

# 2021 Washington State Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

WIOA Youth  
WIOA Adults  
Wagner-Peyser  
Veteran Services  
Dislocated Workers  
Program Performance  
Workforce Development  
Research and Evaluations



**PY 2021 WIOA  
Annual Performance  
Narrative Report  
November 2022**

*Submitted by:*

Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board  
Washington State Employment Security Department  
Washington's Local Workforce Development Boards



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# Section I: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in Washington state

## Introduction

Last year, 75,602 Washington residents received help getting a job through our state's 90 WorkSource offices and affiliate sites. They came with a range of needs. Most needed help connecting to unemployment insurance benefits and determining their next career steps. Others needed more basic, individualized or training services to overcome barriers to meaningful employment. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is one of the primary funding sources for Washington's workforce benefits and services. WIOA Title I-B has funded activities in Washington state since July 1, 2015. This report provides a review of the impact those funds have had in Washington in program year (PY) 2021, July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022.

## WIOA in Washington

In PY 2021, Washington state received \$78,327,543 in WIOA Title I-B funds from the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) for employment and training services designed to benefit employers, dislocated workers, disadvantaged adults, and low-income youth. Washington state also received \$22,970,489 in Wagner-Peyser Act funds to provide specialized attention and services to individuals with disabilities, migrant and seasonal farmworkers, ex-offenders, youth, minorities, and older workers.

## Overview of Washington's system

Washington's workforce development system is a coordinated and collaborative network of services, programs, and investments. Network participants share the goal of improving the skills of the state's workforce to fill available jobs. The network strives to create the workforce needed by business, industry and other organizations including the public sector and nonprofits. It helps potential job candidates, particularly low-income and opportunity youth, adults and displaced workers, overcome obstacles to successful employment.

Washington's federally funded workforce services are coordinated through WorkSource, the state's one-stop delivery system, and its network for WorkSource sites (American Job Centers [AJC]). WIOA Title I-B and the Wagner-Peyser Act provide primary funding for Washington's WorkSource operations and many of the WorkSource basic and individualized career services.

The network functions to support economic expansion and develop the talent of the state's workforce. To meet the challenge of the 21st century global economy, the public workforce system works in partnership with businesses, educators, nonprofits, organized labor and community leaders to foster economic development and high-growth opportunities in regional economies. This system exists to help employers find qualified workers to meet their present and future workforce needs.

At the heart of Washington's workforce development system is WorkSource, which is made up of one-stop comprehensive, affiliate, specialized and connection sites. WorkSource is the primary access point for employers and job seekers. WorkSource serves thousands of individuals who are seeking employment, changing jobs, reentering the workforce or learning new skills. This makes WorkSource an ideal venue for workforce solutions for job seekers and employers alike.

At WorkSource sites throughout the state, individuals can find job openings, receive other job search assistance, and attend workshops that can improve employability. Qualified individuals can find assistance with specific training in high-demand occupations. Employers can get help with workforce needs including recruitment, screening, employee training, layoff aversion and employee retention. WIOA Title I-B and the Wagner-Peyser Act provide primary funding for the WorkSource service delivery system. Other formula-based and competitive federal, state and local programs that constitute required and additional one-stop partners, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWGs), Job Corps, YouthBuild, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Basic Education, unemployment insurance, and the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) also support WorkSource.

## Washington's economy and labor market

### Nonfarm employment recovery

Washington state plunged into a deep and short recession in early 2020. From February to May 2020, Washington payroll dropped by more than 431,300 or 12 percent, bringing total employment down to levels last observed in 2014.

By historic standards, the swift drop in employment was followed by a swift recovery. As of June 2022, total nonfarm employment in Washington had recovered all the nonfarm jobs lost during the recession, with 7,800 more nonfarm jobs as compared to February 2020.

Throughout 2021 and 2022, employment trends varied significantly by industry. Notably, industries that were well poised to shift to telecommuting practices were able to avoid steep initial losses and recovered relatively quickly. Washington's information sector provides an example of a sector that not only benefitted from the flexibility of telework, but also made telework possible for other industries. Employment dipped by less than 2 percent during the recession, and as of June 2022, expanded by 14.8 percent compared to the pre-recession peak. Employers added nearly 178,200 payroll jobs from June 2021 to June 2022, with a large percent of the jobs added in leisure and hospitality. The unemployment rate was 3.8 percent in June 2022, down from the previous recession peak of 16.8 percent in April of 2020. As of the June 2022 the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) monthly survey of payroll employment, the state overall has recovered all the nonfarm jobs lost since February of 2020. The collapse and the recovery have not been consistent across industries. Many industries have fully recovered, while others have not. The leisure and hospitality sector, including restaurants, hotels, and entertainment venues, continues to be the largest contributor to the overall jobs losses since February 2020, and is still down 21,800 jobs as of June 2022.

By comparison, industries that rely on face-to-face tasks were more likely to suffer deep and sustained employment losses. Leisure and hospitality suffered the deepest losses of any sector, shedding an estimated 147,800 jobs (42.2 percent) from February to May 2020. Despite a strong growth rate, industry employment remains below pre-recession levels.

While the ability to work from home played a significant role in industry employment trends, a number of industry-specific factors came into play, as well as environmental factors. Virtual school, constrained child care resources, and health concerns affected workers' ability to engage with the labor market.

Most industries fell somewhere between the extremes of information and leisure and hospitality, each influenced by a unique set of challenges. Construction losses at the start of the pandemic were steep, but a robust housing market and continued demand buoyed the sector, which recovered quickly. Manufacturing losses occurred after the short-lived recession, affected by reduced demand for aircraft. Retail trade dipped by 10.9 percent in spring 2020, but recovered relatively quickly as a whole, due in large part to the availability of online shopping and a general shift from dining out to eating home prepared meals. As of June 2022, retail trade employment is up 5,300 jobs compared to February of 2020.

In short, the pandemic affected industries and workers differently for a number of reasons, including, but not limited to, the ability to work from home.

