



## BOARD MEETING AGENDA

February 2, 2022, | 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. | Meeting No. 254

Click Link to Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/99892451717?pwd=NEJwQlIXTIRWSUNySXI2TIBLc3AwQT09>

Meeting ID: 998 9245 1717 | Password: 780404

1:00 p.m.	<b>Call to Order</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Welcome and Introductions</li></ul>	
1:05 p.m.	<b>Consent Agenda (Action)</b>	<b>1</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Approval of December 2021 Meeting Minutes</li><li>• Performance Sanction Policy Adjustments</li></ul>	
1:10 p.m.	<b>TAP Planning Process Update (Action)</b>	<b>2</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eric Wolf, Workforce Board</li></ul>	
1:55 p.m.	<b>Chair's Report – Board Leadership</b>	<b>3</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lee Anne Caylor, Interim Chair</li><li>• John Aultman, Governor's Office</li><li>• Larry Brown, Incoming Co-Chair</li><li>• Gary Chandler, Incoming Co-Chair</li></ul>	
3:20 p.m.	<b>Break</b>	
3:25 p.m.	<b>2022 Legislative Agenda</b>	<b>4</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nova Gattman, Workforce Board (Handout)</li></ul>	
3:55 p.m.	<b>Executive Director's Report</b>	
4:00 p.m.	<b>Adjourn</b>	

Tab 1



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## **MINUTES OF MEETING NO. 253**

### **December 15, 2021**

#### **Board Members Present:**

Lee Anne Caylor, Chair  
Gary Chandler, Representing Business  
Kairie Pierce for Larry Brown, Representing Labor  
Creigh H. Agnew, Representing Business  
Mark Martinez, Representing Labor  
Cami Feek, Employment Security Department (ESD)  
Jane Hopkins, Representing Labor  
Rebecca Wallace for Chris Reykdal, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Marie Bruin for Jan Yoshiwara, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC)  
Mark Mattke, Representing Local Government  
David Stillman for Cheryl Strange, Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)  
Chris Alejano, Representing Underserved Populations  
Lisa Brown, Department of Commerce  
Marie Davis for Lisa Brown, Department of Commerce  
Larry Brown, Representing Labor

#### **Call to Order**

Ms. Lee Anne Caylor called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. on a virtual meeting using Zoom.

#### **Thank You Presentations**

The Board gave a special presentation of thanks and recognition to Ms. Creigh H. Agnew, Mr. David Stillman, and Mr. Mark Martinez for their service to the Board.

#### **Consent Agenda**

Ms. Creigh H. Agnew moved to approve the Consent Agenda that included approval of the October 13, 2021 Meeting Minutes, the 2022 Meeting Schedule, and the approval to release the Performance Sanction Policy Adjustments for public comment. Mr. Mark Martinez seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

**Executive Director's Report**

Workforce Board Executive Director, Ms. Eleni Papadakis, submitted a report to the Board in writing. In person, she highlighted the staff changes within the Workforce Development Councils (WDCs). She welcomed William Westmoreland, CEO of Pacific Mountain WDC. Mr. Mark Mattke also took the opportunity to announce Miriam Halliday has joined Workforce Southwest Washington as their new CEO, replacing Kevin Perkey. Ms. Papadakis and Ms. Becky Wallace updated the Board on the ongoing partnership with Amazon World Services (AWS) as they launch two large investments in building pathways to careers in cloud computing, with an emphasis on underrepresented populations. In mid-November, the company launched the AWS Skills Center in Seattle. Amazon repurposed one of its buildings to create exhibit and classroom space, and they've hired a faculty and program team to support their goal of exciting people in the community about technology and technology-based jobs.

Ms. Papadakis also acknowledged Ms. Jan Yoshiwara's recent announcement regarding her intent to retire in six months and welcomed the Workforce Board's new CFO/COO Lisa Engelhart.

**2022 Legislative Session**

Workforce Board Staff, Ms. Nova Gattman, presented to the Board the final list of decision packages submitted for consideration in the Governor's budget as the workforce system's 2022 Legislative Agenda. They include Career Bridge modernization, Climate Change Workforce Development Group, Data Integration Study, Future of Workforce Development, and Advance Equity in IT Careers. She went over the primary mode of communications and how the Board can stay abreast of the latest developments. In response to Ms. Caylor's question asking how the Board can support Ms. Gattman during the 2022 Legislative Session, Ms. Gattman requested Board members and agency partners let us know if they bring on new legislative staff so we can ensure we are looping in the right people and also know who to go to for information.

Ms. Gattman invited the Board to share any legislative updates they may have. In response to Ms. Gattman's invitation, Mr. Mark Mattke announced that the WDCs, along with the Washington Workforce Association, are in the process of developing a request to create and fund a workforce innovation fund intended to provide the WDCs with more flexible funding in order to serve those individuals who are not eligible for assistance under the current federal eligibility guidelines. The intent is to be able to work with their partners in the community and economic development to determine where the need is greatest, then have the ability to easily access funding in order to meet those needs. Ms. Gattman thanked Mr. Mattke for the updates and asked that he keep her in the loop so that Board staff may assist as appropriate.

**TAP Planning Process**

Mr. Eric Wolf, Deputy Director of Policy and Programs, opened his presentation by explaining to the Board that the reason they are being asked to approve the Perkins Performance Target updates to be released for public comment so early is because that particular portion of the TAP plan is required to be released for 60 days, while the other portions are only required to be released for 30 days. He noted that system partners from the Career and Technical Education

System were present at the meeting to help answer questions, and that the Board would have the opportunity at their meeting in March to give final approval of the new performance targets. Mr. Wolf walked the Board through the concept of Perkins target setting, and the rationale behind some of the targets and why they were reset. The Board discussed the difference in how the targets were set, and how they seem to be significantly lower, which seems to be the trend across the nation in response to the pandemic. Mr. Wolf offered to snapshot what other states are doing in advance of final approval. Ms. Becky Wallace added that the Board should expect an additional round of renegotiated targets in the very near future because many of the indicators are based on the state assessment cycle which has been tipped on its head over the past two years. Ms. Marie Bruin added that the community college system will continue to work with OSPI to ensure students continue to be successful. Ms. Creigh H. Agnew moved to submit the proposal for public comment for 60 days. Mr. Mark Martinez seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

### **Update on COVID Flexibility Workforce Information Notices**

Mr. Eric Wolf, opened the presentation by providing some background information on the flexibility policies. He noted that in early 2020, the Workforce Board considered three elements of operational flexibility and policy that our local counterparts were asking for. The first of those three elements were specifically suspending CASAS as the default testing mechanism for assessing basic skills throughout the workforce development system and allowing people to choose the test that's appropriate. The thinking behind that was it was warranted because tests primarily needed to be monitored in person or proctored in person, which was almost impossible or cost prohibitive to do while everyone was working remotely. The second item of policy flexibility suspended a state policy that capped the amount of fund transfers that local areas could make between their adult and dislocated worker fund pools under WIOA Title I. The third was eligibility documentation at the moment of enrollment allowing them to self-attest to their eligibility, so long as our programs follow up in a reasonable amount of time to obtain the appropriate documentation. These three policies are scheduled to sunset in early March, and the point of the update was to inform the Board that a more structured conversation will be held in the coming months on whether or not to continue the policies.

### **Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) Update**

Ms. Nona Mallicoat and Mr. David Kuhn of Employment Security Department gave a presentation to update the Board on replacement of the Efforts to Outcome (ETO) technology system. WorkSource Integrated Technology (WIT) will be a multi-phased project that will replace ETO with a cloud-based solution.

The meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

## Performance Sanctions Policy Adjustments – Tab 1

PRESENTERS: Eric Wolf

BOARD MEETING DATE: 2/2/21

DISCUSSION TIME NEEDED: Consent Agenda Item – Discussion at Board Member's Request

<p><b>ISSUE/SITUATION:</b> Be concise - 1 or 2 sentences that get to the heart of the situation, problem or opportunity being addressed</p>	<p>DOL Monitoring in early 2021 required the state to develop new policies for performance sanctions and outlining the state funding mechanism in the event local areas do not reach agreement on infrastructure funding agreements.</p> <p>Draft Policy 5415 establishes and implements a state performance sanctions policy for all entities that receive Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I-B funding. If Board approves the draft it will be circulated for public comment and returned to the Board for final approval at the January Board meeting.</p>
<p><b>BACKGROUND:</b> Short history of how this recommendation came to be. What has been tried, to what result? What evidence exists to support this recommendation?</p>	<p><b><u>Revisions to Policy 5415: Performance Sanctions</u></b></p> <p>The purpose of the performance sanctions policy is to ensure accountability of entities that receive WIOA Title I-B funds from state administrative agencies in meeting the needs of the local workforce development system and ensure compliance with applicable federal and state laws, regulations, policies, guidance, and terms and conditions of applicable awards and contracts.</p> <p>In July 2021, the state Workforce Board approved Workforce System Policy 5415 on Performance Sanctions pursuant to DOL's request. In October, DOL requested that Board staff refine the Performance Sanction policy and note the following additional information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What technical assistance and corrective action plans may include.</li> <li>• That sanctions could be recommended regardless of corrective action if progress reporting on corrective action plans are not submitted; and</li> <li>• That the state Board, as the WIOA board, makes final determinations on timelines, sanctions, and whether compliance has been met.</li> </ul> <p>During the public comment period from December 12 to January 12, the Board received a request from DOL that the provision allowing local areas to appeal sanctions of the Board to the Department be removed. This final version removes that provision.</p>
<p><b>RECOMMENDATION AND NEXT STEPS:</b> What specific result do you want from the Board? Is this recommendation for discussion or action? If for discussion, will</p>	<p>Staff recommends the Board approve Policy 5415 for final adoption.</p>

<p>action be required at a later date? What next steps are expected after this discussion?</p>	
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## **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I Policy Employment System Administration and Policy**

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Washington envisions a nationally recognized fully integrated One-Stop system with enhanced customer access to program services, improved long-term employment outcomes for job seekers and consistent, high quality services to business customers. In order to achieve this vision, Employment System Administration and Policy sets a common direction and standards for Washington's WorkSource system through the development of WorkSource system policies, information memoranda, and technical assistance.

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**Policy Number:** 5415

**To:** Washington WorkSource System

**Effective Date:** July 16, 2021

**Subject:** WIOA Title I-B Performance Sanctions

### **1. Purpose:**

To establish and implement a state performance sanctions policy for all entities that receive Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I-B funding.

The purpose of the performance sanctions policy is to ensure accountability of entities that receive WIOA Title I-B funds from state administrative agencies in meeting the needs of the local workforce development system and ensure compliance with applicable federal and state laws, regulations, policies, guidance, and terms and conditions of applicable awards and contracts.

To accomplish these responsibilities, as well as to satisfy its oversight role, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB), as the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) will impose penalties or conditions in the form of sanctions for any issues of noncompliance that have not been promptly resolved based on state-imposed corrective actions identified in monitoring or other oversight reports.

### **2. Background:**

Section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires the state workforce development board (SWDB) to negotiate performance targets for each WIOA metric at the local level. States may leverage sanctions on local grant recipients sanctioned for performance failure or for failure to report (section 116(f) of WIOA).



### 3. Policy:

There are currently five metrics (employment 2 quarters after exit, employment 4 quarters after exit, median earnings, credential attainment rate, and measurable skill gain rate) for the three Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Workers, Youth).

Targets for these are negotiated between the state and the WDC. Local areas are then held accountable to possible sanctions after adjusting targets (using the state-developed regression model) to account for most recent local conditions.

The state performance sanctions policy mirrors the federal sanctions policy (TEGL 11-19) to the extent possible. "Failure" to perform on any WIOA metric would be defined as any of the following:

- Failure to meet 50% of targets for any metric, or
- Failure to average 90% of targets for all measures across programs (i.e. Adult) (via regression modelling), or
- Failure to average 90% of targets for all programs across a given measure (i.e. earnings).

Failure in the first year would trigger technical assistance by state partners coordinated by the WTECB, and a technical assistance and corrective action plan to achieve negotiated performance levels. Technical assistance and corrective action plans may include but are not limited to: identification of one or more specific performance issues; assessment of specific technical assistance or training needs; selection of one or more specific technical assistance or training activities to be implemented; identification of the appropriate entities to provide the technical assistance or training; identification of a timeline for completing of the technical assistance and training; and specific dates for reassessment of technical assistance or training needs and completion of the specific technical assistance or training. If an area does not improve performance in their corrective action period for two consecutive program years, they may be subject to sanctions.

Sanctions assessed after two years of performance failure under correction action may include a recommendation to the state workforce board that a non-performing local workforce development area not be recertified by the Governor in future program years. Sanctions may be recommended regardless of corrective action taken in cases involving failure to submit or correct quarterly performance reports. The WTECB, as the state grantee, makes the final determination on timelines, sanctions, and whether compliance has been met.

#### **Appeals Process**

~~Upon an area being notified of the possibility of being sanctioned, local boards have the right to appeal the decision to the Department of Labor. They must do this within 30 days of intent to sanction for performance failure. The appeal would be to the Region 6 DOL representative.~~

### 4. Definitions:

**Sanction** is a penalty imposed/assessed or a remedial action required for noncompliance with applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations, contract provisions/grant agreements or conditions, or policies.

**Targets** are the negotiated level of performance agreed upon for any of the five metrics across the Title I programs

**Technical Assistance** is the efforts by either the Department of Labor or the state to identify and correct causes of performance failure.

**5. References:**

- WIOA Section 116(g) – Performance Accountability
- WIOA Final Rule, 20 CFR 677.220 – Under what circumstances may a corrective action or sanction be applied to local areas for poor performance?
- WIOA Final Rule, 20 CFR 677.225 – Under what circumstances may local areas appeal a reorganization plan?
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 11-19 – Negotiations and Sanctions Guidelines for the WIOA Core Programs

**6. Supersedes:**

None.

**7. Website:**

<https://wpc.wa.gov/policy/state/WIOA>

**8. Action:**

Local Workforce Development Boards and their contractors must distribute this policy broadly throughout the system to ensure that WorkSource System staff are familiar with its content and requirements.

**9. Attachments:**

None.

**Direct Inquiries To:**

*Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board*  
*P.O. Box 43105*  
*Olympia, WA 98504-3105*  
*(360) 709-4600*  
[workforce@wtb.wa.gov](mailto:workforce@wtb.wa.gov)

**Direct Other Inquiries To:**

*Employment System Administration and Policy*

*Employment System Policy and Integrity Division*  
*Employment Security Department*  
*P.O. Box 9046*  
*Olympia, WA 98507-9046*  
[SystemPolicy@esd.wa.gov](mailto:SystemPolicy@esd.wa.gov)

# Tab 2

## TAP Planning Updates

PRESENTERS: Eric Wolf

BOARD MEETING DATE: 2/2/2022

DISCUSSION TIME NEEDED: 45 minutes

<p><b>ISSUE/SITUATION:</b> Be concise - 1 or 2 sentences that get to the heart of the situation, problem or opportunity being addressed</p>	<p>Board members will discuss the upcoming TAP plan update due in March 2022 and their timeline for approval of updates to the plan, consideration of public comments, and approval of the plan updates for submission.</p>
<p><b>BACKGROUND:</b> Short history of how this recommendation came to be. What has been tried, to what result? What evidence exists to support this recommendation?</p>	<p>The Department of Labor issued additional guidance to states in November that planning requirements were unchanged from 2020, but that states should make updates to reflect COVID impacts on their economies. Staff has updated the strategic portions of the plan to incorporate economic impacts of the 2020-2021 period and the effect of COVID on system participation. At the February Board meeting, staff will review relevant updates to the strategic chapters of the Talent and Prosperity for All plan.</p>
<p><b>RECOMMENDATION AND NEXT STEPS:</b> What specific result do you want from the Board? Is this recommendation for discussion or action? If for discussion, will action be required at a later date? What next steps are expected after this discussion?</p>	<p>Staff recommends that the Board review the draft strategic portion of the plan and offer comments and feedback. The Board further authorizes staff to assemble remaining components and partner plans for public comment before the next Board meeting so final approval can be given before submission.</p>

# STRATEGIC ELEMENTS – Draft 2022 Update

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## **(a) Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis.**

***The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions, economic development strategies, and labor market in which the State’s workforce system and programs will operate.***

### **1. Economic and Workforce Analysis**

***A. Economic Analysis. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions and trends in the State, including sub-state regions and any specific economic areas identified by the State. This includes:***

***(i) Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations. Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.***

Between February 2010 (the State’s Great Recession low point) and February 2020 (just as the COVID-19 pandemic was taking hold) there were 120 months and all except 17 of them saw job growth. In February 2020 Washington state employment registered at just under 3.5 million, and the unemployment rate reached a low of 4.1 percent. While there were areas and sectors that struggled, overall, the economy was strong and labor markets were healthy.

In early 2020, most Washingtonians were working in the service sector – about 85 percent, and it was where most recent job growth was concentrated. Unfortunately, service jobs were among the most vulnerable to disease transmission and once pandemic lockdowns began and social distancing requirements were put in place in March, these jobs accounted for almost 90 percent of all job losses between February and May of 2020. The biggest contributor of service sector job losses, about one-third of total losses, was the Leisure and Hospitality industry.

Since that time, the Leisure and Hospitality industry has added jobs at the fastest pace (up 49 percent), but it is still 40,000 below the pre-pandemic level. Similarly, Retail Trade shed jobs at a fast rate in early 2020 but has experienced solid growth since.

The information sector weathered the pandemic as well as any other in the state. After growing by 46 percent in the decade that preceded Covid, it only lost 1 percent of its workforce during the downturn, and then rebounded by 11 percent by the end of 2020.

The pandemic has continued through 2021 and into 2022, further straining the healthcare system in Washington, the U.S., and the world. In Washington, registered nurses have shown the most online job postings—over 8,000 in August 2021. Laborers, managers, and software developers also had large numbers of postings.

Through the end of this decade the occupation projected to have most growth in demand is software developers (4,310 average annual openings). It is followed by home health aides (2,122), market research analysts (1,824), and operations managers (1,404).

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***(ii) Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations. Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.***

Between 2017 and 2027, the information sector<sup>1</sup> is projected to have the fastest annual growth in employment ---at 3.2 percent, followed by “Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services” with 2.6 percent employment growth over those same 10 years, according to Washington’s Employment Security Department. Overall, the state’s employment growth is projected to average a 1.5 percent each year during this period. The slowest growing industry is mining (0.1 percent), followed by manufacturing (0.3 percent). In short, the forecast anticipates high-turnover, low-wage industries to grow enough to remain the largest in terms of employment, while professional services and education & health become increasingly more important economic drivers, primarily as the relative size of goods-producers declines (outside of construction, though that could change quickly depending on the economy).

The expected continued growth in the construction and healthcare industries is mirrored on the occupation side with increased demand for carpenters, construction laborers, registered nurses, and personal care aides. Most of the rest of the growth occupations are service jobs, which share the characteristic of not being easily outsourced.

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***(iii) Employers’ Employment Needs. With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in (A)(i) and (ii), provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.***

Despite large numbers of jobseekers, companies still have difficulties finding workers with specific skills. To better measure the needs of industry, Washington’s Workforce Board periodically administers and publishes an Employer Needs and Practices Survey. The most recent survey, conducted in 2019, featured responses from 2,647 employers, of which 1,765 were considered valid.

According to survey results, almost 70 percent of Washington’s employers with two or more workers experienced workforce challenges in the 12 months prior to the survey—a pre-pandemic period when the state’s economy was booming. Finding and hiring qualified job candidates was the most common challenge for employers across the state, with 38 percent of survey respondents citing this issue. Some 80 percent of Washington’s employers had job openings during this same period, with 45 percent reporting difficulty finding talent. One in five of these employers (roughly 15,000) had to turn down new

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<sup>1</sup> Among 2-digit NAICS industries, Washington Employment Security Department, industry control totals.

business opportunities as a consequence of not finding the right job candidates to fill open positions—a significant economic loss.

Small businesses (those employing fewer than 20 people) account for 20 percent of Washington’s workforce. They faced greater recruiting challenges than larger firms, and thus experienced greater losses in missed business opportunities because of being short staffed. However, the state’s larger employers experienced more turnover and retention issues than smaller businesses. Larger businesses also experienced a higher rate of declined job offers than smaller employers, according to the survey.

Based on job postings as of December 2021, knowledge and/or experience with customer support experience, administrative scheduling, productivity tools, sales, and infectious disease were the most in-demand skills. The certifications listed as highest in-demand were driver’s license, registered nurse, First Aid/CPR, and commercial drivers.

The Workforce Board pays particular attention to mid-level occupations and skill gaps—focusing on occupations that require education beyond high school but stops short of a four-year degree. This mid-level skills section of the labor market sits at the intersection of a number of trends. Workforce Board research shows that among mid-level training occupations, the projected supply of skilled graduates will fall short by about 137,000 of projected openings each year in Washington. The largest gaps are in computer and information science, technician, service, and education occupations. Teacher assistants, preschool teachers, and library technicians are key occupations driving demand for educators at the mid-level. As seen in previous analyses, demand also remains strong for specific health occupations, led by jobs for registered nurses, medical and dental assistants, diagnostic-related technologists, dental hygienists, massage therapists, and health practitioner support technicians.

