, the workforce development system has learned a great deal about the weaknesses of the infrastructure, as well as what works well, and what barriers hinder students, jobseekers and industry.

Models of Success

Washington has made significant headway in developing effective models of education, training and service delivery. Our state hosts a number of pilots and local programs that bring industry together with education and training in ways that have improved student education and employment outcomes.

Employers also report satisfaction with the folks they hire from these programs. Such examples occur at both the secondary and postsecondary levels. Yet, not enough of these initiatives cross over or include both levels of education. One example of a statewide high school level effort is the "IT Academy" program, a partnership of Microsoft and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. This program provides all high school students access to training and an industry-valued career certification track. The program also provides industry mentors for classroom teachers who facilitate student Information Technology learning.

Connecting Training to Jobs

The workforce development system has strengthened and expanded its ability to provide “Direct Connect” training. That is, customized “just-in-time” training that prepares individuals for specific available jobs. While the effects of the recession have caused a drop in the number of apprenticeships available, apprenticeship is an optimal Direct Connect model offering participants income and a structured, accessible career ladder. Other examples of Direct Connect training options that have become more available include: On-the-Job training, classroom programs designed to meet specific employers’ hiring needs, and online and hybrid postsecondary education customized for employers.

More Career Guidance Needed

Our state has been inconsistent in investing in comprehensive career guidance for youth and adult students. High quality comprehensive career guidance makes a difference in education and employment outcomes for students, yet investments in this area are difficult to grow or sustain in the face of cuts to education and training. If this issue is not addressed, Washington is destined to repeat student achievement gaps, as well as inefficiently use resources as students choose education and employment pathways that don’t suit their interests or aptitudes. Career guidance and education models, such as Navigation 101 and Jobs for Washington’s Graduates, have shown promising results and should be considered for scale-up statewide.

Washington’s employment rate continues to be a concern, especially for dislocated workers out of work for more than six months, our young adults, returning veterans, and workers over age 50. For each of these populations, many challenges remain. Employment outcomes are even more discouraging for those in these groups who are a minority, disabled, or lacking a high school diploma.

Partnering for Success

While system partners have been working hard together at the state and local levels to fill service gaps and improve access to high quality programs, the huge demand for services coupled with funding reductions continues to be a serious challenge. The Workforce Board’s [new strategic plan](#) adopted this year seeks to build stronger partnerships between customers (workers and employers) and the workforce development system. Most importantly, our new strategic plan aims to ensure every customer of the system has access to a pathway that meets their employment needs.

As system partners and stakeholders move forward together to achieve the new strategic plan, the business, labor and service provider members of the Workforce Board invite you to reflect on the foundation of success that has been established over the last four years.

Progress Report on *High Skills, High Wages* 2008-2018

Youth Goal – *Ensure all youth receive the education, training and support they need for success in postsecondary education and/or work.*

STATUS: Since the launch of the 2008 strategic plan, Washington has put in place programs to guide students in planning their education and careers, help communities identify and intervene with youth at-risk of dropping out and aid in the transition from high school to postsecondary and the workplace. Tight budgets have kept these programs from becoming statewide. Over the four years since the plan's adoption, the high school graduation rate has improved only slightly and unemployment rates have increased. Below are progress highlights associated with specific objectives of this goal.

Youth Objective 1

A K-12 Guidance and Counseling System provide students and their parents with a curriculum to individually plan their pathways and prepare for future education and/or work after high school.

- **Comprehensive Career Guidance** - Since 2007, 1,126 grants for comprehensive guidance, issued by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, have been provided to 407 schools in 165 districts statewide (Over 563,000 students reached). Over half of all middle and high schools continue to use the [Navigation 101](#) curriculum, which is now available for free to schools.
- **High School and Beyond Plan** - The State Board of Education developed a proposed definition for the [High School and Beyond Plan](#) graduation requirement that incorporates the key elements of a career guidance curriculum (consistent with Navigation 101). The definition is not yet in rule however because there are insufficient funds to support the guidance activities required under the proposed rule.
- **CareerBridge.Wa.Gov** - The Workforce Board has broadened the appeal of the state's Eligible Training Provider list with a user friendly, searchable website that allows the user to identify their career interests, learn about occupations and find detailed information on the Washington-based programs that prepare students for those occupations. The [website](#) also includes performance results for almost all the programs that are large enough and old enough to have data (roughly 40 percent of all programs listed).