### State and local roles

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB [or WTB]) serves as the state's workforce development board and manages performance accountability for WIOA. The core business of the WTB is to coordinate state policy and state strategic planning for the workforce development system, evaluate results and facilitate demonstration projects that test innovations and ideas.

The Employment Security Department (ESD) serves as the state's WIOA Title I-B grant recipient. ESD's WIOA responsibilities include stewardship of the funds, oversight and monitoring activities, issuing statewide policy, management of grants and contracts and allocation of the WIOA Title I-B funds to the Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) for the delivery of services within an integrated service delivery system.

ESD also fulfills an operational role within the WorkSource system through providing services funded by Wagner-Peyser, TAA, Jobs for Veterans State Grant, and unemployment insurance (which includes RESEA).

LWDBs are the local leaders, conveners, and managers of the WorkSource system through which WIOA and non WIOA-funded programs are accessed. They are the strategic visionaries for local implementation of WIOA funds. There are 12 LWDBs in Washington, and each is private industry led and locally focused. Council members are appointed by Chief Elected Officials (CEOs), and councils are certified by the Governor. CEOs are the local area WIOA Title I grant recipients. CEOs direct their LWDB staff to administer the funds and oversee the area's workforce development system to effectively respond to the local economy and needs of local citizens. LWDBs convene with regional partners and stakeholders to assess skill gaps, identify emerging and future employment possibilities, and collaborate with economic developers and other partners to develop and implement the region's workforce development plan. LWDBs are the system's portal into the business community and are responsible for facilitating multiple interagency projects and programs.

## WIOA Title I and Title III program descriptions

### WIOA Title I-B Youth Program

**Who is served:** Youth must be between 14 and 24 years old, low income and meet other criteria described in the WIOA, such as a need for additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment. To qualify as low income, one must be a TANF or SNAP recipient, homeless, a foster child, or have a family income below 70 percent of the lower living standard income level.

**Participation:** 2,448 young people were served by the WIOA Youth Program between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022.

**Program description:** The program prepares low-income youth ages 14 through 24 for success in school and the world of work. Eligible youth may receive counseling, tutoring, job training, mentoring or work experience. Other service options include summer employment, study skills training and instruction in obtaining a GED or equivalent.

### WIOA Title I-B Adult Program

**Who is served:** Specific eligibility guidelines are described in the WIOA. Basic services are available to all adults with minimal eligibility requirements. Basic, individualized or training services are authorized for unemployed individuals unable to find jobs. In some cases, these services are available to employed workers who need more help to reach self-sufficiency.

**Participation:** 14,544 participants received career services, and 2,131 participants received training services from the WIOA Adult Program between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022.

**Program description:** The program prepares individuals 18 years and older for participation in the labor force by providing basic services and access to job training and other services. Services are coordinated through the state's one-stop system, WorkSource. Basic services include skill assessment, labor market information, consumer reports on training programs and job search and placement assistance. Individualized and training include more intensive assessments, work experiences and occupational skills training. Priority is given to veterans and eligible spouses, low-income individuals, recipients of public assistance, and those who are basic skills deficient.

### WIOA Title I-B Dislocated Worker Program

**Who is served:** Specific eligibility guidelines are described in the WIOA. Dislocated workers are individuals who lost jobs due to plant closures, company downsizing or some other significant change in market conditions. In most cases, eligible workers are unlikely to return to their occupations because those jobs are no longer economically viable, and they must be eligible for (or have exhausted) unemployment compensation. Other conditions can lead to eligibility for services, such as separating military service members and eligible spouses of military service members, being self-employed but not working as a result of general economic conditions or being a displaced homemaker.

**Participation:** 7,183 participants received career services and 2,634 received training services through the WIOA Dislocated Worker Program between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022.

**Program description:** The program customizes employment and training services to meet dislocated workers' needs, establishes early intervention for workers and firms facing substantial layoffs and fosters labor, management and community partnerships with government to address worker dislocation. Dislocated workers are also eligible for basic services including skill assessment, labor market information, training program consumer reports and job search and placement assistance. Individualized training includes intensive assessments, work experiences and occupational skills.

## Annual report coordination with Titles II and IV

As requested by DOL and directed in guidance via TEGL 5-18, WTB staff met with the director of Title II programs in Washington (administered by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges) and the directors of the two Title IV programs in Washington, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) in the Department of Social and Human Services and the Department of Services for the Blind and gave them a preliminary draft of the narrative to review and comment on during development. Their feedback was minimal to this year's annual report, but both titles have a newly established understanding of their consultative role in this process and have agreed to make themselves available in the third quarter in future years to continue to advise on development of the Title I/III Annual Report.

## WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser Program

**Who is served:** Specific eligibility guidelines are described in the WIOA. Career services are available to anyone who is legally entitled to work in the United States no matter one's age or employment status. Through Title III, basic and individualized career services are offered. A veteran or his or her eligible spouse has a priority to receive such services.

**Participation:** 75,602 participants were served under Wagner-Peyser with 63,313 having received career services between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022. Furthermore, 5,130 Wagner-Peyser participants received training services funded by other programs.

**Program description:** The Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933 established a nationwide system of public employment offices, known as the Employment Service. The Employment Service seeks to improve the functioning of the nation's labor markets by bringing together individuals seeking employment with employers seeking workers. The Wagner-Peyser Act was amended in 1998 to make the Employment Service part of the one-stop delivery system under the Workforce Investment Act. In 2014, the Wagner-Peyser Act was amended again under Title III of the WIOA. The Employment Service under the WIOA builds upon the previous workforce reforms, requires colocation of the Employment Service offices into the nearly 2,400 American Job Centers nationwide, and aligns performance accountability indicators with other federal workforce programs. Basic services include skill assessment, labor market information, consumer reports on training programs, and job search and placement assistance. Individualized services include career and vocational counseling.

## Section II: Customer satisfaction and effectiveness in serving employers

### Customer satisfaction

The WTB is statutorily ([RCW 28C.18](#)) tasked to use surveys to assess both employer workforce needs and participant satisfaction with workforce programs. The WTB also conducts periodic surveys to assess hiring practices and incumbent worker training.