Washington’s workers have traditionally earned higher wages than the rest of the nation, a trend which has accelerated in recent years. In 2001, state residents earned an average 3 percent more than workers nationally. By 2019, Washington workers median earnings were 14 percent higher than the national median. Washington workers pulled in a median annual wage of \$41,735 compared to the rest of U.S. workers who earned a median annual wage of \$36,519. While this is generally good news for Washington’s workers, earnings growth has not been equally distributed. In 2019, individuals with less than a high school education had median annual earnings of \$30,627. This compares to \$62,447 for those with bachelor’s degrees and \$86,167 for those with graduate or professional degrees.

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***(B) Workforce Analysis. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in section 3 of WIOA. This population must include individuals with disabilities among other groups in the State and across regions identified by the State. This includes: —***

***(i) Employment and Unemployment. Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data and trends in the State.***



As elsewhere, the last two years have been a roller coaster for unemployment rates and numbers in Washington. In January 2020, Washington state’s unemployment rate was at near all-time lows at 4.0 percent. With the COVID pandemic leading to a government-mandated lock down of businesses and work sites, unemployment hit a high of 16.3 percent three months later. However, as businesses re-opened and social distancing requirements relaxed, unemployment dropped again to 4.5 percent by the end of 2021.

Employment trends have mirrored unemployment trends, suffering deep drops immediately after the pandemic hit and lockdowns were instituted. Steady job growth returned as restrictions loosened and the economy began to return to normal, despite masking and other social distancing requirements. Throughout the second half of 2021, the pandemic surged as new variants caused spikes in illness and hospitalizations. At this writing, the pandemic continues to impact the economy with the omicron variant. Perhaps unsurprisingly, statewide employment, while strong, has yet to reach pre-pandemic levels.

The largest labor market trend resulting from this pandemic era, and only partially masked by the low unemployment rate, are the growing numbers of working-age Washingtonians (and Americans) who remain on the economic sidelines—choosing not to work. This has been dubbed “The Great Resignation,” as many, particularly front-line workers have chosen to stay out of the labor force or left jobs to seek higher wages and better working conditions. This can be seen in the state’s declining labor force participation rate. In the summer of 2008, the participation rate was just under 70 percent, close to an all-time high. The decline in labor force participation was accelerated by the Great Recession, especially among older, male workers, who appeared not to be able to regain the higher-paying jobs they had lost and essentially were sidelined and not working at all. However, labor force participation did reach a post-recession peak of 65.7 percent—just before the pandemic struck. Since then, it has been mostly down and at the end of 2021 settled at 63.5 percent. In other words, more than a third of Washington’s working-age labor force are not working, sparking worry about where this continuing downward trend in labor force participation is leading—for workers, employers, and their communities.

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***(ii) Labor Market Trends. Provide an analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations.***

See (1) (A) (i) above.

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***(iii) Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce. Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.***

Those with higher education levels have stronger labor market outcomes, higher labor force participation rates, and lower unemployment levels. According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, in 2019, 8.3 percent of Washington’s labor force had less than a high school diploma, 22.1 percent of Washingtonians had a high school diploma or equivalent, 32.0 percent had some college or an associate degree, and 37.0 percent held a bachelor’s degree or higher. Among prime working-age Washingtonians, nearly one in three who lacked a diploma were absent from the labor force—a concerning statistic. Also concerning, those without high school diplomas who were counted as part of the state’s labor force had high unemployment rates—6.4 percent were unemployed. In comparison to the overall population, those with some college or an associate’s degree had a 77.6 percent labor force participation rate and a 3.8 percent unemployment rate. Those with a bachelor’s degree or higher had a labor force participation rate of about 87 percent and an unemployment rate of just 2.4 percent.

Data published in 2021 by Washington’s K-12 education department, the Office of Superintendent of Public Education (OSPI), shows that 82.9 percent of the students who entered ninth grade four years earlier graduated on time. Females had a higher graduation rate (86.0 percent) than males (80.0 percent). Asians (91.1 percent) had the highest graduation rate among different racial and ethnic groups, while Native Americans had the lowest graduation rate (69.8 percent). Low-income students had a 75.1 percent graduation rate, students with disabilities 64.5, and homeless students had a 59.4 percent graduation rate.

Low high school graduation rates remain a concern. However, young people who are neither employed nor in school pose an even bigger concern. These so-called “disconnected youth” can delay critical milestones, such as marriage and home ownership, miss chances to hone their work skills and advance careers, and may end up relying on public assistance, or in worse cases, enter the criminal justice system. Being disconnected at a young age can have a lasting impact as these years are a critical period of growth and independence. In 2019, nearly 4.8 percent of 16-19 in Washington individuals, were neither in school nor employed. This totaled about 17,310 young people.

Educational attainment in Washington also varies widely by race and ethnicity. More than one third of Hispanics had less than a high school education, a far higher percentage than any other group. For Whites, about 92 percent had a high school diploma or higher, the highest among ethnicities. Asians had the highest share attaining a bachelor’s degree or higher and Pacific Islanders the lowest with a four-year degree.

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***(iv) Describe apparent ‘skill gaps’.***

Aligning the state’s degree production with projected job openings can be difficult. Students begin education programs that can take several years to complete. In the meantime, demand for occupations can change from the time students begin their training. Assessing future demand against supply can help residents make good choices about what to study. It also assists education institutions in

determining their program mix and where to develop new programming and curriculum to meet labor market needs.

To help match the output of degrees with future openings, three different education levels are given focus by the workforce system: 1) “mid-level” education that requires more than a year of post-high school training or education, but less than a bachelor’s degree, 2) a bachelor’s degree, and 3) a graduate degree. Although completions in middle-level training occupations is expected to be the highest of the three education levels, the demand for mid-level skilled workers is also expected to see the greatest increase within the labor market. The number of projected mid-level openings is estimated at just over 136,000 more per year than the number of completions, if they continue at their current rate. The skill gap for bachelor’s degrees is anticipated to be about 85,000 annually.

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***(2) Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in (a)(1)(B)(iii) above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in (a)(1)(A)(iii) above. This must include an analysis of –***

***(A) The State’s Workforce Development Activities. Provide an analysis of the State’s workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and mandatory and optional one-stop delivery system partners***

The following data shows the number of people served, funds spent, and providers that are part of Washington state’s Workforce Development System, with services provided at one-stop WorkSource career centers. The following information focuses on the 12-month period that ran from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020.

**WIOA Title I Adults:** There were 19,782 persons served and \$14,713,000 in federal funds expended. Providers included WorkSource Centers and affiliate sites, contracted colleges, community-based organizations, and local government agencies.

**WIOA Title I Dislocated Workers:** There were 6,871 persons served and \$12,765,000 in federal funds expended. Providers included WorkSource Centers and affiliate sites, contracted colleges, community-based organizations, and local government agencies.

**WIOA Title I Youth:** There were 3,041 persons served and \$14,832,000 in federal funds expended. Providers included community-based organizations, educational service districts, school districts, and city/county government through the Workforce Development Councils.

**Wagner-Peyser Labor Exchange:** There were 90,071 persons served and \$12,371,000 in federal funds expended. Providers included the Employment Security Department and WorkSource Centers statewide.

**Trade Act – Trade Adjustment Assistance:** There were 861 persons served and \$8,099,000 in federal funds expended. Providers included the Employment Security Department and WorkSource centers statewide.

**Basic Education for Adults:** There were 38,738 persons served and \$11,231,000 in federal funds and \$82,442,000 in state funds expended. Providers included Washington’s community and technical colleges and community-based organizations.

**Vocational Rehabilitation Services:** There were 8,479 persons served and \$30,336,000 in federal funds and \$13,889,000 in state funds expended. Providers included local divisions of Vocational Rehabilitation units and contracted community partners.

**Department of Services for the Blind:** There were 1,022 persons served and \$7,891,000 in federal funds and \$3,514,000 in state funds expended. Statewide services provided through six offices located throughout the state.

**TANF/WorkFirst Education and Training Services:** There were 2,983 persons served and \$13,657,000 in federal funds expended. Providers included Washington’s community and technical colleges, private career schools, and community-based organizations.

**TANF/WorkFirst Community Jobs/Career Jump:** There were 2,075 persons served and \$17,491,000 in federal funds expended and \$279,000 in state funds expended, provided by 21 community-based organizations throughout the state.

**TANF/Community Works:** There were 571 persons served and \$1,494,000 in federal funds expended and \$15,000 in state funds expended, provided by 21 community-based organizations throughout the state.

**TANF/WorkFirst Employment Services:** There were 5,789 persons served and \$12,694,000 in federal funds expended. Providers included WorkSource offices and some community services offices.

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**(B) The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities. Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A), directly above.**

**Strengths:** Washington’s workforce development system is a complex network of 55 programs, managed by 12 state agencies and 12 local Workforce Development Councils. It serves hundreds of thousands of current and future jobseekers and employers at a cost of more than \$1 billion a year in federal and state funds. Four state agencies manage or coordinate 84 percent of these funds.

**A complex system, serving many needs:** The system is complex because it serves a wide variety of people with vastly differing circumstances. It takes a coordinated effort among many program partners at state agencies, school districts, community and technical colleges, local Workforce Development

Councils, and community-based organizations to develop a skilled workforce able to meet the diverse demands of business and industry in Washington. To succeed, the system must effectively prepare individuals for the job market by offering training for occupations in demand, as well as job preparation and support services to help individuals succeed. The system must be sufficiently flexible and comprehensive to accommodate the varying needs of participants and employers. Effective coordination of service delivery is essential to success, as is employer engagement, particularly at the local level.

**Highly regarded, but still room for improvement:** Washington's approach to coordinated service delivery is highly regarded at the federal and state levels, and recent federal workforce development legislation includes components of Washington's system in its design. Workforce professionals in Washington acknowledge, however, that there is still room for improvement. This reflects the necessarily complex nature of the system, the accelerating changes taking place in the economy, and the diverse needs of workers and employers.

**Strong local partnerships are critical:** Strong local partnerships are critical to workforce development program success. Federal law requires that federally funded services be provided and in some cases, such as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), be managed at the local level because local government officials and businesses best understand local needs.

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) is the lead state agency responsible for coordinating system partners statewide. It works with them, as well as the Governor and Legislature, to develop the strategic vision and policies for workforce development in Washington.

**Weaknesses:** A 2015 study of the workforce development system undertaken by the Washington State Auditor's Office found that the overlap and duplication of effort found in the workforce system are largely justified, because risks are associated with coordination and service delivery. Entry to some programs is open to all, without restrictions or special requirements, but participation in other programs is restricted by specific eligibility criteria. The overlap and duplication we found was mostly in the programs that serve specialized populations. The report found fragmentation in the 10 TANF-related programs. The risks the report found in the system were related to the complexity of the system with its many moving parts, and assigning authority to the local level.

Although Washington is well respected at the federal and state levels for its coordinated, holistic approach to workforce development, the report identified four areas of potential risk within the system that may warrant further analysis:

- Variations in local service delivery;
- Inconsistent quality of counseling to help students transfer into training and employment;
- Variable degrees of engagement between employers and educators; and
- Federal restrictions on services particularly in TANF.

***(C) State Workforce Development Capacity. Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A), above.***

See (A) above for details on capacity of programs.

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## **(b) State Strategic Vision and Goals.**

***The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategic vision and goals for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include—***

***(1) Vision. Describe the State's strategic vision for its workforce development system.***

Washington's strategic vision is to: help more people find and keep jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency, with a focus on disadvantaged populations; close skill gaps for employers, with a focus on in-demand industry sectors and occupations, including through registered apprenticeships; and work together as a single, seamless team to make this happen.

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***(2) Goals. Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the analysis in (a) above of the State's economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This should—***

***(A) Include goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment and other populations.***

***(B) Include goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.***

### **Business Engagement Goals:**

- Identify meaningful metrics to establish a baseline and increase the number of businesses utilizing the workforce system.
- Have at least one sector partnership in development in each workforce region. Use the Sector Partnership Framework or a similar framework to show progress over time.
- Train workforce system staff on the implementation of business engagement.
- Increase resources for work-based learning opportunities, including on-the-job training and registered apprenticeship, internships, job shadows, but especially, incumbent worker training.
- Increase the amount of work-based training including incumbent worker training, on-the-job training and registered apprenticeship, job shadows, internships.

### **Integrated Service Delivery Goals:**

- Improve Washington's workforce system staff capabilities to navigate customers to the resources they need to advance on their individual career pathways.

- Develop an intake process that eliminates redundant assessments and streamlines customer experience.
- Increase the number of participants, including those with barriers, who have defined career pathways and have gained portable skills, received industry-recognized credentials, and/or earned college credits.

**Access and Technology Goals:**

- Establish the state-level advisory committee on accessibility and barrier solutions and ensure the designation of local advisory committees during the first two years of the plan. By the fourth year of the plan, ensure that the state-level advisory committee has received multiple years of progress reports on barrier removal projects at the local level from each local area.
- Identify and encourage local pilot programs that use technology as a means of facilitating and improving an integrated service delivery for customers, including programs that are designed to improve access to the system.

**Next-Generation Performance Accountability Goal:**

- Develop a system to accurately measure the collective success of all WIOA partners in serving workforce populations.

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***(3) Performance Goals. Using the table provided in Appendix 1, include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)***

Most performance goals will be negotiated and submitted to the U.S. Department of Labor and U.S. Department of Education in May of 2022.

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***(4) Assessment. Describe how the State will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce investment system in the State in relation to the strategic vision and goals stated above in sections (b)(1), (2), and (3) and how it will use the results of this assessment and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements.***

The state established standard Core Measures of participant outcomes and has been applying them across a wide range of workforce programs for almost 20 years. In addition, periodic surveys of both participants and employers have been conducted over the same time span. Both the state Core Measures and the surveys will be reviewed for possible revisions to enhance their applicability and relevance to the WIOA framework and implementation.

The state has begun development of methods to measure the overall participation by individuals in the workforce system, including and beyond the WIOA core partners, and to measure the collective effect of

that system on the employment and education outcomes of those individuals. Similarly, while awaiting development of national effectiveness measures for services to employers, the state is assessing the methods for measuring the extent to which the workforce system is interacting with the entire employer community.

### **Next-Generation Performance Accountability**

To meet the combined challenges of a competitive economy and a changing labor force, and make the best use of limited resources, Washington's workforce system must achieve its objective outcomes and continuously improve its performance. While Washington's workforce system has been a national leader in performance accountability, WIOA mandates create the opportunity to improve performance measures to better support a more integrated and coordinated service delivery system. That WIOA combines six federal programs under a common performance measurement system also brings challenges along with those opportunities.

New measures will be developed to provide a system-level, cross-agency assessment of overall progress that provides a clear picture of customer progress (worker, employer, jobseeker and student) rather than individual program results. At this point, we are awaiting guidance from federal agency partners.

### **Next Generation Performance Goal**

The following goal will help move Washington's system forward:

- Develop a system to accurately measure the collective success of all WIOA partners in serving workforce populations.

In addition, soon after the passage of WIOA, Governor Jay Inslee directed the Workforce Board to work with the system's stakeholders to shape Washington's strategic plan toward three goals to maximize the workforce system's impact:

1. *Help more people find and keep jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency, with a focus on disadvantaged populations.*
2. *Close skill gaps for employers, with a focus on in-demand industry sectors and occupations, including through apprenticeships.*
3. *Work together as a single, seamless team to make this happen.*

These three goals continue to inform the larger system and guide any changes. Below are ways the system is evolving to better serve all populations through enhanced performance measures.

### **Overview of Washington's workforce development accountability system**

Washington has made great progress in implementing a workforce development accountability system since the Workforce Board was created by the state's Legislature in 1991. Part of the Board's mandate was to establish standardized performance measures across multiple workforce education and training partners and programs. In consultation with workforce training and education agencies and providers, a



comprehensive set of Core Measures and data collection methods were established to address the following questions:

- Did participants of workforce programs get the skills they needed?
- After leaving the program, were participants employed?
- How much did they earn?
- Were program participants and their employers satisfied?
- Did the participant and public get a good return on investment?

To achieve these goals, the Workforce Board developed a variety of measurement methods, including administrative records matching, surveys, and statistical evaluations. The last question, about return on investment, was answered through periodic “net impact” studies which compared the employment rates and earnings of program participants with those of a control group with similar demographic characteristics.

The establishment of these core measures and data collection methods constituted one of the broadest and most sophisticated ongoing state workforce education and training assessment systems in the country.

Federal workforce programs also addressed performance accountability on a program-by-program basis. However, different performance measures were developed separately for many federal programs during this period.

The performance measures largely focused on participant outcomes in terms of employment, earnings, attainment of credentials or progress in education and customer satisfaction. The Workforce Board was heavily involved in national efforts, starting in 2003, to bring interested states together to develop model measures for participant performance outcomes that could be applied across a wide range of programs. The resulting model measures were very similar to the ones adopted by Washington in 1996, and are known as the *Integrated Performance Information* measures.

Under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) further progress was made toward service coordination and integration of federal programs. Although WIA emphasized closer service coordination across agencies and programs, there were no provisions for performance measures except for the Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and Title III (Wagner-Peyser employment services) programs. WIA did advance participant choice and consumer information provisions and Washington aggressively implemented a performance-based Eligible Training Provider List, requiring programs meet specific completion, employment and earnings thresholds in order to be eligible for federal training dollars.

Washington also uses this performance information to help individuals seeking training make informed choices, most notably through the Washington Career Bridge website, launched in 2009. Not only can job counselors see whether an education program led to living-wage jobs, but so can jobseekers, students, parents, educators, and anyone else interested in the outcomes of thousands of Washington education programs.

### **WIOA promises a better integrated, more coordinated system**

It was against this backdrop that WIOA was enacted in 2014, the first federal reform of the workforce system in 15 years.

WIOA's overall goal is to serve customers at a variety of entry points and offer services as needed, rather than requiring customers to proceed on a specific pathway through increasingly "intensive" levels of assistance. If the intention of a high-functioning system is to enable customers to move into and across programs as needed, then the performance measurement system needs to be capable of accurately measuring results when many of the participants are served by multiple programs.

Many details of WIOA's performance accountability system are yet to be defined in regulation and federal guidance; however parts of the emerging picture are becoming clear. WIOA makes important changes in federal performance measurement requirements, including:

- Updated and standardized outcome measures applied across all six core programs. The majority of these measures are very similar to Washington's existing IPI/State Core measures, which have been used for all of the core programs except Wagner-Peyser.
- Reporting procedures which recognize the relationship between participants' barriers and other characteristics and their outcomes, and that many participants may be served by more than one program.
- Extending the types of training providers to be covered under performance-based Eligible Training Provider List processes.

Several of WIOA's key features move toward more consistent accountability for its component programs. In addition to the updated measures and reporting improvements mentioned above, final WIOA rules are likely to include a "common exit" rule under which the exit outcome period for a participant served by multiple programs will not start until the participant has exited from all of them.

However, WIOA does not focus on assessing the collective performance of the WIOA partners, instead focusing on participants served under each of the six separate federal funding streams. Reporting on performance measures is required for participants with specific barriers and by demographic groups within each of the six core programs, but not unduplicated reporting across all of the core programs. Recent regulatory drafts from the federal departments of Labor and Education reference an "average indicator score," arrived at by averaging each performance measure across all six programs. This may be an initial step toward assessing system-level performance, but the average of performance at the program level will not be very effective in measuring the system-level performance of the WIOA partnership.

In contrast to the previous act (WIA), WIOA measures are proposed to exclude the outcomes of participants who rely solely on self-service, eliminating the performance of almost 40 percent of the

state's Title III (Wagner-Peyser) participants from the official performance measures. However, Washington will continue to include this growing segment of the state's workforce customer base.

### **Washington's Commitment to System-Level Performance Accountability**

Washington's Workforce Board is committed to developing a true "system" of workforce delivery, with service delivery coordinated and aligned across programs and agencies. In May 2015, the Workforce Board decided to pursue development of performance data appropriate to a coordinated and aligned system of service delivery by measuring how the components of that system collectively affect the outcomes of different types of clients, regardless of the mix of resources involved. That is, the system will be measured by how well the state is collectively serving populations—such as those with disabilities, or out-of-school youth—rather than how participants receiving services from Vocational Rehabilitation or from Title I Youth are faring.

This will be in addition to—and developed more slowly than—the required calculation and reporting of federal measures at the program level.