Youth Objective 2

All students leave high school prepared for success in further education and/or work.

- **Multiple Pathways** - Harvard published "[Pathways to Prosperity](#)," and the state House passed the [Career Pathways Act](#).
- **Opportunity Internships and Jobs for Washington's Graduates** - The Legislature enacted statutes and funding for these two programs designed to prepare students for college and careers. In 2012, five [Opportunity Internship programs](#) in Washington connected 262 disadvantaged students to internships.
- **Programs of Study** - State work groups are in the process of designing model Programs of Study in Aerospace/Manufacturing, Information Technology, Healthcare and Agriculture. The models will articulate secondary and postsecondary education and result in industry-based certifications where applicable.
- **Washington IT Academy Program** - OSPI and Microsoft partnered to provide [Microsoft IT Academy](#) to all Washington high schools. Since the partnership began, 154 schools have utilized the program and 4,049 total certifications have been awarded.

Youth Objective 3

All students graduate from high school.

- **Graduation Rates** - In 2011 the on-time graduation rate was 75 percent, up from the 72 percent rate in 2008. The extended graduation rate in 2011 was 81 percent, an increase over the 77 percent rate in 2008.
- **PASS Act** - The legislature enacted the Pay for Actual Student Success Act ([HB 1599](#)) including a system of financial awards for high schools that demonstrate improvement in certain dropout prevention indicators.
- **Building Bridges** - Funding for this [community partnership program](#) continues during the current biennium, but at 50 percent of the level of the previous biennium. Reduced funding has resulted in grants going to just three school-community partnerships for the 2010-2011 school years. Fifteen other school-community partnerships have been funded since 2007-2008.
- **Dropout Reduction, Intervention, & Reengagement** - [Chapter 20 of the Laws of 2010](#) sets a course for Washington to establish a comprehensive dropout reengagement system.
- **Basic Education Definition** - Now includes activities designed to reengage in education youth up to 21 years.

Youth Objective 4

Reduce unemployment rates among older youth, and improve their career prospects.

- **Summer Youth Employment** - In the summer of 2009, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding supported a youth employment program that created more than 5,600 summer jobs for low-income youth and young adults at more than 1,500 work sites. Funding was provided only one year.
- **Recognition of Work Experience Programs** - In 2012, [the Governor recognized SODO, Inc.](#), a South Seattle manufacturing based internship program for disadvantaged youth, as a model youth program, highlighting the importance of private-public partnerships in creating work opportunities for youth.

Adult Goal – Provide Washington adults (including those with barriers to education and employment) with access to lifelong education, training, and employment services.

STATUS: Since the launch of the 2008 strategic plan, Washington has continued to invest in programs that are effective in getting adult workers engaged and re-engaged into our economy. These investments have been difficult to sustain during the Great Recession but results continue to show that programs like On-the-Job Training, Worker Retraining, Apprenticeship, Opportunity Grants, and I-BEST are effective in getting adults the education and training they need to find family-wage jobs. Other strategic improvements include finding ways to shorten the amount of time an adult needs to spend in a classroom, including online education and shorter, more customized programs. Going forward, Washington needs to be conscious of the increasing number of long-term unemployed workers who may require more direct intervention to return to work. Below are progress highlights associated with specific objectives of this goal.

Adult Objective 1

Increase the number of adults who have at least one year of postsecondary training.

- **The number of adults who completed** at least one year of postsecondary education or training at a community or technical college, a private career school, or an apprenticeship program increased from 27,442 in 2007 to 28,659 in 2010.
- **The [Opportunity Grant Program](#)** provides financial aid and support services to low-income workforce education students. Support increased from \$7.5 million and 2,000 student FTEs in 2007 to \$12.5 million and 3,800 student FTEs in 2011. In 2012, 3,600 student FTEs received the grant.
- **The [Student Achievement Initiative](#)** - There was a 31 percent increase in the number of student milestone points achieved from 2007 to 2011.