As WIOA Title I-B is included in these evaluations, all of them are partially funded by the WIOA state set-aside. They are all used to assess customer sentiment, which is then used to continuously improve our one-stop certification process.

The most recently completed satisfaction survey is the 2020 Employer Needs and Practices Satisfaction Survey. While it won't be completed in time for this report, WTB has begun the 2023 Workforce Participant Satisfaction Survey for participants who exited from WIOA training during the 2021 to 2022 program year.

## 2020 Employer Needs and Practices Satisfaction Survey

**Overview:** The follow-up employer satisfaction survey concerns employer satisfaction with hiring of workforce program participants, as well as overall satisfaction with engaging with the state’s workforce development system. The *2020 Employer Needs and Practices and Satisfaction Survey* is currently the most recent completed version.<sup>1</sup> The WTB has started the planning process for doing the next employer survey in 2023. The next participant survey is currently under way and has an expected publication date in late 2022 to early 2023.

The 2020 employer survey was conducted in the summer of 2019, which randomly sampled 27,153 Washington employers from an estimated universe of 200,000. Responses therefore reflect employer sentiment at that time. A total of 1,765 surveys were completed yielding a final response rate of 6.5 percent.

**Finding and hiring qualified job candidates:** Almost 70 percent of Washington’s over 200,000 employers with two or more workers experienced workforce challenges in the past 12 months. Given a historically low unemployment rate, it is no surprise that finding and hiring qualified job candidates is the biggest challenge for employers – followed by challenges related to turnover and retention.

The scope of these challenges differs significantly across employer characteristics. Manufacturers, for example, reported recruitment as their biggest challenge 12 percent more often than service-providers. There does not appear to be meaningful differences in the type of workforce challenges identified between eastern and western Washington. The demand for talent is a ubiquitous concern across the state.

The most significant differences emerge when employer size is considered. Employers with less than 20 employees cited recruitment as their biggest workforce challenge 10 percent more frequently than larger employers on average. A more startling finding was that 17 percent of these small employers reported forgone business opportunities because of this challenge, compared to just 2 percent of medium-sized and large employers. This is a significant economic drag given that one in five Washington workers are employed by a small employer.

Actions taken in response to recruitment challenges were also less likely to be helpful for small employers. Only 37 percent of small employers reported helpful outcomes compared to 49 percent and 57 percent of medium-sized and large employers, respectively.

Some actions taken in response to recruitment are more effective than others. Employers that increased recruitment efforts were almost 70 percent more likely to report a helpful outcome. This is not a blasé finding; increased recruitment efforts can be resource intensive. Medium-sized and large employers reported using a wider repertoire of recruitment tools than small employers, including much higher use of WorkSourceWA.com – 30 percent of large employers versus just 9 percent of small employers. Moreover, medium-sized and large employers reported using state workforce system services in general more frequently than small employers. This is potentially low hanging fruit for improved service delivery, as 76 percent of employers cite “not enough applicants” as an underlying reason for recruitment difficulties. Increased outreach of public workforce services should be considered.

Employers that automated certain job functions were almost 80 percent more likely to report a helpful outcome in response to recruitment challenges. Employers that lowered job requirements were about 70 percent more likely to report a helpful outcome. Synergies between increased recruitment efforts and lowering job requirements increased the probability of reporting a helpful outcome by an additional 24 percent, and an additional 19 percent for interactions between increased recruitment efforts and automating certain functions. What this means is that challenges related to finding and hiring qualified job candidates can be overcome, but at a cost that may be untenable for small employers.

**Turnover and retention** is the second most common workforce challenge for Washington employers; a challenge that is experienced far more frequently for medium-sized and large employers than small employers, at 27 percent versus 14 percent. Overall, 11 percent of employers report turning down new business opportunities because of this challenge.

<sup>1</sup> 2020 Washington Employer Workforce Needs and Practices Report: Identifying Challenges and Opportunities for Continued Long-term Growth, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, February 14, 2020, <https://www.wtb.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/2020-Employer-Survey-FINAL-4-27-2021.pdf>

The two most helpful actions that employers cited taking in response to this challenge were using state workforce system services and increased training and professional development efforts. These actions increased the probability of a helpful reported action by 63 percent and 59 percent. However, training, and professional development was the biggest workforce challenge for 7 percent of employers.

## **The Workforce Training Participant Survey**

**Overview:** The WTB periodically administers the Participant Survey to individuals who have been involved in certain workforce training programs in Washington. As part of this evaluation, WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth participants are chosen by random sample from the Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL). These samples include participants who exited training during the four quarters of the program year in question (for the current survey: July 2019 through June 2020). Samples were unduplicated to ensure that individuals are not contacted for multiple iterations of the survey.

The WTB has contracted with the Social and Economic Sciences Research Center (SESRC) at Washington State University (WSU) to handle the administrative aspects of the survey. The survey is conducted using Total Design Method principles. The survey is available in Spanish and English and is conducted by phone, mail, and email over the course of two to three months. The survey contract with SESRC started in August 2022; data collection began in September 2022; analysis will begin in January 2023 with completion and delivery expected in February 2023.

The questionnaire is largely quantitative and was vetted by Washington's twelve LWDBs, ESD, various Educational Service Districts, and WTB research and policy staff. The survey includes multiple choice, Likert scale, and open-ended questions. The Participant Survey asks individuals about:

- Reasons for enrolling in WIOA programs
- Training received and satisfaction with that training
- Usefulness of skills learned
- Pre- and Post-training employment

WTB staff intend to administer the next Participant Survey in 2023, for participants who exited from WIOA training during the 2021 to 2022 program year.

## **Effectiveness in serving employers**

WIOA implemented a pilot performance measure to determine the effectiveness in serving employers. States were requested to select two of three USDOL pilot measures and could include additional state-defined employer measures.