Performance targets will be required for all six core WIOA programs (Title I Adults, Title I Dislocated Workers, Title I Youth, Title II Adult Basic Education, Title III Wagner-Peyser Services, and Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation) using the new WIOA measures at the state level, with the state targets set in negotiations with the federal departments. Performance targets are required at the sub-state level only for the three Title I programs – Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth. These local targets are to be negotiated between the regional Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) and the Workforce Board. The current practice under WIA has been to consult with the WDCs in developing target levels to propose to the federal agencies as required for the negotiation process. Only the six core WIOA programs are required to use the WIOA performance measures. Participation of any other federal or state program in a WIOA "combined plan" or "unified plan" does not invoke WIOA accountability for any additional programs.

### **Washington's Alignment with WIOA**

While WIOA shifts several elements of the performance accountability system in the direction of current Washington practices, the act will require significant changes and at least minor modifications in almost every aspect of those processes.

### **WIOA measures compared to current Washington State Core Measures**

Measure	WIOA	Washington	Impact
Employment Rate	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> quarters after exit	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter after exit	These are very similar to the IPI/State Core

			measures. Existing sources and methods appear to be adequate for providing this data.
Median Earnings	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter after exit	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter after exit	
Credential Rate	Percentage of participants who either obtained postsecondary credential, or obtained secondary school diploma during participation or within one year after exit.  (More complicated definition for Title III Youth)	State Core measure is similar, but significant details still to be determined.	
Skills Gain	Percentage of participants (not only exiters) who are in a program leading to either: a postsecondary credential, or employment and achieve measurable skill gains toward credential or employment	No comparable State Core measure	A new measure of progress while in training has yet to be fully defined, and will pose some challenges as it involves data and sources not used in previous

			workforce performance measures.
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	TBD	State has conducted periodic employer surveys, including Workforce Board's 2019 Employer Survey.	New measure(s) will be developed over the next year or more by the federal agencies.

At a high level, the key outcomes identified nearly 20 years ago for the workforce system remain the focus of most performance measurement efforts. They are not static targets, but areas in which positive results should be achieved for all people, and by which improvement efforts should be focused.

- Employment.
- Earnings.
- Skills.
- Satisfaction of workforce program participants.
- Satisfaction of employers.
- Washington will also strive for quality performance measures by emphasizing the following considerations for outcome measures:
  - Quantify the results for customers rather than processes or the quantity of inputs.
  - Promote behavior and results consistent with longer-term objectives – and does not incent actions with unintended consequences contrary to overall objectives of the workforce system.
  - Comprehensible to a lay audience.
  - Create a level playing field among programs and service strategies.
  - Scalable and divisible such that they are applicable to local institutions, regional areas, and the state, and for subpopulations and service strategies.
  - Not easily “gamed” or manipulated.
  - Affordable and not a substantial diversion of resources from direct service to customers.

## **Washington's Commitment to System-Level Performance Accountability**

WIOA's goal is to serve customers at a variety of entry points and offer services as needed rather than requiring customers to move through increasingly "intensive" levels of assistance. If the intention of a high-functioning system is to enable customers to move into and across programs as needed, then the performance measurement system should be appropriate to a system in which many of the participants are served by multiple programs. However, the formal WIOA performance assessment process does not focus on assessing the collective performance of the WIOA partners, instead focusing on each of the six separate federal funding streams.

Washington is committed to developing a true "system" of workforce education and training service delivery, including the integration of performance accountability.

To measure achievement of this plan's objectives of Improving the Customer Experience for Current and Future Workers, Improving Accessibility and Technology, and Engaging Business for Better Results, the Workforce Board is committed to the development of a system-level or cross-agency assessment of overall progress. This is a commitment beyond the federal requirements in order to develop a performance approach that addresses how the WIOA partners are collectively serving all populations within the workforce system. This approach will provide aggregated data by population type, in unduplicated counts across all the core programs.

The development of performance data appropriate to an integrated system of service delivery is necessary to measure how the components of that system collectively affect the outcomes of different types of clients, regardless of the mix of resources involved. This systemic performance accountability effort will be in addition to, and developed more slowly than, the required federal measures computation and reporting at the program level.

## **Work to be Done (What we don't know)**

Many critical details have yet to be released. However, a substantial amount of policy, procedure, and technical development will be involved in implementing the performance accountability components of this far-reaching federal act. This work is likely to continue for at least the next two years. A partial list includes the following:

### **Implementing Federal Measures and Reports**

The full scope of this task will not be determined until more federal instructions are released. However, almost all parts of the process of computing performance measures will require some modification. Some new data will have to be collected for the new education and training progress measure (#5). Data collection and processing procedures must be modified or expanded to support new WIOA requirements for performance measurement, statistical adjustment of performance measures, and mandatory reporting. Data validation processes will need to be established for new data items, and may need to be modified for some items currently collected.

### **Performance Target Negotiation**

Data will have to be assembled and analyzed so that performance can be monitored relative to agreed targets and timely requests can be made for target level adjustments in response to unforeseen developments. This will be particularly important during the initial years when federal statistical models for performance adjustment are not fully developed.

### **Sanctions and Incentives**

The system of federal incentives under WIA was not retained under WIOA. New performance sanction procedures must be developed, and the option of state-designed incentives considered.

### **Combining WIOA and State Core Measures**

Because all three of the current State Core Measures for participant outcomes are very similar (but not identical) to WIOA measures, the number of measures used for the programs involved in WIOA should be consolidated. Because the State Core Measures have been in use for almost 20 years and are applied to programs outside WIOA, careful evaluation is needed before consolidation.

### **Eligible Training Provider List Processes**

WIOA requires the establishment of some new procedures for the existing processes for eligibility of education and training programs for Adult and Dislocated Worker participants. The existing criteria must also be re-evaluated and modified. Further, systems for performance assessment and minimum criteria for programs providing several additional types of services to Youth, Adults, and Dislocated Workers must be developed, including Apprenticeship Preparation programs and incumbent worker training. Additional program information identified as important in WIOA may need to be collected and disseminated, requiring modification of the Eligible Training Provider List and Career Bridge.wa.gov processes and systems. The WIOA Final Rules indicate that states have the flexibility of setting different standards for different types of providers. Significant time and effort will be required to determine how to define different types, and how to set standards for provider types for which there is limited experience and baseline data.

### **Measures for Combined Plan Programs and Other Partners**

The separate federal performance measurement systems for all non-core programs will remain unaffected by WIOA, regardless of the extent to which their activities become formal or informal partners in One-Stop and WIOA. As part of developing a system accountability approach for Washington, it may be desirable to eventually include participants from these other partners in an overall accountability framework. However, this would be strictly a state option, and not subject to federal targets and sanctions.

### **The System-Level View**

Going beyond the federal requirements to develop a system-level view will also require substantial work, and will proceed more slowly than development of required federal reporting. Phased implementation is expected, beginning with development of descriptive data about how many people from which populations are currently receiving what types of services across the partnering agencies.

Fortunately, the Workforce Board has significant relevant experience and established methods for parts of this task.

### **Performance Accountability Summary and Goals**

There is always room for improvement when it comes to performance accountability. Determining how to make these adjustments will take time as the state waits for additional federal guidance and sorts through the many metrics involved in workforce performance. In general, the state is committed to developing a system to accurately measure the collective success of all WIOA partners in serving workforce populations. This approach will provide data aggregated by population type, in unduplicated counts across all the core programs.

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## **(c) State Strategy**

***The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals. These strategies must take into account the State's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a) above. Include discussion of specific strategies to address the needs of populations provided Section (a).***

***(1) Describe the strategies the State will implement, including sector strategies and career pathways, as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3)(B), (D). "Career pathway" is defined at WIOA section 3(7). "In-demand industry sector or occupation" is defined at WIOA Section 3(23).***

### **Introduction**

#### **Historic Opportunity to Strengthen Washington's Workforce System**

The businesswoman scratched her head. Her manufacturing company had doubled in size and was growing quickly. She needed skilled workers and she paid a living-wage, but her job openings went unfilled. She wondered, "How am I going to attract the skilled workforce I need to continue to grow my business?"

He entered the workforce straight out of high school and had worked at the mill for the last 25 years. Today, the mill announced it was closing. In the old days, you just responded to a classified ad in the local newspaper. For a job today there wasn't even a newspaper. He felt lost in today's world; where could he turn, what would he do to support his family?

While he was in school, he spent his summers looking for a job. Time after time, business after business and there were no interviews, no opportunities. How could he find a job? How could he, one day, afford a home and raise a family when all employers saw was his disability?

She just graduated from high school. Her grades weren't the greatest, and since she wasn't going to college, she wasn't sure what to do next. She needed someone to help her figure out her possibilities for working, how to get the right skills and how to find a job – things that hadn't been taught in school. She'd heard about WorkSource from a friend; could they help?

Workforce issues such as these play out every day in Washington among growing businesses, the newly graduated, those with disabilities, and those abruptly displaced from long-time careers.

These same issues drove the near unanimous, bipartisan passage of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA), which calls upon states to *"improve the quality of the workforce, reduce welfare dependency, increase economic self-sufficiency, meet the skill requirements of businesses and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the Nation."*

#### **State Strategic Plan Aligns with New Federal Act**

Washington's dual-customer focus on both workers and businesses is at the heart of the state's workforce system, and undergirds this report on the state's strategic plan for workforce development. Even before WIOA, the state's rich web of programs and resources have long worked together to integrate services, improve outcomes, and evaluate results on behalf of these two key customers. Since the revision to the federal workforce development act, Washington has the opportunity to bring greater alignment among federal, state, and local service and program delivery, allowing the system to build on its previous successes and overcome remaining obstacles.

Specifically, this strategic plan outlines an approach that empowers individuals, communities, and employers to realize their full potential through a universally accessible workforce system that continually improves and adapts to changing conditions and demands. We call this plan *Talent and Prosperity for All*.

### **A Coordinated Plan Aligned with Federal and State Mission and Goals**

Soon after the passage of WIOA, Governor Jay Inslee directed the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) to work with the system's stakeholders to shape Washington's strategic plan toward three goals to maximize the workforce system's impact:

1. *Help more people find and keep jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency, with a focus on disadvantaged populations.*
2. *Close skill gaps for employers, with a focus on in-demand industry sectors and occupations, including through registered apprenticeships.*
3. *Work together as a single, seamless team to make this happen.*

The Governor also directed the Workforce Board to initiate several new activities while developing the state's strategic workforce plan.

These activities (see below) were to be completed before the Governor would approve the plan and before it was submitted to the U. S. Department of Labor (DOL) in March 2016:

- *Explore fully the benefits of a Combined Plan.<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> The U.S. Department of Labor provided states with two options for responding to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014. States could submit a "Unified Plan" that covers only "core programs" of workforce development: WIOA Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Services), Basic Education for Adults, Wagner-Peyser Act services, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs. The unified plan would be limited to service delivery strategies and partner-to-partner operational commitments made between these core programs.

States could also choose to create a "Combined Plan" that covers the core program and *one or more* of the additional partner programs listed in the act: postsecondary Carl Perkins Act programs, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/WorkFirst, Trade Adjustment Assistance Act programs, veterans employment and training efforts, Unemployment Insurance services, SNAP Employment & Training, Senior Community Services

- *Conduct an examination of integrating Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program into the workforce system, including recommendations for serving the most at-risk customers.*
- *Provide a data-driven evaluation and recommendation for planning regions in consultation with chief elected officials, local workforce boards, and stakeholders.*
- *Provide recommendations for elevating the strategic role of both state and local workforce boards to focus on system goals and changing the service delivery system in order to improve outcomes for jobseekers and employers.*

These Governor-directed goals and initiatives have been part of the planning process and are reflected in this report.

### **Critical Steps to Successful Plan Implementation**

Through multiple meetings among interested partners and stakeholders the following critical steps were identified in implementing the state's new strategic plan.

**Continued Focus on the Governor's Direction:** A culture of collaboration, with a laser-sharp focus on improving the outcomes for businesses and workers.

**An Operational Plan Embraced by Partners:** The ability to put the principles of this strategic plan into day-to-day program practices to better serve a combined range of customers.

**Leadership and Sustained Commitment:** Leadership at every level to stay the course when necessary and adjust the sails when needed and the ability to make the right choice driven by performance data and other valid evidence for fact-based decision-making.

**Ongoing Communication:** In order to successfully implement the key priorities within the strategic plan the plan partners and stakeholders will need to invest in building an ongoing effective communication system to support ongoing information sharing and rally partners to respond to challenges and opportunities.

### **Work on this Directive is Built on a Solid Foundation**

Washington's many successes in workforce development are detailed in a [2015 report by the State Auditor's Office](#) highlighting the overall effectiveness in coordinating services among 55 programs across 12 state agencies: *"Washington's approach to coordinated service delivery is highly regarded at the federal and state level . . . The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) is the lead agency responsible for coordinating system partners statewide. It works with them, as well as*

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Employment, Community Development Block Grant, Community Services Block Grant, and the Second Chance Act. The additional partners that join the plan coordinate service delivery strategies and make operational commitments in the plan among themselves and with the core partners.

*the Governor and Legislature, to develop the strategic vision and policies for workforce development in Washington.”*

### **Washington’s Choice of a Combined Plan**

The many partners of Washington’s workforce system chose to submit a robust Combined Plan to federal partners—one of two options under WIOA, and the second consecutive WIOA combined plan the state has submitted. This decision was made with a clear eye towards improving the breadth and depth of services to workers and businesses across the state. By submitting a “Combined Plan,” partners are committing to working toward a seamless, customer-driven system that will not differentiate between programs and agencies whether local, state, or federal. The Combined Plan unites six core programs with any number of workforce services across the education and training system. Once included as “Combined Plan” partners, these programs will be aligned with the mission, goals, and priorities within the combined state plan submitted to federal agencies by March 2020 and updated in 2022.<sup>3</sup>

### **Sustaining Recovery by Unlocking Washington’s Talent**

#### **Business Demand Rises for Highly Skilled Workers**

A shortage of skilled workers coupled with record low unemployment rates has companies eager to hire, but according to a U.S. Department of Labor report, not enough jobseekers to fill existing jobs.

And the shortage of high-tech and other skilled workers is expected to become even more dire over the coming decade. That’s according to a report from McKinsey, the consulting firm.

McKinsey Global Institute, the research branch of McKinsey, said the world could have 40 million too few college-educated workers by 2020. In the United States and other developed economies in North America and Europe, companies will require 16 to 18 million more college-educated workers than will be available in 2020, the report said.

To fulfill this growing demand for highly skilled workers, Washington companies have turned to out-of-state and foreign workers to broaden their labor pool, tapping talent from across the world through the U.S. Department of Labor H-1B Foreign Worker Program. It’s clear that this is a missed opportunity for Washington’s workers, who would benefit from higher-skill, higher-wage jobs, especially in Washington’s thriving tech industry. Skilling up Washington’s workforce to meet the needs of businesses that import their talent requires greater collaboration and frank discussions among workforce professionals, education providers, and the business community. A more engaged and invested business community would help fill existing skill gaps through targeted training opportunities and postsecondary

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<sup>3</sup> In Washington, the “Combined Plan” includes the following partners: core programs (Title I Adult/DW/Youth, Title II ABE, Title III Wagner-Peyser, Title IV Voc-Rehab), TANF/WorkFirst, SNAP E&T (used to be called Food Stamps), Senior Community Services, Community Development Block Grant, Community Services Block Grant, Unemployment Insurance (UI), Veterans, Trade Adjustment Act, and Unemployment Insurance.

education programs and help create a better skilled and educated, homegrown workforce. This would give Washington workers a clearer pathway to higher paying jobs, and businesses a more direct connection to their own backyard talent pipeline. In previous years, the state secured two grants totaling \$9.8 million through the U.S. Department of Labor, which include a focus on the technology industry.<sup>4</sup> These grants will help reduce the number of imported workers.

### **Focus on Youth with Barriers to Employment**

The Great Recession hit a generation of young workers hard. However, young adults are making strides at last, after years of significantly higher unemployment rates since the recession officially ended in 2009. Between 2014 and 2015, the unemployment rate among young people aged 16-19 dropped from 23.2 percent to 17.4 percent. Unemployment among older young adults (aged 20-24) also dipped during that same time, dropping from 14.3 percent to 9.6 percent. Typically, young people are hit harder than other age groups when the economy slumps and even returning to “normal” means there is much work to be done in finding solutions to chronic youth unemployment.

### **WIOA Designates Key Populations with Barriers**

Youth aren’t the only ones with employment challenges. WIOA designates more than a dozen populations as those with barriers. These populations are as diverse as the state’s workforce system and face significant challenges in obtaining living-wage jobs that lead to self-sufficiency and economic prosperity. The 14 populations designated as “populations with barriers” under WIOA include:

<b>Populations with Barriers under WIOA</b>	
<i>Displaced Homemakers</i>	<i>Youth in, or formerly in, Foster Care</i>
<i>Low-Income Individuals</i>	<i>English Language Learners</i>
<i>Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Hawaiians</i>	<i>Migrant/Seasonal Farmworkers</i>
<i>Individuals with Disabilities</i>	<i>Individuals within Two Years of Exhausted TANF Eligibility</i>
<i>Older Individuals</i>	<i>Single Parents/Pregnant Women</i>
<i>Ex-Offenders</i>	<i>Long-Term Unemployed</i>
<i>Homeless Individuals</i>	<i>Veterans*</i>

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<sup>4</sup> One of the grants, totaling \$1.5 million, is being administered by the state’s Department of Labor and Industries. It’s expected to provide training and jobs for up to 1,000 people, 600 of them in the technology industry. Another \$3.5 million will go to the Washington Technology Industry Association to create a registered apprenticeship program in the information technology industry. The initiative will be carried out through an innovative partnership between the state, WTIA, and technology companies, including Microsoft, F5 and AT&T.

<i>"Other Groups" Designated by the Governor</i>	
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In Washington, veterans are presumptively included under WIOA's focus populations.

### **Talent and Prosperity for All - Organized Around Four Strategic Priorities.**

The following key strategic priorities were adopted by Washington's workforce system. These strategic priorities are the organizing principles around which Washington's workforce plan is structured:

**1. Customers Receive Integrated Services that Lead to Employment and Careers:** Customers need to be able to find and navigate the workforce development pathway that is best for them. This means Washington's rich but complex system must help customers move beyond program-specific solutions to make informed choices that pull from the full menu of services. Services need to be designed and delivered with customers as the focal point. In addition to acquiring skills, education, and jobs that put them on the path to prosperity, customers should also understand they have continuous access to the workforce development system throughout their working lives. For sustained lifelong success, individuals will reengage in the workforce system throughout their career and lifelong learning journey. The system's promise is to combine all resources to help each individual learn how to find and keep the right job and receive continued support to advance their careers.

**2. Increase Business Engagement with a Clearly Defined Workforce Value Stream:** An estimated 8 percent of Washington businesses utilize the public workforce system.<sup>5</sup> This stark fact underscores the limited interaction between businesses and workforce development service providers at all levels. Businesses need simple paths to the workforce system and a better understanding of the benefits, whether it's filling open positions with qualified applicants from WorkSource, shaping training programs to ensure workers have industry-specific skills, or partnering with higher education. In addition, once businesses and industries *are* engaged—be it through sector strategies or recruitment services—the workforce system must build and sustain these partnerships. The system's promise to partnering businesses is streamlined and integrated services that are a recognized value and easy for an employer to navigate.

**3. Universal Accessibility to the System through Technology and Other Barrier Removal:** This plan embraces barrier removal and universal accessibility of workforce development services—both physical and programmatic—as core priorities. The system's promise to those with barriers is to help employers realize their individual talents and to help all workers realize their full potential in the workplace. The use of technology to remove barriers for workers and enhance their access to services is a "game changer." Advances in telecommunications and technology potentially allow for seamless, universal, and remote access to education, training, and other workforce development services. While technology cannot fix all barrier access problems, in many cases it will free up staff to tackle more difficult access

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<sup>5</sup> Source: U.S. States: For Richer, For Poorer? Winning the battle for talent and securing our standard of living, Accenture report, Page 5: <http://www.wtb.wa.gov/Documents/U.S.StatesRicherPoorerCombined.pdf>

issues. This plan seeks to convert the best of these possibilities into a reality. The Workforce Board is establishing a permanent advisory committee to support the barrier removal work of local Workforce Development Councils.

#### **4. A Next Generation Performance Accountability System That Shows Outcomes and Identifies Gaps:**

While Washington's workforce system has been a national leader in performance accountability, new federal legislation and its mandates create the opportunity to improve performance measures to better support a more integrated and coordinated service delivery system. Under WIOA's predecessor acts, Washington's annual workforce program evaluation ["Workforce Training Results"](#) has shown whether participants of the state's 12 largest workforce programs got jobs, how much they earned, the skills they obtained, and if they were satisfied with their program, among other measures. The Workforce Board's Career Bridge website, home of the state's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), also provides performance results for thousands of education programs. However, to get a clear picture of the system's effectiveness, the current performance accountability system will have to undergo significant changes. The new federal workforce law requires that customers be served at a variety of entry points. If the intention is to enable customers to move into and across programs as needed, then the performance measurement system needs to measure results when many of the participants are served by multiple programs. These measures will need to quantify the results for customers, create a level playing field among programs and service strategies and promote behavior and results consistent with longer-term objectives, among other changes.