Adult Objective 2

Postsecondary education and training provides effective opportunities for going in and out of training over the course of life-long learning.

- **[E-Learning/Online Learning opportunities](#)** - In 2011-2012, 38,889 community and technical college student FTEs, one-fourth of all enrollments, were served through E-Learning, an increase of 140 percent since 2007.
- **[Open Course Library](#)** - Online materials have been developed for 82 of the state's highest-enrolled courses, including textbooks, freely available online under an open license for use by the state's 34 public community and technical colleges, four-year colleges and universities, and anyone else worldwide. The number of courses covered by online materials has more than doubled since the last annual report.
- **[Credit for Prior Learning](#)** - The colleges and universities are currently redesigning their processes for assessing and granting credit for prior learning. Each two-year college is required to have a process for assessing prior learning and granting college credit for prior learning. Beginning in the fall of 2012, for the first time, the two-year colleges will track the PLA credits granted by the college system.
- **Individualized Certificate Programs** - Four to six community colleges will begin piloting Individualized Programs during the 2012-2013 school year. Individualized Programs grant credit for on-the-job learning that compliments classroom instruction.
- **Life-Long Learning Accounts (LiLAs)** - The 2012 legislature [enacted a bill](#) recognizing LiLAs in state statute and directing the Workforce Board to promote their use.

Adult Objective 3

Adults with barriers to employment and training enter education and career pathways that lead to self-sufficiency.

- **I-BEST** - In 2011, 157 [I-BEST programs](#) served 3,400 students, a three-fold increase since 2007. Also, there were 43,150 students enrolled in basic skills at community and technical colleges in 2011.
- **[Basic Food Employment and Training Program](#)** - provides federal reimbursement to the state for employment and training services to food stamp recipients not in Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. In the most recent federal fiscal year, 27 colleges drew \$8.7 million and served approximately 13,000 students.
- **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation** - The Retooling partnerships with WorkSource are providing professional development for staff and OJT opportunities for over 125 DVR customers.
- **Veterans** - Employers are now able to indicate a hiring preference for veterans and search for job seekers who are veterans through [Go2WorkSource.com](#).

- **Opportunity Partnerships** - [This program](#) aids in completion by providing mentorship and career guidance to disadvantaged community college student who receive Opportunity Grants. Some 142 students participated under the mentorship of 119 business hosts in supervised program guidance in Skagit, Clark, and Yakima Counties.
- **Long-term Unemployed** - As the recession grew longer, the Employment Security Department and Workforce Development Councils took measures to monitor and focus attention on the needs of long-term unemployed. [June 2012 Report](#)

Adult Objective 4

The WorkSource system provides integrated and effective customer service without barriers associated with separate, individual programs.

- **WorkSource Service Delivery Policies** - Seven system policies went into effect on July 1, 2010, joining two policies that were implemented the previous year. These policies are intended to help Workforce Development Councils and partners meet each customer's needs, regardless of program or funding source.
- **[Retooling Washington's Workforce](#)** - Increased efforts to coordinate business outreach among programs and organizations serving employers.
- **North Seattle Community College Opportunity Center for Employment and Education** - Became fully functional in 2011, integrating services across many workforce and social service programs.
- **ESD Training Academy** - Opened its doors in June 2009 with classes on employment counseling, business services, customer flow and more, for WorkSource and partner staff.

Industry Goal – *Meet the workforce needs of industry by preparing students, current workers, and dislocated workers with the skill employer needs.*

STATUS: Since the launch of the 2008 strategic plan, Washington has recognized in statute the role of industry clusters as the organizing principle for coordinating workforce and economic development. The Workforce Board and the state's 12 area Workforce Development Councils have identified the strategic industry clusters in each area of the state. Special state initiatives focused on aerospace, health care, and green jobs have demonstrated what can be done when industry sectors are used as a way to organize workforce development resources. Going forward, Washington needs to continue to have a full range of employers as partners in developing, perfecting, and funding our workforce development system. Below are progress highlights associated with specific objectives of this goal.