The state of Washington has chosen for the pilot period to report on the following for the effectiveness in serving employer performance indicator:

- Repeat business customers (repeated use of core programs).
- Employer penetration rate (percent of employers that use core program services out of all employers represented in an area or state served by the system).

## **Section III: Research and evaluations**

### **Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board performance measures/results**

The legislation that established the WTB also created a comprehensive research program. This program continues under WIOA and is used to measure the results of federal and state workforce investment activities. The research effort assesses the effectiveness of workforce training programs.

Performance measures focus on the results for the portion of WorkSource customers who are registered for basic, individualized or training (only Title I-B) services funded under Title I-B and Title III. Separate Title I-B programs are operated for disadvantaged adults, dislocated workers and disadvantaged youth. Each program has its own measures for employment, education, and training progress.



Federal and state performance measures have precise definitions. Employment and earnings measures are based on wage records collected by state unemployment insurance systems for employer payroll taxes. Washington's federal and state measures use unemployment insurance wage records from the ESD. In addition, Washington participates in the state wage record interchange system (SWIS), which provides unemployment insurance wage records from 20 other states and the District of Columbia.

Some of our performance measures use information about enrollment in education or training following program exit. This information is gathered by matching enrollment data from the state's two and four-year colleges, private career schools, apprenticeship programs, and programs seeking eligibility as WIOA training providers.

## Evaluation activities

The legislation that established the WTB called for the implementation of a comprehensive research program. This program continues under WIOA and is used to measure the results of federal and state workforce investment activities. The research effort assesses the effectiveness of workforce training programs. All of these evaluations are, in part, paid for by the state set-aside. Other fund sources are the state general fund and Perkins where applicable.

## Net Impact Study

The Net Impact and Cost-Benefit Evaluation of Washington state's Workforce Development System is conducted every four years by the WTB, as per its statute. The study uses a control group approach to evaluate workforce training participants outcomes.

Prior studies were contracted out to third parties at considerable expense, but the most recent one was done in-house and completed in 2021. In mid-2019, the WTB research unit began working with partner agencies, including representatives from all four WIOA Titles, to provide administrative data for the study. Since that time, Washington has been severely disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic – with various state agencies scrambling in the public health and economic recovery effort. Workforce development plays an important role in both overcoming this disaster and setting a future course for talent and prosperity for all.

The findings of this study inform – in direct quantitative terms – the attributable economic impact various workforce development programs have. More frequent and consistent net impact and cost-benefit evaluation of these programs will be helpful to on-going economic recovery, and future workforce development planning efforts.

All programs evaluated in this study have a positive earnings and employment impact directly attributed to program participation for individuals on average within three years of program exit. Other influencing factors, such as race, education, employment history, and prior earnings, are held constant. The remaining net impact is due to program participation itself. Using the net impact findings, it is then possible to use average program costs per person and calculate a program's cost-benefit.

Most programs achieve a measurable positive taxpayer return on investment (ROI), with programs breaking even within that same three-year observation period. However, there are several important considerations. For example, many of a program's benefits are unobserved or intangible. Increased personal satisfaction, social justice, civic engagement, crime reduction, public health, and economic multiplier effects are linked to public investments in education and training. Public costs, such as the consumption of welfare benefits, may also be reduced following program participation, which is not accounted for in this study, with the exception of unemployment insurance and Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income for vocational rehabilitation program participants.

For more detail see: [https://www.wtb.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Net-Impact-Study\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.wtb.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Net-Impact-Study_FINAL.pdf)

## Workforce System Matrix

Some of the work of the Net Impact Study feeds into WTB's Workforce System Matrix. For example, the program ROI is updated and used in this product. The most recent version of this is located at:

[https://www.wtb.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Matrix\\_2022\\_updatedearnings042922.pdf](https://www.wtb.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Matrix_2022_updatedearnings042922.pdf)

## Workforce training results

**Overview:** Workforce Training Results (WTR) is an annual evaluation of Washington state’s workforce development system, annually studying outcomes of participants from 12 workforce development programs, using a standard set of performance measures. The evaluation uses a data comparison approach to answer the question “are training programs providing participants with opportunities and positive outcomes?” The report describes the demographics and employment outcomes of each population and participant. The evaluation includes representative programs from all four WIOA Titles.

The *Workforce Training Results* report also includes measures such as hourly wage and hours worked. Most recent, as well as older results for exiting cohorts, can be found at: <https://www.wtb.wa.gov/research-resources/workforce-training-results/>

We produced Workforce Training Results reports for the following programs:

1. Programs for adults including community and technical college, job preparatory training, private career schools, apprenticeship, and a state-funded worker retraining program at community and technical colleges and WIOA dislocated worker services.
2. Programs serving adults with barriers to employment including adult basic education, WIOA adult services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Services for the Blind and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) WorkFirst.
3. Programs serving youth, including secondary career and technical education and WIOA youth services.

**Figure 1:** Participants and expenditures in PY 2021  
Washington state  
Source Workforce Education Training and Coordinating Board

Target population	PY 2021 participants	PY 2021 Expenditures	Cost per participant
Adults	14,544	\$16,370,779	\$1,126
Dislocated workers	7,183	\$19,083,369	\$2,657
Youth	2,448	\$19,270,421	\$7,872
Wagner-Peyser	75,602	\$17,373,532	\$230
<b>Total</b>	<b>99,777</b>	<b>\$72,098,101</b>	<b>\$723</b>

## Employment Security Department program evaluation

ESD’s DATA Division program evaluation team (hereafter referred to as evaluation team) within the Program Evaluation, Research and Analysis (PERA) unit has completed, or is in the process of finishing, several program evaluations and research projects:

- Reemployment services and eligibility assessment (RESEA) program evaluation
- Agricultural and seasonal workforce services (ASWS) customer experience study
- Opioid disaster relief dislocated worker grant evaluation
- Documenting and measuring inequities in the provision of the unemployment insurance (UI) program
- Economic Security for All (EcSA) evaluation summary

These programs overlap with the WIOA because WIOA program participants tend to frequently benefit from these program services. The evaluations are described in detail in the sections that follow.

## Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) evaluation

The USDOL requires states that receive RESEA funds to spend 25 percent of these funds on program components found to reduce claim duration and improve employment outcomes, starting in 2023. The percent increases over time. In 2027 and thereafter, at least 50 percent of funds must be allocated to effective, evidence-based programs. Evidence of this effectiveness can be provided by an evaluation that receives a high or moderate rating from the USDOL. The

program's objectives include promoting alignment with the broader vision of the WIOA, and establishing the program as an entry point for individuals receiving unemployment compensation into other workforce system partner programs. RESEA evaluations are required by the Social Security Act 306(c) and USDOL Unemployment Insurance Program Letters (UIPLs) and TEGs – for example [UIPL 1-20](#), [UIPL 10-22/TEGL 5-21](#) – provide guidance to states about the program and its mandated evaluations.

The evaluation team manages and conducts the RESEA program evaluations. The evaluation team has been involved in two RESEA evaluation projects in PY 2021.

The first project examines how the new scheduling system of the RESEA program – which allows claimants to select the time and location of their RESEA appointment from a three-week window – impacts the rate of appointment no-shows, and which groups of UI claimants benefit most from the new scheduling system. The study uses data from 2017 to 2020, and employs an interrupted time series (ITS) approach. The ITS model allows us to predict the outcomes that would have occurred in the absence of the new scheduling system, the “Reemployment Appointment Scheduler” (RAS), and compare the actual outcomes to these predictions. Such comparison allows us to measure the effect of introducing RAS. The study relies on ESD administrative data sources that provide information on claimant demographics, claim duration, receipt of UI benefits, and RESEA appointment scheduling and attendance. This research finds that the new scheduling tool reduced the likelihood that UI claimants would not show up to their initial RESEA appointment. In addition, UI claimants who benefited most from the new scheduling system tended to be younger, earned lower incomes, and were more likely to identify as Black or African American. In addition, an increase in attendance rates mechanically decreased the number of penalties levied on claimants. If someone misses their RESEA meeting, they can forfeit some, or all, of their UI benefits. Because there were fewer no-shows, there were fewer penalties levied; the average number of weeks of UI benefits claimed increased by about two because of the introduction of the new self-scheduling system. This study informs the state of Washington about how recent innovations in its RESEA program are effective. This research also provides evidence to other states regarding the efficacy of implementing self-scheduling approaches in the RESEA program.

This study has been completed. The report summarizing research findings was completed in May 2022. The report was submitted for the review and assessment of the study design and methodology to the USDOL's Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research (CLEAR), which is tasked to provide causal evidence rankings to studies that seek to estimate the causal impact of programs or policies. The report will be publicly available after it has been assessed and published by CLEAR.

The second project investigates the effect of the RESEA program on claimants' earnings, employment, and claim duration. The evaluation involves conducting a randomized controlled trial (RCT). UI claimants are assigned a random score. The random score is used to determine whether individuals get selected for the RESEA program – within the particular office, selection week, and the language-preference group (treatment group) – or individuals remain in the queue and are considered for the RESEA program during the next selection weeks. Individuals with higher random scores are more likely to get selected to participate in RESEA, whereas individuals with lower random scores are more likely to remain in the queue. Individuals who remain in the queue for five weeks get dropped from the queue after five weeks and are no longer considered for the RESEA program (control group). Data for this study come from ESD administrative databases that capture information on claimant demographics, employment, and earnings, their participation in the RESEA program, and their claims data. These data are supplemented with information on the queue for the RESEA program and the treatment group assignment from the RAS system. This study will demonstrate whether RESEA services, as currently provided, are effective in improving UI claimant outcomes or some improvements in the current program structure are needed.

The RCT is currently in progress. The RCT began in January of 2022 and is expected to last at least one year. The final report is expected to be published in 2024. The [pre-analysis plan](#) has outlined the planned empirical approach to the RCT. The evaluation team is primarily responsible for conducting this evaluation. Evaluation team staff have been working with the ESD Employment Connections (EC), Employment System Policy and Integrity (ESPI), and Information Technology Services Division (ITSD) to implement the RCT. Furthermore, the evaluation team has sought consultation on the project with Abt Associates, a consulting firm hired by USDOL as a RESEA evaluation technical assistant. No USDOL or ED evaluation contractors assisted with the evaluation.

Besides these two studies, the evaluation team is planning to conduct additional work to evaluate the RESEA program and/or its components. For example, future research is expected to involve an extension of the first study to expand the time period and/or to involve the comparison group, as well as an additional RCT to investigate the effectiveness of the program delivery features (e.g., the text messaging feature, remote services delivery).

The project is funded through the federal RESEA grant. The amounts spent during state fiscal years (SFY)<sup>2</sup> 2020 and 2021 are included in the [PY 2020 WIOA Annual Performance Report](#). In SFY 2022, the staff of the DATA Division spent \$387,416 on the RESEA evaluation. No other funds or sources, including Washington state funds, are used to fund this project. The total expected cost of the evaluation will be up to 10 percent of the annual RESEA funding received by the state.

The RESEA program aims to continuously improve its program delivery and assist its participants by implementing different program innovations. The evaluation results can be used to guide the state of Washington in its efforts to make program improvements in the future.

### **Agricultural and seasonal workforce services (ASWS) customer experience study**

The ASWS Advisory Committee was appointed by the ESD commissioner in accordance with [RCW 50.75.040](#). The bill directs the ASWS Advisory Committee to complete a report and recommendations in even years suggesting how to improve the effectiveness of ESD's recruitment process as part of the H-2A application, and analyzing the costs incurred and federal funding received to administer the H-2A program and other agricultural programs within the department. In the [2020 ASWS report](#), the advisory committee provided several recommendations on how ESD could improve its recruitment process with the intention to provide a faster and more effective connection between domestic farmworkers and employers.