#### **Key Commitments Braided Throughout the Plan**

Based on extensive stakeholder input, Governor Directives, and customer needs, the following values and commitments underpin Washington's *Talent and Prosperity for All* strategic plan:

##### **"All Means All"**

With the plan's heightened emphasis on program alignment, many agencies and their stakeholders voiced concern that this would result in reduced services for their clients. Each community urged that customers receive increased services, not less. These services need to be provided in a manner that reflects their unique needs, ranging from one-on-one services for new immigrants to early intervention for youth while still in middle and high school, to educational opportunities for individuals who need additional credentials. The plan consistently directs that priority populations receive the resources they require to be successful and that each community is included in the goal of prosperity and success for everyone. This is a "universal" plan.

##### **Systemwide Partnerships**

A culture of cooperation and partnership will be built to achieve positive results in a complex workforce system. Aligning goals, and measuring them in the same way, across all service and program providers and customers is essential in building this culture of partnership. Through shared goals and measures, Washington can achieve the seamless system envisioned in this plan.

These goals include:

- Deliver prosperity and success in a measurable way for the system’s key customers: workers and businesses.
- Address strategically and efficiently the economic needs of workers and businesses.
- Ensure sustainable results.

### **Interdependency of Government and Non-Profit Agencies**

The mandates outlined in WIOA, the reality of limited resources, and the volume of work to accomplish them all point toward strategic leveraging of all available resources. Members of the non-profit community will be engaged in even closer collaboration with government agencies, including tribes, and colleges and universities. Interagency collaboration will foster increased business involvement and reduce duplication of effort, saving valuable resources, while also reducing business and worker fatigue in using the system.

### **Career Pathways**

The Career Pathways model will be utilized to offer [an efficient and customer-centered approach](#) to workforce development because this model structures intentional connections among workers, employers, and service and program providers. Aligning educational opportunities that lead to industry-recognized qualifications, skills, and academic credentials helps bring workers and employers into the training system on the front end. In turn, this transforms businesses from “customers” into “partners and co-investors” in the workforce system.

### **Continuous Improvement: Old Way of Doing Business is Not an Option**

As the economy and population continue to change, Washington’s workforce system must be even more nimble to adapt to new demands and challenges. Timely, clear, and informative performance indicators will guide strategic course corrections and resource deployment. The Workforce Board, along with its partners, will continue to measure the impact of services to customers and will create an oversight system capable of responding as needed to ensure continued success and system improvements.

### **Professional Development**

A highly skilled and talented staff has played a pivotal role in Washington’s workforce system success. The changes outlined in this plan will require continued investment in staff training and support across agencies and programs. To “manage the system to success,” front-line staff and managers will need to be equipped to respond to changing customers’ needs and support the four key strategies outlined in the plan. Team members will require a broader and deeper understanding of the services provided, not just by their own organization, but by other partners throughout the workforce system. Raising the bar on customer service will require thoughtful and coordinated outreach to businesses, and a tailored approach to providing education and training, and wraparound services for workers.

In addition to partner agencies, Washington will work with business and labor leaders to provide training and technical assistance to those who sit on state and local workforce boards. This assistance



will include helping sponsor training on board duties. The state will strive to offer specific tools, including performance accountability.

### **Leveraging Existing Successes**

Compelling stories of successful initiatives and programs are highlighted in this plan, bringing to life strategic objectives and system goals. These proven successes, and others, will be shared across the system. Too often, unique and successful pilot projects are abandoned due to lack of funding or changes in administration. Encouraging information to be shared across the system, and regularly drawing attention to achievements, will help partners replicate and build on successes.

### **A Plan Embraced by All-Inclusive Process**

A key objective in developing and writing this plan was to have every team member, and his or her stakeholders, endorse and embrace the plan. This process has required time and engagement with numerous committees, task forces, public forums, and an inclusive writing team. This plan strives to honor that participation.

### **Who is Involved?**

WIOA requires Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) to lead strategic planning, business engagement and worker education and training efforts by developing a plan with other workforce partners that coordinates strategies and resources across the workforce system, in support of regional economies. WDCs recognize that in addition to their focus on regional and local needs, they are part of the statewide system which must be recognizable to businesses and workers, no matter their location.

While any workforce system partner may potentially lead a business or training solution, all must support WDCs in the development and implementation of aligned and effective regional and area-wide strategies. In turn, WDCs will work with their partners to identify the approach taken within a region or area. Workforce system partners at the state and regional level will collaborate on the chosen approach.

Workforce system partners in this approach include, but are not limited to:

<b>Workforce System Partner</b>	<b>Services</b>
Registered Apprenticeship (Department of Labor and Industries)	A combination of on-the-job training (OJT) and related classroom instruction under the supervision of a journey-level craft person or trade professional in which workers learn the practical and theoretical aspects of a highly skilled occupation.
Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act	Aims to increase the quality of technical education at both the secondary and postsecondary levels and provide students with academic and technical skills for in-demand, living wage careers that advance the economy.

Workforce System Partner	Services
Community Development Block Grant (Department of Commerce)	The state Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, administered by the state Department of Commerce, awards funds to rural local governments for locally-prioritized activities, such as economic development, construction, and public services activities. These funds are awarded based on a competitive grant process for eligible CDBG recipients. This funding is administered federally by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
Community Services Block Grant (Department of Commerce)	The state Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), administered by the Department of Commerce, awards state and federal funds to local eligible entities to provide services to low-income individuals and households at or below 125% of the federal poverty level (FPL). With approval from the CSBG State Lead Agency, eligible entities determine how funding will be used to support allowable activities, such as employment and training activities. This funding is administered through the State General Fund and federally by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).
Customized Training Program (State Board for Community and Technical Colleges)	A training institution delivers dedicated customized employee training as requested by the business. The level of customization ranges from existing training curriculum delivered at the job site to fully customized training curriculum developed exclusively for the business.
Higher Education (Community and Technical Colleges, Four-year Colleges and Universities, Private Career Schools)	Education and training, customized training, incumbent worker training, certification, registered apprenticeship related supplemental instruction (RSI), education and career counseling, small business resources.
Job Skills Program (State Board for Community and Technical Colleges)	Prospective and current employees of a business receiving a Job Skills Program (JSP) grant are eligible for training. Eligible businesses and industries include private firms and institutions, groups, or associations concerned with commerce, trade, manufacturing, or service provisions. Public or nonprofit hospitals are also eligible.

Workforce System Partner	Services
Title I Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs (Local Workforce Development Councils)	Comprehensive workforce development services - assessment and career guidance , labor market information, workshops, resources for worker training, on-the-job training, support services for job seekers. Business services for employers, including hiring events, labor market information, training, and matching talent to demand .
Title II Adult Literacy (Community and Technical Colleges)	Adult basic skills training, English as a Second Language training, GED
Title III Wagner-Peyser (Employment Security Department)	Career guidance, job matching, and labor market information for job seekers. Job orders, job fairs and hiring events, labor market information, and other business services for employers.
Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Department of Service for the Blind)	Training, retraining of individuals with disabilities, identification and support for the implementation of assistive technologies for jobseekers and businesses, job placement, job development, community rehabilitation providers.
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Department of Social and Health Services, Community and Technical Colleges, Community-Based Organizations, Employment Security Department, Department of Commerce, Department of Early Learning)	Assessment, case management, job placement, education and training, work study, workfare, support services, and job development.
Senior Community Service Employment (Department of Social and Health Services and Community-Based Organizations)	Provide subsidized, part-time, community service work-based training for low-income people age 55 or older who have poor employment prospects. Through this program, older workers have access to the SCSEP services as well as other employment assistance available through WorkSource, the state's one-stop career center system.
SNAP, E&T (Department of Social and Health Services, Community and	Food assistance, assessment, education and training, job search, job search skill development, and support services.

Workforce System Partner	Services
Technical Colleges, Community-Based Organizations)	
Trade Adjustment Assistance (Employment Security Department)	A federal program that helps workers who have lost jobs due to foreign trade to gain the skills, resources, and support they need to become reemployed.
Training Benefits Program (Employment Security Department)	Training benefits pay up to 52 times a participant's unemployment weekly benefit amount, minus any regular unemployment benefits received. These additional benefits are available to eligible dislocated workers in a full-time vocational training program approved by the unemployment insurance (UI) program.
Veterans Employment and Training	Workforce development workshops, assessment and career guidance, and job development as well as referrals to worker training and on-the-job training, support services for disabled veterans.
Worker Retraining Program (State Board for Community and Technical Colleges)	Serves the unemployed or those facing imminent layoffs. Community and technical colleges provide training in basic skills and literacy, occupational skills, vocational education, and related or supplemental instruction for apprentices. Qualified students may receive financial assistance to help with tuition, other costs. Private career schools and colleges enroll a small number of students.

### **Improving the Customer Experience: Better Serving Current and Future Workers**

The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), envisions a streamlined, demand-driven, integrated, and business-informed system that can support the talent needs of business, and the education and training needs of a diverse population of current and future jobseekers and workers, including those most in need.

In many ways, streamlining and integrating the delivery system is the first step in helping all of the state's current and future workers gain a foothold in Washington's economy. Finding more efficient and successful ways to engage these individuals will create a sustainable talent pipeline. The diverse populations served by the state's workforce system include unemployed or underemployed people, those seeking additional education to advance their careers, highly skilled workers, and those facing barriers to employment. Some will pass through the system with minimal support, while others will

require multiple resources. The state's economy benefits when the entire workforce is engaged in productive, meaningful employment, and the state's business community is more competitive and prosperous as a result.

Service delivery integration means current and future workers can access the state's workforce system, at any level throughout their lives, and are able to obtain the appropriate mix of services to put them on, or propel them along, a pathway to economic self-sufficiency. Current and future workers are able to connect to the system quickly and efficiently through a common intake process. They meet, or are connected technologically, to an individual or team of career coaches with up to date knowledge of the specific services – career guidance and resources, education and training programs, and support services – they may need to set and successfully reach their goals. These career coaches are trained to provide culturally competent services, ensuring that all current and future workers have a roadmap to achieve their goals. They ensure that all individuals can access and are enrolled in every program that can help meet their needs, in a way that is transparent to the customer.

### **Improving the Customer Experience Goals**

The following goals will help move Washington's system forward:

- Improve Washington's workforce system staff capabilities to navigate customers to the resources they need to advance on their individual career pathways.
- Develop an intake process that eliminates redundant assessments and streamlines customer experience.
- Increase the number of participants, including those with barriers, who have defined career pathways and have gained portable skills, received industry-recognized credentials, and/or earned college credits.

In addition, soon after the passage of WIOA, Governor Jay Inslee directed the Workforce Board to work with the system's stakeholders to shape Washington's strategic plan toward three goals to maximize the workforce system's impact:

1. *Help more people find and keep jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency, with a focus on disadvantaged populations.*
2. *Close skill gaps for employers, with a focus on in-demand industry sectors and occupations, including through registered apprenticeships.*
3. *Work together as a single, seamless team to make this happen.*

These three goals will inform the larger system and guide any changes. Below are ways the system is evolving to better serve all populations through a more integrated system.

### **Greater Flexibility and Access to Services**

In general, services are integrated to provide greater flexibility and a better fit for people who may need skill-specific training or other intensive services right from the start, rather than moving more deliberately through a predetermined, sequence of steps. Customers will be enrolled simultaneously in any service for which they are eligible and that can help them achieve their goal.

This streamlined integration requires all service providers to quickly identify needs, and then match resources to meet those needs. Increased collaboration and coordination among system partners ensures that the best of what the system has to offer comes forward with a minimum of duplication. Integration provides a flexible, interconnected set of services tailored to each customer. Customers receive a range of services via various providers and funding streams that may be braided together to meet their specific needs.

One key to service integration is a career pathway approach. This approach connects levels of education, training, counseling, support services, and credentials for specific occupations in a way that optimizes continuous progress toward the education, employment, and career goals of individuals of all ages, abilities, and needs. Career pathways fully engage businesses to help meet their workforce needs. In turn, customers are encouraged to choose among a full range of education and work-based learning opportunities that allows them to earn marketable credentials. Ultimately, the goal is to connect the customer to a career pathway that taps their talents and leads to long-term economic security.

### **Customer Choice and Asset-based Programming**

Integration honors the assets and interests of customers at every stage of service delivery. This customer-centered approach recognizes that the needs and interests of customers may change as they engage in services, learn more about their abilities and aptitudes, and consider new career options. Customers help shape their individual pathways and plans to achieve desired outcomes, with periodic check-ins and adjustments to ensure their plans continue to be both appropriate and effective.

Staff must think holistically about customers, their goals, and their skill-sets when they enter the system, and be knowledgeable about their role in connecting them to the services that an individual requires to advance. This asset-based approach focuses first on the strengths and positive experiences each customer brings, and then builds on those assets by connecting individuals with an appropriate mix of services.

### **Intake**

During initial customer contact, all necessary information will be collected to identify potential eligibility for all available services and provide the individual with a full menu of relevant options. The individual's initial intake responses will be available to all partners, helping eliminate multiple requests for the same information. Ideally, the first interview will: evaluate the individual's immediate needs and career interests; compile education and job history; identify any barriers to employment and ability to access education and training; and screen for eligibility for services, funding, and other resources. The intake

process will also include working with the customer to identify potential effective learning modalities (learning styles, modes of instruction and training) or successful prior learning experiences for which they may obtain credit (such as competencies, military training experiences, foreign degrees and certifications, and skills).

### **Triage and Follow-up**

A career coach will work with individual customers to evaluate their need for workforce services and develop a plan for helping them reach their career goals. The plan may include workshops, collateral development, support services, education, training, job search, or a combination, and make appropriate referrals. The career coach team members will engage with the customer to ensure smooth transition, or to redirect the customer if needed. Partners will work together beyond the points of program transition to braid funding and services across organizations for the benefit of the customer.

### **Assessment**

Customers will enter career pathway programs at a level that makes sense for them, depending on their career readiness, while also taking advantage of multiple entry and exit points as they develop new skills. Assessment may vary, and can include standardized tests, criterion referencing, personal interviews, hands-on skill trials, and portfolios. A key piece of assessment is determining whether an individual faces barriers to employment, and then identifying the services needed to reduce or eliminate those barriers. The state approved basic skills assessment Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) is an example of effective assessment because it aligns with the state's community and technical college system and many other service providers, saving customers time and potential frustration that come with multiple tests. With CASAS, customers complete an appraisal and a pre-test before they begin basic skills training.

### **Career and Education Exploration and Guidance**

All customers, but especially those with little or no work experience, need sufficient information to make informed career decisions and education choices. By fully exploring their career and education options, customers are able to choose a career pathway based on their interests, needs, and capabilities. Career pathway exploration should include timely information about a wide range of occupations and whether they're in demand by industry, connections to registered apprenticeship and other work-and-learn programs, and encouragement to consider non-traditional occupations for both women and men. Career guidance should also include a review of any foreign degrees and professional expertise held by educated, skilled refugees and immigrants experiencing unemployment or under-employment.

### **Customer Pathway and Outcome Plan**

Every customer desiring to work with staff to develop a plan with clear and measurable outcomes will have the opportunity to do so. Staff will facilitate conversations with customers to better understand their immediate needs, interests, passions, assets and current capabilities and experience, and career goals. Staff will then help customers develop education and career pathways and outcome plans, and provide necessary information and guidance, including labor market trends, wages, and training and

education opportunities. These plans are considered “living documents,” subject to change as customers learn more about career and education options and discover new areas of interest and capacity.

### **Case Management**

For individuals with barriers to employment, or any eligible customers who need more support, career coaching and case management will be provided as they move through each stage of a program. Career coaches not only help with career and life choices, they assist customers during tough transition points, increasing the likelihood of success. At a minimum, the career coach/case manager provides stability and continuity, while offering encouragement and acknowledging successes. Career coaches/case managers will work as a team to streamline and expedite services. Career coaches/case managers with particular knowledge, skills and expertise in serving individuals with unique, multiple, or the most complex barriers to employment will be available to assist customers who need more specialized or intensive support.

### **Support Services**

Support services help customers overcome employment barriers. For many customers, career pathway success is directly linked to their ability to overcome significant barriers. A variety of social, medical, behavioral, economic, and other support services can help individuals overcome employment obstacles. These services, in tandem with occupational skill development and other career pathway components, enable individuals with barriers to land a job, and keep a job.

### **Customer Pathway and Outcome Plan Options**

#### **Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST)**

Day-to-day living calls for literacy and numeracy skills, as do careers. Basic skills are needed across all occupations, both in landing a job and progressing within a career. Basic skills are also required for more advanced, career-specific education and training. Evidence shows that I-BEST education, pioneered by Washington’s community and technical college system, improves and accelerates the attainment of important learning outcomes and meaningful work credentials. This model, which blends basic skills training with high-demand occupational training, has been replicated and expanded in numerous states. Service integration and cross-training of national staff will increase the number of I-BEST participants who have access to these accelerated pathways to living-wage employment.

#### **Contextualized English Language Acquisition**

English proficiency, including speaking, reading and writing, along with math, listening, employability skills, and solving problems in technology-rich environments, is required to enter and progress within most occupations. Language acquisition is also a necessary ingredient for high-skill, foreign educated professionals to transition into the same or similar employment in the United States. Because evidence clearly indicates that contextualized English Language Acquisition improves and accelerates the attainment of desired learning outcomes, this is considered an optimal instruction method and is being expanded across the Title II system.



### **Work Readiness and Employability Skills Instruction**

Work readiness is an individual's preparedness for getting a job and keeping a job. With work readiness training, customers learn about the structure and culture of the workplace, and about what makes a valuable employee—beyond job-specific skills. Topics typically include communication skills, decision-making and problem-solving, team building and teamwork, following instructions, healthy relationships with authority figures, leadership skills, personal growth, stress management, health and hygiene, and dealing with difficult people and situations. Customers should be able to show through their attitude and behavior that they understand these concepts, rather than simply scoring well on a standardized test. Work readiness is best taught when embedded in an education or training program, not as a stand-alone component.

### **Development of Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities for Job Entry**

Skill development in this model refers not just to those skills needed to enter the field, but building skills that allow individuals to advance within the field. Wherever possible, skill development activities should be integrated with work. Models of work-integrated learning include: project-based learning in the classroom, online coursework, industry guest lecturers, or direct workplace experience, including job shadows, mentorships, internships (paid or unpaid), work study, clinicals, cooperative learning models, and registered apprenticeships. Paid work experience or earn-and-learn models are optimal, but understandably the most difficult to achieve and sustain. Where possible, industry credentials should be integrated into job-entry programs, demonstrating competencies and reducing hiring costs for business partners. Skill development activities should be appropriate to the learning styles, interests and capabilities of each customer. Early intake and assessments will help determine the appropriate pathway and point of entry for each customer.

### **Skills Upgrading for Occupational Advancement**

Skills upgrading refers to development of skills beyond entry-level (first employment during program participation). Skills upgrading should be tied to an industry-recognized credential, whenever possible. Industry credentials should include college credits so customers can more readily add and build on their education to help them move up the career ladder.

### **Business Engagement, Job Development, and Placement**

Successfully connecting customers with jobs requires working with businesses to determine which jobs are currently available, or projected to become available, along with the skill requirements for these jobs. Engaging businesses and sharing labor market data will better inform curriculum development, support work-integrated activities, enhance program offerings, and assist in evaluating the effectiveness of the program in meeting industry needs. Staff responsible for connecting customers to career opportunities, and faculty responsible for curriculum development and delivery, will need to work closely with industry representatives to ensure skill development curriculum and materials are directly applicable to the workplace, and that participants are adequately prepared to meet the needs of business once on the job. This is an ongoing, fluid process. Curriculum will need to be modified or enhanced as new jobs become available or if participants are unable to perform effectively on the job.

### **Post-Job Placement Support for the Customer and Employer**

Landing a job is often just the first step for customers, even if they have benefited from effective pre-placement services. Once on the job they may struggle with child or elder care, transportation, interpersonal issues, family difficulties, medical needs, basic skills development, and court involvement. Or an individual may require additional skill development in specific areas to improve job performance or to keep pace with industry changes. Support services for customers and the businesses who hire them may involve: periodic contact, information and referral for necessary services, and, when necessary, advocacy for the individual on the job.

### **System Training and Support**

#### **Professional Development**

Integrated services require a system-wide emphasis on professional development and cross-training for both leadership and front-line staff. Professional development that cuts across all programs and strategies is a foundational element of system accessibility. Training includes: business and economic intelligence, career development principles, collaboration and problem solving, customer service methodology, diversity in workforce development, labor market information and intelligence, principles of communication, program implementation principles and strategies, and workforce development structure, policies and programs. Key skills for frontline staff include cultural competency, technical fluency, and command of motivational interviewing techniques. These core skills will significantly improve outcomes by connecting customers to the workforce system. Training and cross-training will ensure staff is able to serve a diverse population who experience a wide range of barriers to employment and require an array of integrated services to be successful along their career pathways.