Industry Objective 1

The workforce development system supplies the number of newly prepared workers needed to meet current and emerging employer needs.

- **Closing the Mid-Level Supply/Demand Gap** - The Workforce Board routinely measures the annual supply of newly prepared mid-level workers per year and compares that supply to future projected demand for mid-level workers. The most recent skill gap report released in February 2012 shows that Washington's mid-level skill gap is approximately 9,000 workers per year. [Latest Skill Gap Analysis](#)
- **Increasing the Supply of Health Care Personnel** - The number of students completing ADN and BSN registered nurse programs at two- and four-year colleges increased by 28 percent between 2007 and 2011, and is now very close to matching labor market demand. [Completion Report](#)
- **Increasing the Supply of Aerospace Workers** - Air Washington received a \$20 million grant from the Department of Labor to increase training for aerospace workers. As requested by the Governor, the 2012 legislature appropriated funds to expand secondary school programs for aerospace, funds to expand engineering capacity at U.W. and W.S.U., and funds for coordination, research, and evaluation of aerospace programs. Also, the Governor invested WIA funds to expand the capacity to train workers for aerospace. [Aerospace Training Report](#)
- **Increasing Supply of Green Industry Workers** - The Legislature established a goal of creating 15,000 new green economy jobs by 2020. Workforce and economic development partners helped ensure that Washington received its share of federal assistance in support green industry skill training. [Reports](#)
- **Manufacturing Certifications** - The Workforce Board has been working with the National Association of Manufacturing on a plan to make NAM-Endorsed Certification System an organizing factor in manufacturing programs of study with Washington's community and technical college system. [Report](#)

Industry Objective 2

The workforce development system strengthens Washington's economy, focusing on strategic industry clusters as a central organizing principle.

- **Strategic Cluster Policy** - The 2009 Legislature enacted HB 1323 establishing strategic industry clusters as a central organizing focus for workforce and economic development. The Workforce Board adopted the strategic cluster policy for workforce development and collaborated with the WDCs to identify strategic clusters in each area of the state. [HB 1323 report](#)
- **Centers of Excellence** - The 2009 Legislature codified Centers of Excellence.

- **High Demand Programs of Study** - The 2012 Legislature earmarked funds for college and university student enrollments in science, technology, engineering, and math.

Industry Objective 3

Current and dislocated workers, and job seekers receive education and training that builds competitive skills and businesses.

- **Worker Retraining Program** - The number of participants in the Worker Retraining Program administered by SBCTC increased from 10,529 in 2007 to 19,562 in 2011 but dropped to 16,601 in 2012.
- **Workforce Employment & Training** ([SB 5809](#)) - During 2009-2011, SB 5809 provided \$6 million in state funds to leverage training funded by WIA. The combined total of \$21.5 million funded support services and training for nearly 8,700 individuals.
- **Retooling Washington's Workforce Long-term Unemployed Initiative** - Provides data and coordinates efforts to serve the approximately 75,000 individuals who have exhausted their unemployment insurance benefits.
- **OJT Investments** - Since July 2010, there have been over 1,300 participants in OJTs, with 85 percent of the participants completing training before leaving, and 70 percent employed.
- **Microsoft E-Learning** - As of October 1, 2012, 21,695 individuals have started one or more Microsoft E-Learning courses available through WorkSource and 7,976 have completed at least 75 percent of a course.
- **Workplace Digital Learning** - In January 2012, the Workforce Board and its state and local partners began implementing the workplace digital learning demonstration project funded through a congressional general appropriation.
- **Workforce Training Results 2012** - [WTR 2012 reports](#) that the state's largest programs for dislocated workers, the Worker Retraining Program and the WIA Title I Dislocated Worker Program, both have strong positive net impacts on participants' employment rates and earnings.

This report was prepared by the staff of the Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board. www.wtb.wa.gov