One of the recommendations was to conduct a customer experience study to better understand the experience of farmworkers and employers in the ESD application and referral process. The evaluation team has been working closely with the Employment System Policy and Integrity (ESPI) Division, particularly the Agricultural and Seasonal Workforce Services (ASWS) unit, to develop the process to execute the study. The ASWS Advisory Committee has provided input and feedback throughout the process. No USDOL or ED evaluation contractors assisted with the evaluation.

The ESD launched the request for proposals in May 2022 to seek bidders to conduct the first part of the customer experience study. The study is currently in the planning stage. The ESD has identified the contractor who will perform the study. The study is expected to start in October 2022 and the final report is expected to be delivered in 2023. The purpose of the first study is to conduct a customer experience study to better understand the experience of apple, grape, and pear farmworkers and growers with the Washington state agricultural recruitment system, and identify key areas to improve the agricultural recruitment system for U.S. workers in these production activities. By conducting in-depth interviews (one-on-one and/or focus group) with apple, grape, and pear growers and farmworkers, the research will seek to:

- Learn how apple, grape, and pear growers recruit skillful U.S. specialty crop farmworkers;
- Learn how apple, grape, and pear farmworkers look for agricultural jobs and become employed in the production of apples, grapes, and pears;
- Identify how to improve the ESD agricultural recruitment system to benefit farmworkers in given industries;
- Identify how to improve the Washington state agricultural recruitment system of U.S. workers to become part of the specialty crop growers' recruitment process and increase specialty crop growers' competitiveness; and
- Propose recommendations on potential modifications to the ESD agricultural recruitment system and processes to improve the customer experience.

<sup>2</sup> Washington state fiscal year *i* includes July 1 of year *i-1* through June 30 of year *i*, e.g., SFY 2020 runs from July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020.

The final report from the study is expected to contain a list of concrete, actionable recommendations that ESD could use to improve its agricultural recruitment system, thereby improving the recruitment and hiring experiences and outcomes of employers and workers.

After completing the first study, ESD intends to conduct the second part of the study in 2023 to 2024. The second part of the study is expected to address the same research question but will focus on different crop activities. The second study will focus on studying the production of cherries and other berries, as well as activities related to the apple, grape, and pear production omitted in the first phase (e.g., if the first study explores apple harvesting, the second study will explore apple thinning).

The project has been funded through Washington state funds. The amounts spent during state fiscal year (SFY) 2020 and 2021 are included in the [PY 2020 WIOA Annual Performance Report](#). In SFY 2022, the staff of the DATA Division spent \$73,475 on this project. In the future, the project will also be funded through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) Grant that was secured by the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). ESD was awarded the grant to conduct the work in 2022 to 2024. The total expected cost of the project is \$500,000.

### **Opium Disaster Relief Dislocated Worker Grant evaluation**

The Pacific Mountain (PacMtn) Workforce Development Council (WDC) received an Opium Disaster PY 2018 National Dislocated Worker Grant (the Opium program hereafter) in May 2019. The Opium program is targeted to people adversely affected by the opium crisis with the goal of improving employment and health outcomes of these individuals. The Opium program offers an augmented version of the services provided under the Dislocated Worker Grant (DWG). The DWG offers reemployment services targeting individuals who have been affected by adverse economic events, including plant closures and mass layoffs. In addition to reemployment services, the Opium program offers temporary employment opportunities, as well as may finance training opportunities for individuals transitioning into health care careers related to the opium epidemic.

The evaluation assesses the efficacy of these services and whether they are associated with higher earnings and decreased use of unemployment insurance benefits. Guidelines for the Opium disaster relief dislocated worker grant evaluation are provided in [TEGL 04-18](#) and [TEGL 16-21](#). The evaluation team is responsible for conducting the evaluation. The PacMountain WDC has been involved in planning and development of the evaluation. The details of the initial evaluation were discussed in the [PY 2020 WIOA Annual Performance Report](#). The initial [evaluation report](#) was published in January 2022. This report finds that the augmented services offered through the Opium program improve career outcomes for recipients *more* than if they had received standard dislocated worker grant services: the marginal services provided through the augmented version of the dislocated workers program resulted in a \$3,050 increase in earnings over the study period.

The evaluation team is currently planning the second stage of evaluation, which is intended to improve the causal inference of the study. The evaluation team will continue working with the PacMtn WDC to develop the study. No USDOL or ED evaluation contractors have been assisting with the evaluation. The evaluation will be conducted in 2023, with the tentative completion date of mid-May 2023. The goal of the planned evaluation is to assess whether the receipt of the augmented services via the Opium program leads to improved employment and career outcomes. The research is expected to compare the outcomes for dislocated workers served by the PacMtn WDC (that provided the Opium program) to the outcomes of dislocated workers in other workforce development areas (WDAs) where people could not receive this program. The comparison group from the other 11 WDAs will be generated using propensity score methods that will calculate the likelihood of being eligible to receive the Opium program services had the services been offered in that WDA. ESD will use administrative data from the ESD's Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) case management system and administrative data on claimants' employment and earnings.

The initial evaluation demonstrates that augmented services, especially when targeted to populations in need, can result in large positive impacts on recipients' lives. The second stage of evaluation is expected to support this conclusion and provide additional robust evidence of the impact of the augmented services via the Opium program on the labor outcomes of individuals affected by the opium crisis. This research will inform the state's efforts to provide more comprehensive services to the opium hit populations.

No Washington state funds were used to fund this project. The project was funded through the National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) under WIOA. The amounts spent during state fiscal year (SFY) 2020 and 2021 are included in the [PY 2020 WIOA Annual Performance Report](#). The amount spent by DATA Division staff included \$18,070 in SFY 2022.

### **Documenting and measuring inequities in the provision of the unemployment insurance program**

The Washington state's UI program aims to provide temporary income to all qualifying individuals who lose jobs through no fault of their own, and to do so equitably. However, not everyone who qualifies for the UI program applies for, or is approved for, benefits. Also, there are reasons to believe that the provision of UI benefits is not equitable in practice. Economically and socially disadvantaged populations may be less likely to claim UI benefits, and when they do, they may receive lower levels of benefits than their peers.