#### **Implementation of Technology**

This streamlined, integrated approach requires staff to use technology in new ways to simplify administrative processes, provide the customer with easy-to-use interfaces to access relevant information, connect to resources, and expand the options available for skill development certification, and portfolio management. New technologies will enable jobseekers to use their own devices to connect easily and effectively to public systems and take advantage of state-of-the-art communications, and networking and accessibility tools.

#### **Replication of Promising Practices**

Adopting streamlined customer service and service delivery integration does not mean that Washington must reinvent the wheel. In many instances, the state leads the nation in education and training programs, in performance accountability, and in service delivery. It does, however, mean that our workforce system must continue to transform itself to meet the changing needs of our business and job seeker customers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The following programs and models, among many others, have proven results in their programmatic areas. They provide examples of building blocks for the workforce system to integrate as it adapts to the new realities of our economy:

**Co-enrollment** allows customers to access more resources and provides staff an easier way to serve all customers. Roughly half of the state's Workforce Development Areas have adopted automatic co-enrollment of future and current workers seeking new or better jobs into the WIOA Title I Adult and Wagner-Peyser Employment Service programs.

**Labor–Management Committees** are formed during major closures and facilitate the coordination between labor and business representatives, the workforce system and community partners. These committees are often the platform for pursuing Trade Adjustment Assistance, National Dislocated Worker Grants or other forms of funding to assist transition.

**Peer Outreach** contracts place select workers from an affected group, during closure, on-site at the affected work site and in WorkSource offices to offer a trusted source of support to provide critical information on the array of services available through the WIOA one-stop system and ease their fellow dislocated workers' transition to training, job search and/or relocation activities, as appropriate. These individuals offer the emotional and motivational support necessary to assist a community experiencing a major layoff.

**Puget Sound Welcome Back Center** builds bridges between the pool of internationally trained professionals living in Washington and the need for linguistically and culturally competent professional services. Its goal is to assist these professionals to make the best use of their professional skills through respectful, innovative, and individualized career counseling, and educational services. To that end, the Center assists people to gain industry certification recognized in the United States.

**Transition Centers** offer tailored spaces to serve large impacted workgroups. Based on individual circumstances, these centers may be implemented within a One-Stop office or nearby location. *(An example is the Simpson Lumber Mill closure in Mason County in 2015. Through a Labor-Management Committee, the company was certified for Trade Adjustment Assistance and two Peer Outreach Workers were funded to staff a Transition Center, alongside workforce system partners, in the office space next door to the Shelton WorkSource Center.)*

**Bachelors in Applied Science (BAS) degrees** create expanded opportunities for both students and businesses by providing upper-division coursework at community and technical colleges in an applied field. These degrees, many of them online and tailored to working adults, build upon professional-technical associate's degrees.

**Bachelor and Graduate degrees** create expanded opportunities for both students and businesses. Washington's public four-year colleges and universities, along with the state's community and technical colleges, provide opportunities for Washington residents to obtain a bachelor's degree to meet the state's growing need for an educated workforce. In addition to the four-year degree pathways at Washington's public colleges and universities, community and technical colleges offer applied bachelor's degree (BAS) programs. The state's two- and four-year institutions have also forged articulation agreements that help students transfer between institutions. In addition, Washington's public four-year institutions offer access to a range of quality graduate degree programs.

**Centers of Excellence** are flagship institutions located at Washington's community and technical colleges that focus on a targeted industry and are designed to provide fast, flexible, quality education and training programs. (A targeted industry is identified as one that is strategic to the economic growth of a region or state.) Centers are guided by industry representatives to lead collaborative and coordinated statewide education and training efforts.

**Workforce and Education Program Advisory Boards** are long standing, with private sector business and labor representatives serving as advisors to two- and four-year college programs, providing: advocacy, curriculum recommendations, and support for quality higher education programs.

**HS 21+** allows students 21 and older to attain a competency-based high school diploma. The program awards credit for prior learning, military training, and work experience.

### **I-BEST Programs**

**Professional Technical I-BEST** co-enrolls students in adult basic education and college credit-bearing career pathways that lead to living wage jobs. I-BEST accelerates students down their career pathway, by contextualizing and team teaching the language, math, and other foundational skills needed to succeed in their professional-technical program. I-BEST students are nine times more likely to earn a workforce credential than students in traditional basic education programs.

**Professional Technical Expansion I-BEST** allows students to move further and faster down their career pathway by putting English and math courses in context, as needed for longer-term certificate and degree programs. This allows students to skip developmental education and earn their college or terminal-level English and math credits through contextualization and team teaching.

**Academic I-BEST** co-enrolls students in adult basic education and Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA) courses for students intending to earn a transfer degree. Through Academic I-BEST, adult education students can accelerate their progress down a transfer career pathway and reduce or eliminate time spent in developmental education.

**I-BEST at Work** is based upon a partnership between a community college or community-based organization, and an employer, in which the college or organization provides a basic skills instructor who team-teaches with a representative from the employer. It is part of the comprehensive I-BEST Pathway, designed to accelerate the progress of basic skills students within the context of work.

**I-DEA** Integrated Digital English Acceleration is an on-ramp to I-BEST that, in collaboration with the Gates Foundation, provides the least English proficient ESL students with a laptop computer. Half of the instruction is delivered online, offering 24-7 accessibility.

**Industry DACUM** incorporates the use of a business or industry focus group to capture the major duties and related tasks included in an occupation, as well as the necessary knowledge, skills, and traits, in a process facilitated by a Center of Excellence or community college. This cost-effective method provides a quick and thorough analysis of any job.

**Industry showcases** highlight how industry skills are put to use in the work world and serve as an example of how community and technical colleges are responsive to the changing needs of businesses.

**Industry Skill Panels** are public/private partnerships of business, labor, and education working together to improve the skills of workers in industries vital to Washington's economy. Washington has worked with Industry Skill Panels since 2000.

**Workforce Program Review** is a community college review of a vocational education program's intent and objectives. Industry representatives participate on evaluation teams that look at: program accomplishments, student performance standards compared to the needs of industry, facility adequacy as a training site, quantity and quality of graduates, and job placements. This review team then makes recommendations for any identified program improvements or innovations.

### **Integrated Service Delivery Summary and Goals**

In conclusion, a truly integrated service delivery system holds promise for Washington's workforce by helping people reach their goals no matter their barriers, their background, or where they entered the system. Doing this effectively calls for eliminating the program funding silos to truly integrate staff and support customer access to services and resources, eliminating redundant assessments, and helping more customers define career pathways that help them achieve portable skills, higher education levels, industry credentials, and satisfying, living-wage careers.

### **Engaging Business for Better Results**

When Washington's workforce system effectively engages with business, it's a win-win situation for workers, and for employers. By working closely with firms to determine their talent challenges and by implementing effective solutions, the workforce system helps both businesses and workers prosper.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) places a greater emphasis than its predecessor act on engaging business in the development of workforce solutions, identifying business as a primary customer of the workforce system. Yet for the system to realize the full potential of business engagement, it must go beyond thinking of employers as merely customers. Businesses must be partners and co-investors in the system. After all, businesses know what they need, and the skills that they lack. They can help identify, create, and implement effective workforce solutions. By providing businesses with easier access to the workforce system and a clearer understanding of the benefits of working together, Washington will move business engagement to the next level.

Washington is already known as a leader in business engagement. The state piloted Industry Skill Panels, which bring together employers, educators, and community leaders to address common skill gaps and training needs. Skill Panels, in turn, were instrumental in establishing Centers of Excellence, which serve as statewide resources to address the needs of a specific industry sector—from aerospace to allied health. Housed within the state's community and technical college system, Centers of Excellence provide fast and flexible education and training programs that respond directly to the needs of industry.

Washington was also an early adopter and leader in the implementation of sector strategies, which build partnerships between businesses, training providers, community organizations and other key stakeholders, around specific industries to address their particular workforce needs. Washington has also invested in Skill Centers, which provide career-focused education to high school students and serve multiple school districts through inter-district cooperatives. These centers partner with local employers to give students the skills to be successful in the local job market and advance in their education and training.

In 2015, Governor Inslee appointed industry sector leads to better support the growth of strategic industry sectors in Washington: aerospace, agriculture, clean technology, forest products, information, communication technology, life sciences and global health, maritime, and military and defense. Moreover, the state Office of Economic Development and Competitiveness in the Department of Commerce works with critical industry leaders on recruiting new companies to Washington and grow key industry sectors statewide.

Today, Washington has the opportunity to take this work to the next level and to close skills gaps and help employers hire and further develop the talented workforce they need to grow and prosper.

### **Business Engagement Goals**

Over the next two years, the following goals will help move Washington's system forward:

- Identify meaningful metrics to establish a baseline and increase the number of businesses utilizing the workforce system.
- Identify meaningful metrics to establish a baseline and increase the number of businesses reporting satisfaction with the services they receive via the workforce system by 5 percent each year.
- Have at least one sector partnership in development in each workforce region. Use the Sector Partnership Framework or a similar framework to show progress over time.
- Increase resources for work-based learning opportunities, including on-the-job training and registered apprenticeship, internships, job shadows, but especially, incumbent worker training.
- Increase the amount of work-based training including incumbent worker training, on-the-job training and registered apprenticeship, job shadows, internships.

In addition, soon after the passage of WIOA, Governor Jay Inslee directed the Workforce Board to work with the system's stakeholders to shape Washington's strategic plan toward three goals to maximize the workforce system's impact:

1. *Help more people find and keep jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency, with a focus on disadvantaged populations.*
2. *Close skill gaps for employers, with a focus on in-demand industry sectors and occupations, including through registered apprenticeships.*

3. *Work together as a single, seamless team to make this happen.*

These three goals will inform the larger system and guide any changes. Below are ways the system is evolving to better serve all populations through better engaging business.

**What Better Engagement Means for Business**

According to a 2014 [Accenture report](#), employers cannot find the talent they need. In this report, just “18 percent of employers [nationally] reported sufficient access to needed skills.” But despite this need for skilled workers, here in Washington, just 8 percent of businesses connected with the state’s workforce system to find talent. And talent acquisition is only one challenge facing today’s businesses. New articles and reports identify a variety of human resources challenges that the workforce system could help to address, including:

- Skilling up workers and jobseekers to keep pace with rapid changes in technology.
- Retaining talent.
- Planning for succession.
- Increasing workforce diversity.
- Dealing with the greater demand for flexibility within the workforce.
- Impacts of personal life on work.

There are areas where the public system and business share in the cost of developing an employee’s skills, including work-based learning (on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, registered apprenticeship). Business partnerships with workforce development and human services programs can increase diversity in the hiring pool and support job retention in the workplace. If employers are willing to partner with the workforce system, expend energy, and, devote resources, they can leverage their investment to create sustainable solutions to their workforce challenges.

**What Better Business Engagement Means for the Workforce System**

An emphasis on business engagement creates a benchmark for more activity—more surveys, more meetings, more outreach—but not necessarily more engagement. While many businesses do not know about the many workforce system programs and services that could benefit them, more outreach does not necessarily lead to more employers partnering with the workforce system.

Successful business engagement is about better understanding the value proposition that the workforce system can offer business and delivering that value by:

- Aligning and coordinating “disconnected parts” across the system to provide workforce solutions that meet real business needs.
- Enlisting business as a partner in the identification, development, implementation of and investment in workforce solutions.
- Making services and products more transparent, accessible, and user-friendly, and supporting services with appropriate technologies for employers.

By finding more effective ways of working together, leveraging limited resources, and addressing long-term issues, the workforce system can help employers achieve stronger results, forging a sustainable and mutually beneficial alliance. Engaging business as a partner increases the diversity and number of resources available and builds a team that helps workers find, keep, and grow in good jobs.

Jobseekers enter the workforce system with varied skills and experiences, but the ultimate goal of the workforce system is to create pathways to prosperity for all. Business services strategies should seek to grow jobs with family-sustaining wages and benefits, encourage ongoing skill training and employee advancement, promote good working conditions, and adequate hours, while recognizing the right to join a union. Washington will consider job quality when engaging with businesses to offer work-based learning, on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, and customized business services.

### **Aligning and Coordinating Across the Workforce System**

Effective business engagement is a system function, rather than a programmatic one. Each system partner comes with specific resources to develop, support, educate, and train the workforce in the region, and a mandate to better engage business in doing so. When each program works in isolation to create businesses services, increase contact with businesses, or solicit business input, the end result is a patchwork approach where some businesses are asked the same questions over and over, and others are left completely out of the conversation. Creating an aligned and coordinated approach that conveys the full strength of the system increases its efficiency and the likelihood that employers will realize value from the system.

To achieve this innovation, Washington's workforce system must shift its focus when working with businesses from the promotion and administration of programs and management of services, to a more strategic role of building regional talent pipelines, addressing skill gaps, and creating meaningful education and career pathways for a range of workers in key industries.

Recently, a staff person at a WorkSource center described the transition as moving from inventory control to business solutions. In inventory control mode, staff thinks in terms of how many jobs a company has open and how many jobseekers the program has available or could quickly train to apply for these jobs. In the business solution model, staff move from focusing on this "inventory" of specific services and programs to helping businesses access system resources and services that will meet their specific needs. Put another way, the system must move from a "push" that works to match the jobseeker inventory on hand to a "pull" or a "demand-driven" system working in partnership with businesses to determine and develop the talent they actually need.

What better way to demonstrate value and responsiveness than to engage business as equal partners in the design and creation of the products and services they need? Sector partnerships and career pathways are proven mechanisms for forging these relationships.

### **Engaging Business through Sector Partnerships**



Sector strategies are the most widely used approach to engage businesses throughout the U.S., according to the National Governors Association (NGA). Sector strategies are regional partnerships of employers within one industry that bring together government, education, training, economic development, labor, and community organizations to focus on the workforce and other needs of their industry. At the state level, sector strategies are policies and investments to support and align regional sector strategies. NGA finds that “a growing body of evidence demonstrates their effectiveness for employers and workers.”

Washington’s workforce system is a recognized leader in the implementation of sector strategies. The state needs to capitalize on this strength and move beyond sector strategies to sustainable sector partnerships. Sector partnerships shift employers from being customers of the workforce system to active participants in the design and creation of workforce solutions—forming business-to-business partnerships within industry sectors that set the course for resolving industry-wide workforce needs.

In addressing industry sector workforce issues, system partners package their individual components to create customized solutions. This may include incumbent worker training that moves current workers into higher demand fields, paired with recruitment strategies to backfill the entry-level opportunities that open up as a result. Employer engagement may lead to more work-based learning opportunities where the company makes it easier for potential and existing workers to elevate their skills in workplace settings. Sector partners may also choose to focus on longer term solutions, including reaching within the K-12 system to prepare young people for future careers in the industry. The key is to leverage the investment and resources of all partners toward a common goal. Rather than competing for the attention of businesses, the workforce system strategically braids together the resources of the public, philanthropic, and private sectors to create new solutions to ever-changing business challenges.

A Sector Partnership Framework is included in the appendix of this chapter to support the transition to sector partnerships. The framework provides a common set of principles, definitions, processes and criteria and creates the expectation that regional and state sector leads will coordinate and leverage each other’s work. The Framework creates a common language for implementing sector partnerships, sharing promising practices and lessons learned among regional level workforce development professionals from different agencies and different parts of the state.

The framework also provides a vehicle to identify the training needs of system partner staff to support sector partnerships. By using the framework to report on the status of sector activities, policy makers, business stakeholders, and workforce system partners will all have a better understanding of the impact of sector partnerships. Most importantly, the framework lays the groundwork for fully engaging business as a partner in workforce solutions.

### **Engaging Business through Career Pathways**

Career Pathways form a transit system for careers, mapping out the various routes workers can take to achieve their career and life goals. Career Pathways serve as a recruitment and retention tool for industry sectors, clearly conveying the career pathways within the industry to current and potential

employees. Businesses identify the career progression within and among the occupations critical for the industry to prosper. The education system, through ongoing consultation with businesses, organizes programs that enable current and future workers to access the necessary education and training to fulfill those job requirements and move up the career ladder throughout their lives.

Career pathways must be highly informed by businesses in a regional economy and supported by system partners. These pathways offer a mechanism for those with barriers to employment to move more efficiently into jobs. The workforce system partners identify and provide the support services for current and future workers to succeed in their education and training and enter careers. Business input helps the education system better tailor and update curriculum based on regional industry needs and trends, building a sustainable talent supply pipeline.

### **Making workforce services more transparent, accessible and user-friendly**

Businesses often find it difficult to navigate the vast array of programs and services available within the workforce system, because individual programs often compete to be “the” solution. The program-by-program approach to developing business services has resulted in an abundance of program-specific solutions. If the workforce system is to better engage business, it must demystify, align, and simplify access to this array of resources and services. Businesses care little about the program and funding stream, and more about getting the talented workers they need. Several approaches will address this challenge.

### **Identify/invest in business services and coordination**

The fact that navigators are needed to help businesses access services demonstrates the complexity of the workforce system. For example, a business wanting to support the growth of a young, inexperienced jobseeker may be offered on-the-job training support by one partner, an internship by another, a work experience, job shadow, or assistance setting up a registered apprenticeship program by others, and so on. The workforce “solution” may have more to do with which program is contacted first, rather than which approach fits best.

The industry outreach teams assembled and led at the local level (which may include current staff focused on employer services in Business Services/Solutions positions), must be sufficiently cross-trained in business programs and services to readily identify services useful to businesses, regardless of who provides them. These teams will also help tailor and package services to meet specific business needs.

### **Speak the Language of Business**

Even within the workforce system, programs have their own languages built around their authorizing legislation, regulations, and cultures. Translating workforce development products and services into a common language that resonates with business serves the dual purpose of creating a stronger partnership among workforce system partners while also improving the relationship with businesses. That language educates system partners on what business really wants, not what they presume business wants.

### **Create a Common Brand**

The difference between on-the-job training, clinicals, internships, job shadows, cooperative training, work experiences, work study, registered apprenticeships, and other workforce activities revolves around who offers the programs and program-specific rules and regulations. All are approaches that allow jobseekers to actively build their knowledge and skills in a work-and-learn setting. But the names are confusing, leading to the conclusion that the system is fragmented. Creating a common brand and a clear, common plain-language menu of service options will make it more likely that businesses will use these services.

### **Increase Work-and-Learn Opportunities**

Work-and-learn opportunities are a win-win-win for the jobseeker/worker, the business, and the workforce system. Jobseekers collect a paycheck while in training and businesses are able to defray payroll costs, while helping a worker gain valuable skills. Work-and-learn solutions help ensure training provides tangible, relevant skills that lead to jobs for trainees. They give an employer the opportunity to get to know job candidates and build commitment between employers and jobseekers.

### **Train Staff to Support Business Engagement**

The state must invest in professional development if the workforce system is to successfully connect with businesses, help identify and solve business problems, and retain the business community as true customers and partners. Professional development should also help to show the connections between effective business engagement and better jobseeker outcomes, building a bridge between staff who serve businesses and those who serve jobseekers. This may include , adopting business assessment methods to better match potential workers with employers, and developing customized recruitments. A set of leading indicators will help staff know if they are on track in helping area businesses. These indicators must be part of staff professional development.

### **The role of Local Workforce Development Councils**

Under WIOA, local Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) are responsible for assuring the workforce system meets the needs of businesses, workers, and jobseekers within economic regions and local areas. WIOA requires WDCs to lead business engagement by developing both a strategic plan and operating plan with other workforce partners that coordinate business engagement strategies and resources across the workforce system, in support of regional and local economies.

WDCs exercise their leadership responsibility in a variety of ways. At a minimum, WDCs serve as leaders for specific efforts, like sector partnerships. In addition, WDCs assess business engagement opportunities, (both in terms of quantity and quality); convene, organize, coordinate, facilitate, and support the efforts of workforce partners to create an aligned approach to business engagement; facilitate information sharing among workforce partners and businesses; and/or create partnerships with effective intermediaries who already have the trust of the business community. While any workforce system partner may potentially lead a business solution or provide services to businesses, all are expected to support Workforce Development Councils in the development and implementation of

aligned and effective regional business engagement strategies. In turn, WDCs are expected to work with their partners to identify the approach taken within a region. Workforce system partners at the state and regional level will collaborate on the chosen approach.

Workforce Development Councils will unify the approach of all partners and establish a documented process for business engagement. WDCs and workforce system partners must work together to implement it. This includes organizing, targeting, and assigning representatives to the market, setting protocols for contact and services, identification and analysis of business workforce problems, adopting an integrated plan, maintaining a shared customer base, connecting jobseeker staff to the process, seeking alignment with business demand, and reporting and evaluating progress.

### **Business Engagement Summary and Goals**

In conclusion, a system that better engages businesses will rely on a firm accountability framework that identifies meaningful metrics to establish a solid baseline on the number of businesses utilizing the workforce system, and builds business satisfaction with the system by 5 percent each year. The new goals also call for establishing at least one sector partnership in each workforce region and using the Sector Partnership Framework, or a similar framework, to show progress over time. The goals also call for establishing a baseline and increasing resources for work-based learning, including on-the-job training, registered apprenticeship, internships, work experience, and especially, incumbent worker training in the next two years.