Following the guidelines outlined in [UIPL 23-21](#), the evaluation team aims to comprehensively examine the issues of equity and access in the UI program. The research project is underway and is expected to be completed in 2024. The study will measure, document, and describe inequities in the provision of the UI program by different demographic and socio-economic groups (e.g., by race/ethnicity, earnings level), and will test a potential solution to address the problem of existing inequities in the UI program. While the empirical approach is still in the planning phase, the evaluation team is planning to conduct an in-depth exploration of its administrative data as well as implement and assess the effectiveness of a proposed solution to reduce any potential inequities. Findings from this research will help ESD improve the quality of the services it provides to the UI claimants and ensure services are delivered in an equitable way.

No Washington state funds are used to fund this project. The project is funded through the federal USDOL UI Equity Grant Funding. In SFY 2022, the DATA Division staff spent \$394 on this project. The total project funding is \$806,231.

### **Economic Security for All (EcSA) evaluation summary**

Economic Security for All (EcSA) is a poverty reduction and equity program that directly addresses the need for economic recovery, especially for people of color and rural communities. It was launched in four pilot areas in 2019 with the support of the Governor's Poverty Reduction Work Group (PRWG), multiple state agencies, including the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and LWDBs. In 2021, Governor Inslee expanded EcSA to seven additional regions, covering most of the state. EcSA is overseen by ESD, the State Workforce Agency (SWA).

Social Policy Research Associates is contracted for an ongoing evaluation of early implementation of EcSA initiative, addressing the evaluation components for the programs being implemented in the twelve LWDBs across the state.

This evaluation was initiated in early 2020 to evaluate implementation of four initial local pilot programs. The evaluation was expanded in May 2021 to include 12 local programs, as EcSA was expanded statewide. An initial evaluation report was submitted in August 2020, a midpoint evaluation was produced in May of 2022, and a final evaluation report is planned for January of 2024. In total, ESD has allocated \$392,973 in WIOA Statewide Activities funding to support this evaluation. This evaluation approach was planned with involvement from DSHS, WTECB, WA Department of Commerce, and representatives from local workforce boards.

Evaluation components and the goals of the evaluation is provided in much more detail in *Appendix 7*. Also included in *Appendix 7* is the EcSA Initial Evaluation Report and the EcSA Midpoint Report for your review.

## Section IV: Common exit

### Common exit policy requirement from TEGL 5-18

Washington's common exit policy is found in Section 1.5 of the [Data Integrity and Performance Policy Handbook](#) affiliated with [WorkSource System Policy 1020, Revision 1](#) (Data Integrity and Performance Policy and Handbook).

The common exit policy applies to the following ETA-funded programs:

- WIOA Title I-B youth
- WIOA Title I-B adult
- WIOA Title I-B dislocated workers
- WIOA Title III (Wagner-Peyser Act)
- National Dislocated Worker Grants
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- Jobs for Veterans State Grant

Section 1.5.1 of the handbook notes that our state MIS calculates the "Exit Date" automatically, after the system determines that participants have not received any participation-level service for 90 consecutive calendar days and are not scheduled to receive future services. In accordance with the requirements of TEGL 14-18, the exit date is applied retroactively, after a 90 consecutive calendar-day period without participation-level services, back to the last day on which individuals received participation-level services provided by any program included in WorkSource System Policy 1020, Revision 1. Individuals who are participating in more than one program will have a single common exit date based on the last completed participation-level service. This ensures that the exit date is the same as the last date of service for all programs in the participation period.

## Section V: Data validation, reporting and performance accountability

The ESD Workforce Monitoring unit is the agency's principal WIOA Title I-B, Wagner-Peyser, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), and Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program monitor. The unit performs annual onsite monitoring of each local workforce development board (LWDB) and other direct sub-recipients for WIOA. The unit conducted quarterly monitoring of TAA. The unit performs ongoing Wagner-Peyser monitoring. The Workforce Monitoring unit incorporated data element validation (DEV) into the annual PY 2021 WIOA Title I-B monitoring visits, TAA quarterly monitoring visits, and ongoing Wagner-Peyser and RESEA reviews. Data validation activities for WIOA Title I-B, Wagner-Peyser, and TAA were based on guidance in Washington state's data element validation policy, ESD WorkSource System Policy 1003, Revision 2, which was based on guidance in TEGL 23-19. Below are the procedures for each of the programs.

### WIOA Title I-B core programs and dislocated worker grants

1. ESD's DATA Division staff provides the Monitoring unit with a participant record table that assigns a random number to each record in the "num" field four weeks before each LWDB monitoring entrance. The table includes the Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) data values to be validated against source documentation.
2. The participant record table is filtered by the "Report Name" field to only display program participant records in the table that include ITSS services. The table is then filtered by the "Enrollment Start Date" field to encompass a timeframe that includes all new enrollments since the last monitoring review up to the last day of the last quarter to ensure all records have data values on the current PIRL to validate. Using the "num" field to create a random sort of the filtered results, the first respective number of unduplicated participant records are selected to reach the desired sample size as detailed below.
3. Sample size and methodology:
  - a. For each of the 12 LWDB monitoring reviews ([PY 2021 WIOA Title I-B monitoring schedule](#)):