With sector partnerships, employers within one industry within a regional labor market are able to come together with government, education, training, economic development, labor, and community organizations to focus on workforce (and possibly other) industry-identified needs.

### **Guiding Principles**

- Sector strategies are but one of many strategies for workforce and economic development.
- Statewide and local sector partnerships and strategies can co-exist in mutually reinforcing and beneficial ways. They are not mutually exclusive of one another.
- Critical factors for identifying sectors to be targeted for sector strategies include employment opportunities (including opportunities for those with barriers to employment), wage levels (including career and wage progression potential), and the economic impact of the industry.
- Because policy objectives vary, workforce and economic development partners may work from different lists of targeted sectors. That being said, collaboration and coordination is imperative when economic and workforce strategies target the same sectors.
- Nascent or emerging sectors, as well as mature or plateaued ones, have a role in workforce and economic development initiatives.
- Both traded sectors and local services sectors have a role in workforce initiatives. Traded sectors generally include export or innovation-based industries – agriculture, manufacturing, scientific research and development. Local services sectors are population-based. Retail, health care,

educational services, food services, public administration – tend to locate based on population and are prevalent in almost all communities.

- Targeted sector lists should be updated to keep pace with changing economic conditions.
- As strategies are developed to serve the workforce needs of sector partnerships, there should be an emphasis on data-driven outcomes (such as employment placements) for businesses, jobseekers and workers, including individuals with barriers to employment.
- Alignment between local and statewide sectors
- Identified statewide sectors represent statewide priorities for sector work. When Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) identify regional and/or local sectors using the process and criteria in the Washington Sectors Partnership Framework, they will identify which statewide sectors are also of regional and/or local significance. Not all statewide sectors will be of significance to regional/local economies, nor will all regional sectors be significant at the state level.
- When regional, locally identified sectors are also statewide priority sectors, WDCs are expected to connect with state sector leads at the Department of Commerce or other designated agencies to determine how best to align local activities with statewide sector goals. Statewide sector leads are expected to reach out to WDCs operating in regional and local economies where high concentrations of companies are part of identified statewide sectors, in order to identify opportunities to work together/align work. Opportunities to align regional/local industry sectors that are part of the supply chain for statewide sectors should also be coordinated among state sector leads and WDCs.

### **Criteria for identifying and prioritizing target sectors**

#### **Criteria**

The identified sector is important to the regional economy in terms of employment, economic impact, growth potential, and/or wages.

#### **Process**

Conduct quantitative data analysis: Identify core/driver industries and inter-industry linkages. Measure and rank criteria relating to industry concentration, employment, and opportunities for wage and career progression. Criteria should include, but not be limited to:

Industry concentration – Using employment location quotient for the local area relative to the nation. (Possible data sources: *Employment Security Department's Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages*, *U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics location quotient calculator at [http://data.bls.gov/location\\_quotient/ControllerServlet](http://data.bls.gov/location_quotient/ControllerServlet)*)

Recent and projected employment growth – Looking for positive projected growth potential. (Possible Data Source: *ESD's employment projections for projected data and ESD's Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages for recent employment data*)

Opportunities for wage progression – As indicated by range between 25th and 75th percentiles in wages observed within a given occupation in the sector (Possible Data Source: *ESD's Occupational Employment Survey wage data.*)

Opportunities for career progression – As indicated by percent of occupations in the middle- and high-wage ranges and other indicators of occupational mobility within a given sector. (Possible Data Sources: *ESD's occupational wage data and industry-occupation matrix.*)

Conduct qualitative validation: Validate quantitative findings through conversations with industry (business and labor) and regional economists. Criteria may include but not be limited to:

Quantitative factors such as employment projections relating to retirements and turnover; output; earnings per worker; commute patterns; change in establishments; change in wages; exports as percent of output; traded versus local services sectors. (Possible Data Sources: *ESD's Employment projections, Bureau of Labor Statistics national replacement rates for occupations at [http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep\\_table\\_110.htm](http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_table_110.htm), comparisons between job openings and numbers of unemployed from sources like Help Wanted on Line at <https://fortress.wa.gov/esd/employmentdata/reports-publications/occupational-reports/employer-demand-report>, Washington Department of Revenue's Quarterly Business Income at <http://dor.wa.gov/content/aboutus/statisticsandreports/TID/StatisticsReports.aspx?query=gbinaics>, commuting patterns from the Census Bureau's county to county migration flows, change in establishments and changes in wages reported on ESD's Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages; Occupational Employment Survey.*)

Qualitative Factors such as industry-recognized certifications and related opportunities for career progression, policy/regulatory/legislated issues, resources at-hand, and factors of chance and special circumstances, as identified by companies within the sector.

### **Common definitions**

**Sector:** A group of industries with similar business processes, products or services such as construction or health services; formerly categorized by the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system, now categorized by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Because of the qualitative and quantitative limitations of defining sectors only by NAICS codes, they need not be the single source of data.

**Industry Cluster:** A geographic concentration of interdependent competitive firms that do business with each other, including firms that sell inside and outside of the geographic region as well as support firms that supply new materials, components, and business services. (RCW 43.330.090)

**Targeted Industries or Clusters:** Industries and industry clusters that are identified based on a strategic economic development consideration or other public concerns.

High Employer Demand Program of Study: Postsecondary or Industry Recognized Certificate or degree program in which the number of students prepared for employment per year (from in-state institutions) is less than the number of projected job openings per year in that field—statewide, or in a region of the state.

High-Demand Occupation: An occupation with a substantial number of current or projected employment opportunities.

WIOA contains a federal definition of “in-demand industry sector or occupation” at Section 3(23) that the state also incorporates in its analysis:

(i) an industry sector that has a substantial current or potential impact (including through jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency and opportunities for advancement) on the State, regional, or local economy, as appropriate, and that contributes to the growth or stability of other supporting businesses, or the growth of other industry sectors; or (ii) an occupation that currently has or is projected to have a number of positions (including positions that lead to economic self-sufficiency and opportunities for advancement) in an industry sector so as to have a significant impact on the State, regional, or local economy, as appropriate.

High Student Demand Program of Study: Postsecondary or Industry Recognized Certificate or degree program in which student demand exceeds program capacity.

### **Tracking sector implementation and outcomes**

The Workforce Board convened a work group to develop a rubric aligned to the Workforce Board’s approved sectors framework in order to answer the question “how would we know if sector strategies make a difference?”

The intended outcomes for sector strategies are generally the same as for programs in the workforce system:

- Did people get and keep jobs?
- What did they earn?
- Were businesses retained or grown?
- Did the jobseeker and the business have a positive experience?

However, it is difficult to draw direct causal links between sector strategies and statewide performance improvements related to the outcomes listed above. Those implementing sector strategies can track specific factors, such as the numbers trained (if training was a goal of the project), the number of those recruited who were placed into jobs, the time required to fill job openings, etc. The specific results vary based on the sector project undertaken and the needs of employers.

It was agreed that the primary goal for the implementation of sector strategies was to provide a strong and flexible tool to help WDCs meet their requirement to coordinate business engagement and fulfill

the expectation that implementation of WIOA would support economic vitality of the communities they serve. In order to roll this information up to a statewide level, a common approach to sector strategies and reporting tool is needed. Local sector experts identified the lack of consistency in the implementation of sector strategies as a challenge to learning across and even within local areas.

Therefore, a rubric was developed and incorporated in the state strategic plan to provide:

- Common definitions.
- Clarification of the steps needed to implement a sector strategy.
- Criteria that help a local area identify, track and map progress throughout a sector project.
- Sample outcome measures and a tool for tracking sector-specific outcomes.

Local areas/region will complete a rubric for each targeted sector identified as part of their strategic plans, and will update their progress every two years as part of local/regional plan reviews and board certification criteria. The rubric includes a template for tracking and reporting outcomes that will be compiled across regions/areas to give the Workforce Board, the locals, and partner agencies a better understanding of the results obtained and the strategies that are most effective.

This approach also recognizes that the implementation of sectors is a learning opportunity. Locals should not be penalized for taking risks to address industry needs. Sector strategies are most effective as a way to gain more precise, actionable information to better fill the needs of employers and jobseekers.

The Workforce Board will provide formal training for local practitioners on the implementation of sector strategies and the use of the rubric to increase consistency and develop local expertise.

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### **Accessibility and Technology**

A key priority for Washington's workforce system over the next 10 years is ensuring universal access to the entire array of education, training, and support services. Every Washington resident should have the opportunity to progress along a clearly defined and guided career pathway that leads to economic self-sufficiency.

Advances in technology offer one way to provide both remote and universal access to the state's workforce system. Tapping this technology will help more Washington residents, including those with barriers, access a wide range of services.

While technology will tear down a number of barriers to workforce system access, advances in technology—or the way it is applied throughout the system—*will not solve all accessibility issues*. Executing universal accessibility to Washington's workforce system will require a concerted, long-term effort from all partners, and a willingness to adapt and refine service delivery strategies to meet customer needs. This collective commitment is essential if all Washington workers are to benefit from an improving economy.



## **Accessibility and Technology Goals**

The following goals will help move Washington's system forward:

- Establish a state-level advisory committee on accessibility and barrier solutions and ensure the designation of local advisory committees during the first two years of the plan. By the fourth year of the plan, ensure the state-level advisory committee has received annual progress reports on One-Stop centers' accessibility at the local level.
- Identify and encourage local pilot programs that use technology to facilitate and improve integrated service delivery for customers, including programs designed to improve access to the system.

In addition, soon after the passage of WIOA, Governor Jay Inslee directed the Workforce Board to work with the system's stakeholders to shape Washington's strategic plan toward three goals to maximize the workforce system's impact:

1. *Help more people find and keep jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency, with a focus on disadvantaged populations.*
2. *Close skill gaps for employers, with a focus on in-demand industry sectors and occupations, including through registered apprenticeships.*
3. *Work together as a single, seamless team to make this happen.*

These three goals will inform the larger system and guide any changes. Below are ways the system is evolving to better serve all populations through enhanced accessibility.

### **Universal access across the workforce system**

Fundamental to the Workforce Board's vision for the workforce system is the concept of *universal accessibility*. Washington's workforce system must be prepared and able to serve jobseekers from all kinds of backgrounds, who face a variety of barriers. Universal accessibility encompasses both *physical accessibility* of all facilities, as well as *programmatic accessibility*—taking into account the particular access needs of all customers. Integration of service delivery and better coordination among workforce system partners will allow services and delivery approaches to be customized to meet a wide range of needs.

### **Identifying and Removing Barriers to Workforce Services**

WIOA has provided new energy across Washington's workforce system to address and remove barriers to access so that a greater number of Washingtonians can connect with a career pathway and a living-wage job. Through numerous WIOA planning meetings, public forums, and community town halls, an overarching theme has been that the system must provide high quality, customized services for all jobseekers with barriers.

The Workforce Board embraced the new federal workforce act as a chance to improve service delivery and remove barriers to access for *all individuals with barriers to employment*, not just those populations

covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act. While developing recommendations related to accessibility, the Workforce Board engaged stakeholders, staff, and policy experts representing a wide range of the 14 populations designated as “populations with barriers” under WIOA:

<b>Populations with Barriers under WIOA</b>	
<i>Displaced Homemakers</i>	<i>Youth in, or formerly in, Foster Care</i>
<i>Low-Income Individuals</i>	<i>English Language Learners</i>
<i>Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Hawaiians</i>	<i>Migrant/Seasonal Farmworkers</i>
<i>Individuals with Disabilities</i>	<i>Individuals within Two Years of Exhausted TANF Eligibility</i>
<i>Older Individuals</i>	<i>Single Parents/Pregnant Women</i>
<i>Ex-Offenders</i>	<i>Long-Term Unemployed</i>
<i>Homeless Individuals</i>	<i>Veterans*</i>
<i>“Other Groups” Designated by the Governor</i>	

\*Veterans are presumptively included under the WIOA Focus Populations in Washington.

An initial look at how technology could be used to remove access barriers for individuals with disabilities quickly expanded in scope to consider *all* strategies to remove access barriers to *all* barrier populations. Some of the common barriers faced by vulnerable populations include:

- Lack of recent work experience.
- Difficulties with transportation, housing, or childcare.
- Lack of work-appropriate wardrobe or resources (tools, equipment, safety gear)
- Inability to access necessary language translation services or accessibility devices.
- Lack of financial and educational literacy.
- Lack of reliable online access.
- Lack of up-to-date accessibility equipment.
- Inability to successfully utilize technology resources.

### **Technology is a Powerful Tool to Remove Barriers**

Advances in personal computing and telecommunications technology have made the Internet and person-to-person connectivity a feature of many people’s daily lives. WIOA acknowledges these improvements by opening the door to “virtual” service delivery—bringing services each participant needs to their doorstep, or kitchen table.

Recognizing that barrier removal requires sustained effort over time, the Workforce Board established its first standing advisory committee to lead a statewide effort on removing barriers to access throughout the system. The standing advisory committee, described below, works with local advisory committees on accessibility issues, starting an ongoing conversation between local workforce system practitioners and state-level policymakers. In this way, the committee will be able to systematically identify and address access barriers.

The first three recommended strategies embrace technology to achieve a more accessible workforce system. The final recommendation is designed to address system barriers of any nature, including barriers that cannot be addressed solely through technology.

The two recommended strategies embrace technology to achieve a more accessible workforce system.

### **Strategies to Improve Access for All: Technology as a Barrier Removal Tool**

#### **Virtual Service Delivery**

With WIOA, education and training services are no longer required to be administered in person. The availability of online, real-time, hybrid (blended online and face to face), and open source course materials warrants close system collaboration. Beyond simply providing access, the system must help customers gain the skills to effectively use these new technological tools. Some tools have become increasingly common in just a few short years. Video conferencing technology, for example, is widely available and less expensive than in years past. Reducing or eliminating the need for customers to travel and *physically* access a one-stop center will remove accessibility barriers for many Washingtonians.

Services offered virtually via computer, tablet, or smartphone empower people with mobility challenges, or anyone preferring to access information remotely. These tools allow them to begin progressing down a career pathway on their terms and at a time and location more convenient to them. Virtual service delivery helps customers with childcare or transportation barriers make progress toward a better future. A parent can hop online when the kids are asleep and gain access to services, or a family who lacks a car can avoid making several bus transfers to reach a one-stop center--if the center is reachable by bus at all. Many rural Washingtonians live hours away from the nearest comprehensive one-stop center. Accessing these services at home just makes sense. Even rural customers without reliable Internet connections still benefit from virtual service delivery—library systems statewide have expressed interest in partnering with the workforce system to create “remote connection sites” strategically located around Washington.

Currently, the Employment Security Department uses chat rooms to serve job seekers virtually, and WorkSource Connection sites are increasing access to individuals in their own neighborhoods, meeting people where they are geographically and socially.

#### **Promoting Open Education Resources**

Washington’s 34 community and technical colleges provide a wide range of open education resources (OERs), online courses, and e-Learning strategies to workforce system customers. These resources allow

working adults and place-bound customers who are far from a college or university campus to access education when it fits their work and life schedules. OERs are teaching and learning materials that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license. These resources may be used free of charge, distributed without restriction, and modified without permission. Often, OERs take the form of digital textbooks, video lectures, assessments, and new forms of “gamified” multimedia education experiences. Washington’s community and technical colleges are leaders in the OER movement, ready to share their expertise with the entire workforce system.

### **Promoting eLearning**

Washington’s public higher education institutions also offer a wide array of e-Learning strategies that can be integrated into the workforce system where appropriate. E-Learning is high quality online instruction and assessment that allows students to study and learn on their own schedules. Customers with physical, sensory, behavioral health, or cognitive disabilities as well as rural populations and economically disadvantaged communities, can benefit from online instruction tailored to their needs.

Any public-facing service offered to workforce system participants must be accessible to all, including individuals who use a screen-reading device or other accessibility equipment. Ensuring that the state’s new online job-matching site is accessible for all, the site’s architects have agreed to go beyond the ADA’s Section 508 accessibility standards and instead adopt the more stringent, internationally recognized [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0](#). When the new website is ready to launch, system partners will test the “public-facing” elements of the website with customers with barriers who have intermediate skill levels in accessing software and technologies. Any needed accessibility adjustments will be made before launch or immediately after.

### **Thinking Beyond Technology to Remove Barriers**

#### **Local and State Advisory Groups on Barrier Solutions**

WIOA allows local area boards to establish standing committees to work on issues specifically faced by individuals with disabilities, including Section 188 and ADA compliance.

Washington’s workforce system has embraced a more expansive goal of improving access for populations with a wide variety of barriers to access, including economic barriers, geographic barriers, physical barriers, language and cultural barriers, low-level education and skills barriers, and behavioral health barriers. To build consensus on a coordinated and sustained effort to remove these access barriers, a standing Workforce Board committee on accessibility issues is being created.

The Workforce Board’s advisory committee on barrier solutions will be informed by local advisory committees that evaluate accessibility issues at the community level and will help local boards prioritize projects and track progress toward improved customer service for those populations. The state standing committee will additionally serve as a forum for sharing best practices and strategies to improve access and advocate for resources and policy development that will improve services for all populations with barriers.

Local Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) will partner with the state advisory committee on barrier solutions to identify barrier removal projects and best practices that can be brought to scale statewide. Local WDCs have taken the lead for several years in convening their own advisory groups on system accessibility at the local level. Each WDC will designate either one of these existing advisory groups or create a new one to focus on barrier removal work, and will seek to recruit members from a broad spectrum of populations with barriers to employment, including, but not limited to: people with physical, sensory, behavioral health, or cognitive disabilities; economically disadvantaged communities; low-skilled and under-educated individuals; English language acquisition or bilingual communities; disadvantaged youth; and the long-term unemployed. Local WDCs are encouraged to engage with real customers with barriers, including encouraging customers to be part of their local committees focused on barriers.

These local advisory groups on barrier solutions will create an annual progress report to their local WDC outlining and discussing issues, accomplishments, and future deliverables related to the accessibility goals in local WDC strategic plans; concerns and challenges faced by populations with access barriers, as seen from the advisory groups' perspectives; a work-plan containing recommendations for improving accessibility in the coming year; and a progress report on previous work-plans for improving accessibility. The same report will be delivered each year to the state advisory group on barrier solutions, which will incorporate identified local best practices into statewide strategies. The state advisory group on barrier removal will also redirect resources toward barrier removal projects it prioritizes, and will help local advisory groups identify and broadly recruit representative members.

### **Accessibility and Technology Summary and Goals**

In conclusion, a truly accessible workforce system is one that makes full use of technology. The system will also include state-level advisory committees, with annual progress reports on One-Stop center accessibility at the local level. Finally, the local pilot programs that use technology to facilitate and improve integrated service delivery for all customers will be identified and encouraged.

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# Tab 3



# Workforce

Training and Education Coordinating

## Board

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **INSLEE APPOINTS BUSINESS, LABOR CO-CHAIRS TO HELM WORKFORCE BOARD**

*Now is time to seize the moment and ensure business and labor voices are heard*

OLYMPIA—Governor Inslee announced the appointment of two new co-chairs to helm the state's Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) bringing together labor and business leaders at a time when the state faces pivotal workforce and economic challenges during an ongoing pandemic. The board is tripartite with equal representation from business, labor, and government.

It's the first time ever in the Workforce Board's 30-year history that the Board has had two co-chairs to help direct policy initiatives and respond to labor market shifts. The Board advocates for workforce policies that help more Washingtonians achieve living-wage jobs and ensure a supply of skilled workers to help businesses thrive.

The two new chairs are Gary Chandler, vice president of strategic affairs at the Association of Washington Business, and Larry Brown, President of the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO. They succeed former Workforce Board Chair Perry England, vice president of building performance at MacDonald-Miller Facility Solutions in Seattle, who chaired the Board from 2015 through 2021.

"I appreciate the willingness of these two highly respected leaders to come together to collaborate on behalf of Washington's business and labor communities," said Governor Jay Inslee. "Maintaining, growing, and diversifying our state's world-class workforce is one of our highest economic priorities, especially as we work towards an equitable economic recovery that opens up new opportunities in rural communities and communities of color."

Chandler, a former state representative and Grant County commissioner, has been engaged in numerous business enterprises in the agricultural sector. He currently owns The UPS Store in Moses Lake.

Brown oversees the state's largest union organization. Prior to his election in 2018, Brown served as legislative and political director of Machinists (IAM) District Council 751. He first became a member of the IAM in 1983 as an inspector at Boeing, after serving in the U.S. Navy. He currently serves on the Auburn City Council.

"It's a tremendous honor to serve in this role alongside Gary," said Brown. "Together, we can work to create and sustain good family-wage jobs and successful businesses across Washington, but particularly in the rural parts of the state in need of economic development. But even statewide, we need to make sure we have a skilled and trained workforce that will help us achieve that goal and make our state an even better place to live and work."

"Workforce challenges are among the biggest challenges facing employers right now," Chandler said. "We must ensure that Washington has a skilled, trained and educated workforce so we can continue growing and bring economic prosperity to all of Washington."

The Workforce Board advises the Governor and Legislature on workforce development policy, ensures the state's workforce services and programs work together, and evaluates the performance of Washington's key workforce programs. Two-thirds of the voting seats are held equally by business and labor representatives, with remaining seats held by major service providers. The Board's vision is for every Washington community to be thriving, inclusive, and economically resilient.

In 2020, soon after the start of the pandemic, the Workforce Board was tasked by the Governor to create a workforce development component to the state's post-pandemic economic recovery plan. This plan was considered an essential piece of the Governor's recovery efforts, helping jump start Washington's workforce on the path to economic vitality.

# # #

*The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board is a partnership of business, labor, and government, dedicated to helping Washington residents obtain and succeed in family-wage jobs, while meeting employers' needs for skilled workers.*



# Tab 4

# Workforce System Legislative Update

**PRESENTER NAME:** Nova Gattman

**BOARD MEETING DATE:** 2/2/22

**DISCUSSION TIME ALLOTTED:** 30 min

<b>ISSUE/SITUATION:</b> Be concise - 1 or 2 sentences that get to the heart of the situation, problem or opportunity being addressed.	<b>THE ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY IS:</b>  Board staff will provide an update on the legislative session and the Board's agenda as it relates to the state's strategic plan for workforce development – <i>Talent and Prosperity for All</i> (TAP). As time permits, Board members will be invited to share updates on their legislative priorities following the staff presentation on the Board's agenda.
<b>TAP STRATEGIC PRIORITY:</b> Which TAP strategic priority or priorities does this recommendation support? Can you tie to specific goals and objectives in TAP? Briefly describe these connections. If the connection is unclear, describe why this is of consequence to the Workforce Board and/or workforce system.	<b>THIS IS IMPORTANT TO THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM BECAUSE:</b>  A coordinated and effective approach to the Board's statutory role to provide advocacy for the workforce system requires a thorough understanding of legislative initiatives and changes relating to the workforce system.
<b>BACKGROUND:</b> Short history of how this recommendation came to be. What has been tried, to what result? What evidence exists to support this recommendation?	Information about the agency's legislative activities are located at: <a href="https://www.wtb.wa.gov/about-us/workforce-board-legislative-tracker/">https://www.wtb.wa.gov/about-us/workforce-board-legislative-tracker/</a>  Board staff will be sending out handouts on bills and budget items of interest the morning of the Board meeting to allow for the most timely information possible on activities on the Legislative Session.
<b>RECOMMENDATION AND NEXT STEPS:</b> What specific result do you want from the Board? Is this recommendation for discussion or action? If for discussion, will action be required at a later date? What next steps are expected after this discussion?	<b>THE RECOMMENDATION AND/OR REQUESTED ACTION IS:</b>  Information and discussion only.  Board members may request additional information on bills or budget items that relate to workforce development.  If time permits, Board members will be invited to share information on their legislative requests and priorities.

Project Name	Agency	Fund Source	Amount	Detail
Accelerated Learning Opportunities	OSPI	GF-S	746,000	Funding is provided to school districts to expand learning opportunities and implement additional instruction, enrichment and student supports based on an evaluation of student needs. (General Fund - State)
Additional Support for WEIAOB	WTB	Workforce Education Investment Acc - State	75,000	This item increases staffing levels for the Workforce Education Investment Accountability and Oversight Board (WEIAOB) to support its current business needs. (Workforce Education Investment Acc - State)
Addressing Nursing Workforce Needs	WWU	GF-S	894,000	This item expands enrollment of the university's RN-to-Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program and establishes a new Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program, including an Associate Degree in Nursing to MSN pathway.
Apprenticeship Remote Learning	LNI	GF-S	2,500,000	Funding is provided to create and administer a grant program for modernizing the technology and remote learning infrastructure in existing joint registered apprenticeship programs. Grant applications must include a plan to sustain the investment over time.
Apprenticeship Retention Study	LNI	GF-S	205,000	Funding is provided for the staff and resources necessary to begin conducting a four-year retention study of state-registered apprentices. The study must include the collection of data from all apprentices three months into their apprenticeship to understand any challenges and barriers they face, make aggregate data available by trade in an accessible dashboard for public use, and implement an early alert response to connect apprentices with needed supports.
Background Check Fee Assistance	DCYF	GF-S	1,267,000	Per federal rule, completion of a background check is required for newly hired staff to begin working in a childcare setting. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact employers' ability to recruit and retain an adequate childcare workforce, and the federal rule imposes additional hiring challenges when employees cannot begin working until the background check is completed. Funding is provided for the department to pay the background check application fee and the fingerprint processing fee to reduce the time involved in completing the background check. This is estimated to reduce the timeline for newly hired childcare workers to be cleared to begin working by about 3-5 days.
BEST Program	OSPI	GF-S	4,500,000	Funding is provided to support expansion of the Beginning Educator Support Team program, which offers mentoring for beginning teachers.

Project Name	Agency	Fund Source	Amount	Detail
BH Medicaid Reimbursement Rates	HCA	GF-S, GF-F	31,400,000	Funds are provided for a 4.5 percent increase in Medicaid reimbursement for community behavioral health providers contracted through managed care organizations, effective January 2023.
BH Retention Bonuses	HCA	GF-S	50,000,000	Funding is provided on a one-time basis solely for the Authority to provide assistance payments to behavioral health providers that serve Medicaid and state-funded clients and have experienced revenue loss or increased expenses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. this amount supplements the provider relief [\$31M CSFRF] that was provided in the 2021-23 biennial budget.
Business Enterprise Program Remodel	DSB	GF-S	3,055,000	Funds are provided to upgrade equipment and complete remodels for up to 15 cafes owned by visually impaired business owners who are part of the Business Enterprise program. This will ensure the restaurant owners are prepared to serve the changing dining needs of the public that were created by the COVID-19 pandemic. This funding also allows for the purchase of three food trucks to expand entrepreneurial opportunities.
Cannabis Laboratory Testing	DOH	Dedicated Marijuana Acct - State	818,000	The department will provide expertise to the Interagency Cooperative Team to develop and review accreditation standards for cannabis laboratory testing.
Career and College Pathways Grants	WSAC	SAC Fund Innovation/Quality Acct - Non-Appropriated	16,600,000	This item establishes a fund for Innovation and Quality in Career and College Pathways to provide competitive awards for existing and new community-based career and college collaborations to increase K-12 postsecondary enrollment rates and close equity gaps. An accompanying legislative proposal adapts the existing Fund for Innovation and Quality in Higher Education (Chapter 28B.120 RCW) for this purpose.
Career Launch Grants	WSAC	Workforce Education Investment Acc - State	1,000,000	WSAC will administer a grant pool to support new and existing career launch programs at the public four-year universities.
CCW Intermediary Grants Expansion	ESD	Workforce Education Investment Acc - State	4,000,000	Funding is provided to the Employment Security Department to expand the Career Connect Washington's (CCW) intermediary grants to industry sector leads and private and public four-year universities to create new programs and scale existing ones across the state. Funding also covers the staffing necessary to administer this grant program.

Project Name	Agency	Fund Source	Amount	Detail
CDL Training Grants	SBCTC	Workforce Education Investment Acc - State	3,750,000	The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges will administer a grant pool that would be available to all community and technical colleges that offer commercial driving license (CDL) training programs.
CDL Training Program	DOC	GF-S	121,000	Funding is provided to DOC to collaborate with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and the Department of Licensing to develop a pre-release commercial driving license (CDL) pilot program.
Clean Energy WF Transition	WTB	GF-S	250,000	In coordination with the Department of Commerce, the Workforce Board will convene stakeholders to study the effects of climate change on the workforce and policies enacted to mitigate climate change. (General Fund - State)
CSE Expansion	UW	Workforce Education Investment Acc - State	2,000,000	Funding is provided for the University of Washington to expand the number of students receiving degrees from the Paul G. Allen School of Computer Science & Engineering (CSE).
Cybersecurity Certificate	TESC	Workforce Education Investment Acc - State	454,000	This new one-year interdisciplinary security certificate would focus on cybersecurity and address its interface with biosecurity, chemical security, and security policy, with the goal of contributing to societal stability. This certificate will help students acquire content and skills in many cybersecurity disciplines.
Cybersecurity Degree Options	EWU	Workforce Education Investment Acc - State, General Fund - State	2,810,000	This funding will enhance Eastern Washington University's computer science program by adding a Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity degree option and a Professional Science Master's Cyber Operations degree option in the College of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.
Cybersecurity Degree Program	WSU	Inst of HI ED- Operating Fees Acct - State, Workforce Education Investment Acc - State	4,448,000	Funding is provided for Washington State University to add two new academic programs to help increase the state's cybersecurity workforce.

Project Name	Agency	Fund Source	Amount	Detail
Cybersecurity Training Expansion	WWU	Workforce Education Investment Acc - State	1,208,000	Funds are provided to create an online cybersecurity certificate program, upgrade Cyber Range equipment and software, and invest in additional technical and research support.
Cybersecurity Workforce	SBCTC	Workforce Education Investment Acc - State	7,223,000	This funding will expand cybersecurity program offerings by an additional 500 full-time student enrollments.
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	DOT	Motor Vehicle Account - State, Puget Sound Ferry Operations Acct - State	1,430,000	To improve diversity, equity, and inclusion at WSDOT, funding is provided to utilize a contractor to develop and implement community workforce agreements and to hire workforce development staff to serve as subject matter experts on federal and state civil rights laws.
Eagle Care	EWU	Workforce Education Investment Acc - State, General Fund - State	1,054,000	This item funds implementation of Eagle Care, a robust and coordinated care network that is designed to coordinate and maximize various student support services. The wrap-around care helps students navigate and overcome the social, financial and/or health obstacles that can delay or prevent the successful completion of their degree.
Energy Transition Workforce Account	ESD	Clean Energy Trans Workforce Acct - State	24,780,000	The governor intends to advance a long-term strategy for preparing and transitioning the workforce to fill good-paying, skilled, clean energy jobs. The Clean Energy Transition Workforce Account is established to support workers who are affected by the state's transition from fossil fuels to a clean energy economy. A one-time investment is made into the account, and eligible expenses will be defined in law based on the state's development of a workforce development, training, and transition plan.
Enrollment Advising Fellowship	WSAC	GF-S	1,000,000	This item creates a statewide college and career enrollment advising fellowship that would fund college students to be peer and near-peer mentors for college and career planning. The fellowship would help current students pay for college while they help future students navigate college and financial aid applications.

Project Name	Agency	Fund Source	Amount	Detail
Expand Cybersecurity Capacity	CWU	Workforce Education Investment Acc - State	2,301,000	The university will expand cybersecurity education capacity by adding additional faculty resources in the Department of Computer Science. It also will establish a cybersecurity “boot camp” that prepares individuals to earn certificates as evidence of cybersecurity expertise. The certificate would be available to both students and those who do not attend the university.
Expand Doula Services	DOH	GF-S	102,000	Funding is provided to create requirements for a voluntary competency-based doula certification, for which the department may establish fees. Funding is provided to waive an estimated \$100 fee for doulas who serve clients on Medicaid.
Expand Homeless Student Assistance	OSPI	GF-S	2,932,000	This funding will expand the homeless student assistance pilot program from eight colleges to all 34 colleges in the community and technical college system.
External Recruiting	DOT State Ferries	Puget Sound Ferry Operations Acct - State	200,000	A one-time transfer from General Fund-State will provide funds to hire an external recruiter for Washington State Ferries to reach out to underrepresented populations for vacant positions.
Future Teacher Residency	OSPI	GF-S	10,500,000	Grants will be distributed to school districts to reimburse for payments made to hire college students actively earning their teaching degree to work as teaching assistants in K-12 classroom.
Health Workforce Grants	SBCTC	GF-S	8,000,000	Funding is provided for SBCTC to administer grants to help incentivize students to enter the health workforce.
Healthcare Simulation Labs	OSPI	Workforce Education Investment Acc - State	3,600,000	OSPI will administer grants for nursing programs to purchase or upgrade simulation laboratory equipment. This will help upgrade equipment and expand the capacity of simulation laboratories to serve more nursing students.
Healthcare Simulation Labs	OSPI	Workforce Education Investment Acc - State	3,600,000	OSPI will administer grants for nursing programs to purchase or upgrade simulation laboratory equipment. This will help upgrade equipment and expand the capacity of simulation laboratories to serve more nursing students. (Workforce Education Investment Acc - State)
Healthcare Simulation Labs	SBCTC	Workforce Education Investment Acc - State	5,800,000	This item will administer grants for nursing programs to purchase or upgrade simulation laboratory equipment. This will help expand the capacity of simulation laboratories to serve more nursing students.

Project Name	Agency	Fund Source	Amount	Detail
Healthcare Simulation Labs	WSAC	Workforce Education Investment Acc - State	3,600,000	The Washington Student Achievement Council will administer grants for nursing programs to purchase or upgrade simulation laboratory equipment. This will help expand the capacity of simulation laboratories to serve more nursing students.
Improving Credentialing Performance	DOH	GF-S	2,488,000	Remote work compounded delays in the health professional credentialing section, resulting in a backlog of 34,000 pending health profession applications. Funding will provide project staff to reduce the backlog and complete credentials within seven calendar days of receiving a complete application.
Integrated Data Sharing	WTB	GF-S	216,000	Funding is provided for the Workforce Board to hire an IT policy and planning manager to help develop a design study for technology solutions to improve workforce development, education, and support service programs. (General Fund - State)
Long-Term Care Nursing Staff Crisis	DOH	Health Professions Account & GF-S	761,000	The Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission will expand nursing assistant training and reduce the time someone needs to complete their nurse certification exam. The commission will also create an apprenticeship pathway to improve job prospects for nursing assistants and licensed practical nurses. (Health Professions Account - State, General Fund - State)
Long-Term Care Nursing Staff Crisis	DOH	Health Professions Account - State, GF-S	761,000	The Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission will expand nursing assistant training and reduce the time someone needs to complete their nurse certification exam. The commission will also create an apprenticeship pathway to improve job prospects for nursing assistants and licensed practical nurses.
Long-term Care Nursing Staff Crisis	WTB	GF-S	2,602,000	Funding is provided to conduct health workforce surveys, in collaboration with the Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission, to collect and analyze data on the long-term care workforce. The Workforce Board will conduct health workforce surveys and manage a stakeholder process and pilot grant program to improve retention and job quality in long-term care facilities. (General Fund - State)
Mental Health Access Project	DOH	GF-S	1,680,000	Funding is provided for youth behavioral response teams to conduct behavioral health therapy and trauma-focused cognitive behavioral health therapy, screening and assessments for youth. The teams would be drawn from volunteers in psychology graduate programs.



Project Name	Agency	Fund Source	Amount	Detail
Modernize Career Bridge	WTB	GF-S	460,000	Partial funding is provided for the Workforce Board to modernize its Career Bridge website which is used daily by thousands of Washington middle and high school students, unemployed workers seeking training, and the public. (General Fund - State)
Modernizing Mathematics Pathways	OSPI	GF-S	553,000	This funding will modernize the mathematics pathway by producing a pilot for a revised and expanded course. The pilot will adopt evidence-based strategies that better give students the flexibility and support they need. (General Fund - State)
Next Generation Science Standards	OSPI	GF-S	2,000,000	Funding is increased to continue professional development in the Next Generation Science Standards and to support community-based climate science organizations in partnering with educational service districts and school districts.
Next Generation Science Standards	OSPI	GF-S	2,000,000	Funding is increased to continue professional development in the Next Generation Science Standards and to support community-based climate science organizations in partnering with educational service districts and school districts. (General Fund - State)
Nurse Preceptor Grants	DOH	GF-S	6,000,000	Funding is provided to set up a grant program to provide funding to nurses who are willing to supervise nursing students in health care settings. The goal of this program is to help reduce a shortage of health care settings for students to conduct their clinical hours and bring more nurses into the field. (General Fund - State)
Nurse Preceptor Grants	DOH	GF-S	6,000,000	Funding is provided to set up a grant program to provide funding to nurses who are willing to supervise nursing students in health care settings. The goal of this program is to help reduce a shortage of health care settings for students to conduct their clinical hours and bring more nurses into the field.
Pharmacy - Behavioral Health	WSU	GF-S	341,000	Funding is provided for the development of a residency program focused on behavioral health. The program will create a pathway to train postgraduate pharmacists in behavioral health.

Project Name	Agency	Fund Source	Amount	Detail
Prepare Future Doctors	UW	GF-S	500,000	The University of Washington Medical School will collaborate with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Commission on African American Affairs, Commission on Hispanic Affairs, Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs, and Governor's Office of Indian Affairs to provide mentoring, preparation and career awareness for students of color in grades six and over who are interested in pursuing a career in medicine.
Prepare Future Doctors	WSU	GF-S	500,000	Washington State University will collaborate with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Commission on African American Affairs, Commission on Hispanic Affairs, Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs, and Governor's Office of Indian Affairs to provide mentoring, preparation, and career awareness for students of color in grades six and above who are interested in pursuing a career in medicine.
Refugee Education	SBCTC	Workforce Education Investment Acc - State	3,072,000	These funds will expand existing programming to enable colleges and community-based organizations to build educational pathways to address the various needs of Afghan refugees and connect them to other state resources. Refugees will increase their English-speaking skills, civic participation and workforce readiness by earning credentials that will lead to employment.
Retention of Underserved Students	CWU	Workforce Education Investment Acc - State	286,000	Funds are provided to create an extended orientation for 50 first-year, underserved students. This program promotes retention by giving students and their families strategies for financial and educational success and orienting them to their surroundings. It also introduces them to faculty, staff, and other students in advance of the start of classes.
Rural Jobs State Match	WSAC	GF-S	206,000	One-time funding is provided to match private contributions to the Rural Jobs Program.
Stabilizing Maritime Workforce	DOT	Multimodal Transportation Account - State	1,500,000	Funding is provided for the Pre-Apprenticeship & Supportive Services (PASS) grant program to increase the number of individuals prepared to work in the maritime labor force.
Student Success During COVID	TESC	GF-S	458,000	Funding is provided for The Evergreen State College (TESC) to address student mental health and wellness, instructional design related to online teaching, and missed opportunities for laboratory, art, and media lab experiences.

Project Name	Agency	Fund Source	Amount	Detail
Study on Expansion Opportunities	DSB	GF-S	100,000	Funding is provided for the department to contract with a consultant to conduct a study on new enterprise and revenue-generating opportunities for visually impaired individuals. The study must identify new revenue sources, new or expanded enterprise opportunities, and new needs and methods for preparing visually impaired individuals to effectively manage these enterprises. The department must submit a report in June 2023.
Support Ferries Internships	DOT State Ferries	Puget Sound Ferry Operations Acct - State	294,000	Funding is provided to Washington State Ferries to compensate 10 deck and 10 engine interns.
Support Intellectual Disabilities	Commerce	Coronavirus St Fiscal Recovery Fund - Federal	5,000,000	Funding is provided for grants to organizations that serve the health and welfare of children and adults with intellectual disabilities through opportunities that build motor skills, support development, improve health, and develop leadership. The activities supported through these grants may be used for sports competition and will serve all ages, genders, ethnicities, and socio-economic backgrounds free of charge. (Coronavirus St Fiscal Recovery Fund - Federal)
Upgrade Apprenticeship Equipment	LNI	GF-S	4,000,000	Funds are provided to create and administer a grant program to upgrade apprenticeship equipment to better replicate conditions on the job during the training of apprentices. The grant program is available to apprenticeship programs that are part of the Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee.
WA College Grant - Apprentices	WSAC	GF-S	850,000	The Washington Student Achievement Council will contract with an entity to provide administrative support for recipients enrolled in an unaffiliated apprenticeship program.
Washington Award for Vocational Excellence (WAVE)	WTB	GF-S	209,000	The Workforce Board will conduct outreach to schools and colleges, assist with recipient selection, and provide ongoing support of scholarship recipients in successfully navigating higher education pathways for the Washington Award for Vocational Excellence (WAVE) scholarship. (General Fund - State)
WAVE Program Administration	WSAC	GF-S	175,000	Funding is provided to restart implementation and administrative expenditures related to the Washington Award for Vocational Excellence (WAVE) program.

Project Name	Agency	Fund Source	Amount	Detail
WCC Community Support	DOE	GF-S	738,000	Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) collaborates with local organizations to complete environmental stewardship projects statewide. WCC's cost-share requires partners to fund 75 percent of crew costs, and the remaining 25 percent is funded with state appropriations and an AmeriCorps grant. This cost-share works well for most programs, but it presents barriers for organizations in under-resourced areas. To further the state's goals around environmental justice, funding is provided for a two-year period to provide five WCC crews for projects with no cost-share requirement in areas of the state where assistance is most needed.
Wildcat Academic Mentoring Program	CWU	Workforce Education Investment Acc - State	586,000	Funding is provided for the Wildcat Academic Mentoring (WAM) program, a peer-to-peer, collaborative mentoring program that supports the whole student in their wellness and success. The program also will hire, train, and equip graduate student fellows and peer mentors.
WSIPP Reentry Study	TESC	GF-S	200,000	The Washington State Institute for Public Policy will conduct a study to identify reentry outcomes, needs/gaps, and disparities in Washington. Areas to be studied include recidivism, access to employment, access to addiction and mental health treatment, access to trade schools and higher education, and family reunification.

Bill / Sponsor	Short Title	Description/Notes	Status
1536 (Maycumber)	Regional apprenticeship programs	The bill would establish regional apprenticeship programs (Note: Not defined in this section of the statute) through Educational Service Districts (ESDs) in at least two industries or professions per ESD. ESDs are required to coordinate locally on identifying and developing apprenticeship programs, and coordinate with local schools to make the programs available to high school students. The bill charges OSPI to allocate funding for 2 FTE per ESD to oversee programs, along with funding in the budget for establishing the apprenticeships. Enrollments shall be funded up to 1.2 FTEs. ESDs will work with OSPI and the Career Connected Learning cross-agency work group in implementation.	Feb 03 Scheduled for executive session in the House Committee on Education at 10:00 AM.
1592 (Leavitt)	Military spouse employment	Amends existing RCW to: 1) Require authority issuing license to a qualifying military spouse within 30 days after receipt of a complete application. 2) Charges DOH, DOL, ESD, WDVA, and PESB with the creation of a military spouse website including rules/procedures and fees for applications. 3) Makes changes to relevant licensing agencies to include a military spouse point of contact and provide training to new board/commission members about military spouse licensing. 4) DOL, DOH, and ESD are charged with appointing a military spouse or liaison to serve on the licensing body, conduct a review of the licensing process for barriers, and review and identify possible ways to reduce military spouse expenses for licensing. 5) Charges DOH, DOL, and PESB with the creation of a campaign aimed at increasing military spouse employment, including consultation with local organizations. 6) States that a spouse of a service member may terminate an employment contract without penalty at any time after the service member receives military service orders for a permanent change of station.	Jan 27 Executive action taken in the House Committee on Housing, Human Services & Veterans. VOTE: DP7 w/oRec1  Feb 3 Scheduled for public hearing in Appropriations at 1:30pm.
1601 (Leavitt)	Student homelessness pilot	Building upon two previous bills beginning (2019) and then expanding (2021) a foster care and homeless student pilot at CTCs and baccalaureate institutions, this bill would expand the pilot to all 34 community and technical colleges and makes it a permanent program. Each CTC may implement a program to provide assistance to students experiencing homelessness and those who were in foster care upon time of graduation. The program may include access to shower and laundry facilities, short-term housing assistance, case management assistance, and the ability for institutions to establish plans for developing surplus property for affordable housing.	Jan 13 Executive action taken in the House Committee on College & Workforce Development. Vote: DP7 DNP4 w/oRec1
1659 (Slatter)	Higher education grants	Makes adjustments to the basic statutes governing Washington College Grant (WCG) awards and offers a bridge grant to all eligible students in addition to their WCG, if the student is enrolled in an institution of higher education on a half-time basis. The bridge grant is applied after all other gift aid has been awarded. The bill would make more students eligible for the WCG—increases the number of eligible WCG recipients from students with family incomes between 0-55 percent median income up to 70 percent median and adjusts the sliding scale upwards on the rest of the eligibility categories.  Substitute bill clarifies that bridge grants are annual awards and removed the requirement that students enrolled on less than a half-time basis receive prorated bridge grants.	Jan 31 Public hearing in the House Committee on Appropriations.

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Bill / Sponsor	Short Title	Description/Notes	Status
1723 (Gregerson)	Telecommuni- cations access	<p>The bill creates the Digital Equity Act, with the intent to address access to the internet and affordable devices, finishing the “last mile,” and an ongoing need for coordinated efforts for ongoing maintenance and broadband access expansion. Establishes the Washington Broadband Assistance Program within DSHS to inform and provide low-income persons with reduced rates for eligible voice and broadband services. The UTC will determine the providers eligible to participate in the program.</p> <p>The bill creates the Anchor Institution Digital Equity Program for the purpose of providing discounted rates for telecommunications services and discounted telecommunications infrastructure costs to public facilities such as libraries, schools, shelters, and more. The State Broadband Office is charged with an outreach effort to inform “hard to reach” communities and low-income communities with information about free and low-cost broadband programs.</p> <p>Renames an existing program to the Digital Equity Opportunity Program to provide grants to fund training, hardware, and other digital services.</p> <p>Creates a Digital Equity Planning Grant Program within Commerce to support local areas in the creation of a region-specific digital equity plan, including local governments, WDCs, and schools. Creates a Washington Digital Equity Forum to develop recommendations for digital connectivity and advise on the planning grant program.</p>	Feb 01 Executive action taken in the House Committee on Appropriations. Vote: w/oRec8 DNP6 DP2S18
1755 (Peterson)	TANF time limit extensions	By DSHS Request, requires DSHS to create special rules allowing extension of TANF benefits beyond 60 months when the state unemployment rate is above 7 percent.	Jan 31 Public hearing in the House Committee on Appropriations.

Bill / Sponsor	Short Title	Description/Notes	Status
1760 (Paul)	Dual credit program access	<p>The bill requires OSPI to administer a program to subsidize fees and course materials (including textbooks) related to an eligible (defined as eligible for the maximum award of the WA College Grant, or other financial need criteria as determined by WSAC through the development of an income attestation process) student’s participation in dual (college) credit programs. Sets the cost for eligible students at no more than \$42.50/credit (adjusted for inflation). Current fees are set at no more than \$65/credit. OPSI shall collaborate with postsecondary institutions to identify and support eligible students.</p> <p>OSPI would provide \$1,000 per low-income student FTE to the higher education institution, which would refund the unused portion at the end of the school year. The bill requires that public schools shall provide information on available dual credit programs to the families of students in grades 9-12, that dual credit courses are accepted at most, but not all, institutions, and translated to the recipient’s primary language where possible.</p> <p>The bill further makes permanent the Running Start Summer School Program, and expands participation institutions from 3 to 6 CTCs, with two east of the Cascades (up from 1) and increases the number of college credits that can be earned from 5 to 10. Students who have earned up to 10 or fewer colleges credits are eligible to participate. Requires OSPI and SBCTC report by Nov. 1, 2024 on expanding the program to additional institutions.</p>	<p>Jan 28 Executive action taken in the House Committee on Education. Vote: DPS10 w/oRec2</p> <p>Feb 3 Scheduled for public hearing in the House Committee on Appropriations at 1:30 PM.</p>
1780 (Slatter)	Workforce Investment Board	<p>Changes the staffing of the Workforce Education Investment Accountability and Oversight Board (WEIAOB) from the <b>Workforce Board</b> to the Washington Student Achievement Council. Workforce Board would continue the performance accountability role and maintain the WEIAOB data dashboard.</p>	<p>Jan 26 Executive action taken in the House Committee on College &amp; Workforce Development. Vote: DP11 (CWD 22)</p> <p>Feb 1 Rules Committee relieved of further consideration. Placed on second reading.</p>
1805 / 5797 (Paul/Lias)	Opportunity scholarship program	<p>The bill allows the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship to explicitly be applied to registered apprenticeship options. It changes income eligibility for advanced degrees; stating that the state median income may be greater than 125 percent for a recipient if the eligible student can demonstrate financial need through other factors, including debt and other factors to be specified by the program. The bill makes changes to the Rural County High Employer Demand Jobs Program section of the scholarship; specifically related to timing for establishing each year’s state match and changing the GPA requirement to satisfactory academic progress rather than a flat 2.0.</p>	<p>H: Feb 3 Scheduled for public hearing in the House Committee on Appropriations at 1:30 PM. S: Jan 18 Public hearing in Higher Education &amp; Workforce Development.</p>



Bill / Sponsor	Short Title	Description/Notes	Status
1835 (Hansen)	Postsecondary enrollment	Establishes an outreach initiative for the Washington College Grant (WCG) and FAFSA/WAFSA financial aid application. Charges WSAC with a marketing campaign to increase awareness of the WCG. Institutions of higher education (IHEs) shall launch a FAFSA/WAFSA completion initiative, including employing Outreach Specialists at a ratio of 1:600 high school seniors with a 60/40 split of specialists between CTCs and public four-year institutions with a reporting date of Dec. 1, 2023 on the results. The State Library shall administer a pilot grant program for local libraries to increase FAFSA completion rates, in partnership with CBOs, with a report date of Dec 1, 2023 (pilot ends July 1, 2024). Clarifies WCG program eligibility specifically for students or parents receiving certain need-based state aid as well as income requirements already in statute. DSHS shall, through a data sharing agreement with WSAC, verify eligibility; no additional form from the student required. IHEs shall enter in data-sharing agreements with WSAC for student contact information to be used to inform students about WCG eligibility.  WSAC's Fund for Innovation and Quality is renamed the Washington Career and College Pathways Innovation Challenge Program Account.	Jan 31 Public hearing in the House Committee on Appropriations.
1872 (Senn)	Care worker center	Requires the <b>Workforce Board</b> to set up a Care Worker Center, with the intention of promoting care work professions as a valuable career sector. Requires the Board to do a range of research, occupation mapping, marketing, and recommendation work in the sectors of child care, long-term care, and personal attendants for people with disabilities. Workforce Board shall administer a policy transformation grant fund, amount TBD. Annual reporting requirements, beginning Sept. 1, 2022.	Jan 26 Executive action taken in the House Committee on College & Workforce Development. Vote: DNP4 DPS7
2007 (Slatter)	Nurse educator loans	Establishes the Nurse Educator Loan Repayment Program as part of the Washington Health Corps loan repayment and scholarship program for healthcare. Includes nurse educators with an advanced nursing degree (beyond a bachelor's degree) who participated in an approved nursing program (approved by the Nursing Commission) as eligible for participation in loan repayment. WSAC shall set criteria for the program.	Jan 27 Executive action taken in the House Committee on College & Workforce Development. Vote: w/oRec1 DNP1 DP10
2009 (Berry)	Basic income trust	Creates a universal basic income (UBI) trust fund within DSHS, titled the Evergreen Basic Income Trust Program, to provide monthly cash assistance for 36 months beginning Jan. 1, 2023 to Washington residents who apply for the program and are age 18+ with a gross income less than 50 percent of an area's median income. Any cash assistant provided by the program shall not be considered for eligibility for a range of state income assistance programs such as TANF and child care. UBI was one of the recommendations of the Poverty Reduction Work Group, and the Group is a required consultant with DSHS on fair and equitable implementation. DSHS must prioritize outreach and enrollment efforts to specific populations and income levels as named in the bill. A status report is due on Nov. 1, 2023.	Feb 1 Public hearing in the House Committee on Housing, Human Services & Veterans.

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Last updated 2/1/22 for the 2/2/22 Workforce Board meeting.



Bill / Sponsor	Short Title	Description/Notes	Status
2019 (Boehnke)	Careers in retail	<p>Charges the <b>Workforce Board</b> with a two-year research and stakeholder project focused on increasing and clearly identifying education and training opportunities for careers in the retail industry. The Workforce Board, in consultation with SBCTC and the Washington Retail Association, will identify core skills for retail industry employment, existing pathways for these skills, map educational pathways, including apprenticeship programs, identify gaps in education opportunities, and identify higher-wage professions in demand within the retail industry (HR, accounting, etc.).</p> <p>The Workforce Board shall engage stakeholders, including SBCTC, OSPI, ESD, and CCW to make policy recommendations on ways to increase education options for retail credentials, ways for students and graduates to connect with retail employments, incumbent worker training in the industry to higher wage professions, and opportunities for increasing job opportunities for underserved communities and previously incarcerated individuals. A report is due Dec. 1, 2022 and Dec. 1, 2023.</p>	<p>Jan 27 Executive action taken in the House Committee on College &amp; Workforce Development. Vote: w/oRec1 DPS10</p> <p>Feb 1 Rules Committee relieved of further consideration. Placed on second reading.</p>
5600 (Keiser)	Apprenticeship programs	<p>Broad bill focused on increasing apprenticeship opportunities and access, including wraparound services and apprenticeship expansion to “nontraditional” occupation areas.</p> <p>Requires the Apprenticeship Council (Council) to establish economic or industry-based “platforms” for new and existing programs to promote increased industry collaboration and periodic reviews of competencies and curricula for apprenticeship programs and collaborate with a relevant Center of Excellence. Requires LNI to assign an industry liaison to each subcommittee. Platforms must report annually about participation in current programs, progress in developing new ones, and on reviews of competencies and curricula. LNI must require new apprenticeship programs to provide a sustainability assessment prior to approval. States the Council, in its approval process, shall consider whether participants will move toward a living wage, have access to a career ladder, or other nonwage benefits.</p> <p>LNI is charged with the following requirements under the bill: 1) A grant program for one-time technology and remote learning for state registered apprenticeships. Applicants must provide a plan for sustainability for the technology and remote learning infrastructure. 2) Grant program for wraparound services for potential apprentices, including child care and transportation. Grants may be provided to nonprofit organizations or state registered apprenticeship training committees. 3) Grant program for updating equipment in existing state programs. 4) Vouchers for the cost of driver’s education for minors enrolled in a state registered apprenticeship. 5) Conduct an apprenticeship retention study with participants six months into their apprenticeship on barriers and challenges to continuing the program and publish the results on a public website dashboard annually. LNI shall submit a report to the Legislature by Dec. 1, 2026 on its findings and recommendations for retaining apprentices. 6) Develop a list of options for incentivizing apprenticeship utilization in the private sector, particularly for non-traditional industries and smaller employers, with a report due September 30, 2023.</p> <p>Additional provisions: Charges the Governor with establishing a state agency HR committee to develop state agency apprenticeship programs. OSPI, in collaboration with CCW, must submit a report by Dec. 1, 2022 on the creation of a Career Pathways Day for all students, including any legislative action needed, requirements, and barriers.</p>	<p>Feb 04 Scheduled for public hearing in the Senate Committee on Ways &amp; Means at 9:00 AM.</p>

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Bill / Sponsor	Short Title	Description/Notes	Status
5719 (Mullet)	Dual credit costs	Modifies the College in the High School (CHS) grant program beginning July 1, 2022 to cover the dual credit tuition fee for low-income students and to have rules developed jointly with higher education agencies. Clarifies that institutions of higher education must waive all mandatory fees for Running Start students and that the institutions of higher education will be reimbursed for associated costs. Lowers the maximum per college credit tuition fee for a CHS program course from \$65 to \$35 and specifies that institutions of higher education will be reimbursed for associated costs. OSPI shall administer a grant program to support schools covering the cost of the CHS program. Adds a null-and-void clause for the lowering of the maximum credit tuition fee for CHS program courses.	Jan 21 Executive action taken in the Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education. Vote: DPS9
5764	Apprenticeship and higher ed	<p>States the intent of the legislature, with an implementation requirement of the 2025-26 academic year, that students enrolled in an apprenticeship program and receiving related supplemental instruction (RSI) at a CTC may access the Washington College Grant (Grant) through their financial office. WSAC is charged with verifying access to the Grant for those not at a CTC. SBCTC must collaborate with WSAC to develop a student technology interface to verify registration, eligibility, and Grant awards. The bill sets tuition for approved apprenticeship programs is set at the same amount as the Washington College Grant for students attending two-year institutions, including supplies and equipment.</p> <p>The Ruckelshaus Center (through WSAC as contract manager) is charged with undertaking a study to evaluate credential pathways for apprentices, including: 1) Recommendations on expansion of the multi-occupational trades degree and exploration of additional, transferable, credentials and credits. 2) Review of national best practices and governance/operational structures for apprenticeship degree pathways, with recommendations on model(s) for Washington. 3) Apprentices' demand for degrees and when in their career they seek these degrees. 4) Review the current funding model for apprentices in the CTC system and make recommendations on a sustainable funding model that covers the full cost of the program. 5) Identify and remove barriers for apprentices to access the WCG and all other student support programs.</p> <p>WSAC shall report annually, beginning Dec. 1, 2023, on the Ruckelshaus Center study findings, with the 2026 report containing policy recommendations for degree pathways for apprenticeship completers. The Apprenticeship Council shall report by Dec. 1, 2023 on a recommendation process with key stakeholders on whether the state should establish an institution or centralized program for apprentices to use for RSI for credit towards a degree.</p> <p>The bill requires that all institutions of higher education must establish course equivalencies for registered apprenticeship programs, in consultation with faculty representatives. Apprenticeship programs registered before July 1, 2022 must establish credit or course equivalencies by the 2028-29 school year. Any new programs after July 1, 2022 must have credit or course equivalencies established within six years. Allows the Council to establish an exemption from this provision when necessary.</p>	Jan 25 Executive action taken in the Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development. Vote: DPS5

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Bill / Sponsor	Short Title	Description/Notes	Status
5771/1943 (Holy/ Entenman)	Basic ed/ caseload forecast	SBCTC request legislation. Adds to the duties of the Caseload Forecast Council a forecast of adults age 18-44 who do not have a high school diploma or credential and the number of students expected to enroll in basic education for adults courses at CTCs.	S: Jan 25 Executive action taken in the Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development. Vote: DP5  H: Jan 12 Referred to Appropriations.
5789 (Randall)	Innovation challenge program	WSAC request bill. Creates the Washington Career and College Pathways Innovation Challenge Program (program) within WSAC to award grants to local and regional entities for programs with the objective of meeting state educational attainment goals. Grants shall be awarded to local and regional partnerships representing cross-sector collaboration. Grant should (at minimum include one of the following) plan/pilot innovation initiatives, engage CBO and resources to reach the full range of populations in an area, develop programs for specific needs of different populations for postsecondary attainment, provide non-tuition financial support, further innovations such as mastery-based learning or focus on alternative scheduling, and include local matching funds. Annual report requirement by Sep. 1 of each year including an overview of grants awarded, progress toward postsecondary attainment, and disaggregated demographic data.  Renames WSAC's Fund for Innovation and Quality to the Washington Career and College Pathways Innovative Challenge Program Account. Funds may only be spent for the program as described above.	Jan 27 Executive action taken in the Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development. Vote: DPS5
5892 (Brown)	High schools/ nursing pilot	The bill charges the Nursing Commission (NCQAC), in collaboration with rural hospitals, nursing assistant (CNA) training programs, and LNI with the establishment of at least two pilot projects (one on each side of the state) for rural hospitals to utilize high school student CNAs or students in CNA training programs to address the workforce shortage and promote careers in rural hospitals. NCQAC shall report on the project status and any recommendations, including potential barriers in using high school CNA/CNA-in training positions to their full scope of practice, and may contract with a nursing and health services consultant for this project. The program expires June 30, 2025.	Jan 26 Executive action taken in the Senate Committee on Health & Long Term Care. Vote: w/oRec1 DPS10

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# Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board



## VISION

Every Washington community is thriving, inclusive, and economically resilient.

## MISSION

We champion strategies, and align organizations and stakeholders statewide to enable the future of work, which ensures a successful business climate and livable-wage jobs for all.

## VALUES

- ▶ **Racial Equity and Inclusiveness:** We work to end systemic racism, value differences, and welcome all voices.
- ▶ **Innovative and Agile:** We are nimble and creative in responding to the needs of our customers to revolutionize Washington's workforce system.
- ▶ **Collaboration:** We value our teamwork, partnerships and proactively engage all stakeholders with open and honest communication.
- ▶ **Accountability:** We are responsible to each other and to the public to ensure the effectiveness of investments in the workforce system.
- ▶ **Integrity:** We hold ourselves to the highest standards of ethics and honesty. Our moral compass aligns to our vision.

## WHAT WE DO

### Evaluate the State's Workforce System

As an independent third party evaluator, we track the performance of the state's largest workforce programs to ensure a high-quality workforce training system. We are responsible for overseeing a workforce development system that includes 16 education and training programs receiving almost \$1 billion annually in state and federal funds. We also set and evaluate performance standards for education programs eligible for federal and state training dollars as part of the Eligible Training Provider List.

### Advocate for Continuous Improvement & Innovation

We support the continuous improvement of the state's workforce system. To do this, we are charged with offering policy recommendations to the Governor and Legislature. The Board also administers and evaluates innovative pilot projects that can be brought to scale on a regional or statewide basis.

### Regulate Private Career Schools & Oversee Veterans Programs

The Legislature designated the Workforce Board as the primary agency to oversee and regulate private career schools and certificate programs, as well as non-degree programs for veterans. The Workforce Board plays an important consumer protection role in investigating and acting on student complaints.

### Support Career-Connected Learning & Carl D. Perkins Act

We actively promote a wide range of work-based learning and real world work experience to help young people transition to career success. The Board also serves as the state's Board of Vocational Education to oversee the Federal Carl D. Perkins Act and develop policies about how Career and Technical Education (CTE) is delivered across WA.