- i. Each core Title I-B program has 10 records selected, with a minimum of seven reviewed depending on resources.
  - ii. Each DWG program, as identified in scope on the LWDB monitoring entrance letter, has five records selected with a minimum of three reviewed depending on resources. (Note: all DWG records will be recorded on one DWG worksheet)
  - iii. If less than the 10 or five records, respectively, appear in the table, all will be sampled.
- b. The sample size methodology is based on a fixed number of participant records with all required data elements being reviewed per the resources available. The sample includes a mix of active and exited participant records.
4. Monitoring provides ESD's Data Integrity (DI) Team with the sampled records to obtain the identified wage data elements that are data validated by the DI Team.
    - a. ESD's System Performance unit validates the following data elements: 1600-1607, 1614-1618 (1610, 1612, and 1613 elements are not being populated at this time), and 1700-1706.
    - b. Monitoring validates all other data elements as identified in each program's DEV worksheet.
  5. Monitoring sends the list of selected participants with instructions to the LWDB four weeks prior to entrance. Monitoring begins reviewing records one week prior to entrance.
  6. Timelines and documentation of error resolution:
    - a. Once the review is completed, Monitoring will provide the LWDB with the DEV worksheets showing items that failed and they will be required to resolve the items identified and communicate to us when resolved or, if they can't, why they can't.
    - b. The DEV worksheets will identify passes and failures for each record by element. A comment will be added to each cell in the worksheet with a failure value, identifying the cause of the failure. LWDB failures will be color coded light orange, and MIS system issues will be color coded bright yellow.
    - c. The data element "Pass/Fail" column in the DEV worksheet indicates whether each data element passed or failed based on exceeding the 10 percent programmatic pass/fail ratio as prescribed in ESD Policy 1003, Revision 2. If any element fails, it will be color coded a light orange for LWDB level failures and a bright yellow for MIS system issue failures. Both LWDB's and ESD's Information Technology Services Division (ITSD) and DI Team will be required to develop and submit a corrective action plan for element failures assigned to them.
    - d. The LWDB, ITSD and DI Team have 30 business days from the day they receive the DEV worksheets to resolve errors, document resolution and outcome, or reason for failure to resolve in the respective program worksheets and send the completed worksheets back to the Monitoring unit. The reply feature in each comment will be used to document and communicate the resolution, or reason for failure to resolve, or the corrective action plan.

On an annual basis, following completion of the 12 LWDB monitoring reviews, the ESD Monitoring unit reviewed the results of the full sample for each program to identify what elements exceeded the error rate. Those elements identified were included as technical assistance in our annual DEV training, with the exception of MIS system failures. The MIS systems failures are being addressed in the WorkSource Information Technology (WIT) replacement process.

## **Wagner-Peyser**

1. DATA Division staff provides the Monitoring unit with an all-workforce development area (WDA) sample and individual WDA participant record table(s) that includes the PIRL data values to be validated against source documentation. The individual area records process will begin after formal monitoring of Wagner-Peyser starts. When formal monitoring begins, the DI Team will provide a participant record table that assigns a random number to each record in the "num" field four weeks prior to each WorkSource office monitoring entrance.



2. Sample size and methodology for the All-Area Sample ([PY 2021 Wagner-Peyser monitoring schedule](#)):
  - a. Using the “rnum” field to create a random sort of table, for PY 2021 records, the records will then be sorted within the worksheet according to WDA and then the first two records from each area will be selected for a sample of 24 records.
  - b. The sample size methodology is based on a fixed number of participant records. The required data elements selected for review are identified on each PY 2021 “Program Participant File Checklist,” being reviewed per the resources available. The sample includes a mix of active and exited participant records.
3. Sample size and methodology for monitoring visits to WDAs:
  - a. When formal reviews begin, the sample will be pulled based on the WDA and then a sample of at least five records from the offices selected for monitoring within the area when possible, if less than the five records, respectively, appear in the table, all will be sampled.
  - b. The sample size methodology is based on a fixed number of participant records, the required data elements selected for review are identified on each PY 2021 Program Participant File Checklists, being reviewed per the resources available. The sample includes a mix of active and exited participant records.
4. Monitoring provides the DI Team with the sampled records to obtain the identified wage data elements that are data validated by the DI Team.
  - a. The DI Team validates the following data elements: 1600-1607, 1614-1618 (1610, 1612, and 1613 elements are not being populated at this time), and 1700-1706.
  - b. Monitoring validates all other data elements as identified in each program’s DEV worksheet.
5. Timelines and documentation of error resolution:
  - a. Once the review is completed, the Monitoring unit will provide the WorkSource Office and Program Operator with the DEV worksheets showing items that failed and they will be required to resolve the items identified and communicate to the Monitoring when resolved or, if they can’t, why they can’t.
  - b. The DEV worksheets will identify passes and failures for each record by element. A comment will be added to each cell in the worksheet with a failure value, identifying the cause of the failure. WorkSource office failures will be color coded light orange, Program Operations failures will be color coded lavender, and the ITSD and DI Team for MIS system issues will be color coded bright yellow.
  - c. The local WorkSource office will have 30 business days from the day they receive their DEV worksheet to resolve errors, document resolution and outcome, or reason for failure to resolve an item in their respective worksheets. The reply feature in each comment will be used to document and communicate the resolution, or reason for failure to resolve an element, or a corrective action plan.
  - d. The data element “Pass/Fail” column in the DEV worksheet indicates whether each data element passed or failed based on exceeding the 10 percent programmatic pass/fail ratio as prescribed in ESD Policy 1003, Revision. 2. The results of DEV over the quarter will be reviewed with Wagner-Peyser Program Operations, ITSD and DI Team. If any element fails across the quarter, the owner of the respective failure will be required to develop and submit a corrective action plan for those element failures that exceed the 10 percent programmatic pass/fail ratio.
  - e. At the ESD Wagner-Peyser leadership level, a quarterly DEV worksheet will be sent to Wagner-Peyser Program Operations, ITSD and DI Team to use in submitting a response to the Monitoring unit within 30 business days from the day they receive their worksheet. The respective leadership group will send their completed worksheets and any required corrective action plan to the Monitoring unit. The reply feature in each comment is used to communicate resolved errors, document resolution and outcome, or reason for failure to resolve an item in their respective program worksheets.

On an annual basis, following completion of the All-Area Sample and monitoring reviews, the Monitoring unit will review the results of the full sample for each program to identify what elements exceeded the error rate. Those elements identified were included as technical assistance in our annual DEV training, with the exception of MIS system failures. The MIS systems failures are being addressed in the WorkSource Information Technology (WIT) system replacement process.

## Trade Adjustment Assistant (TAA)

### July 2021 to December 2021 process

1. Before each entrance, the TAA monitor ran an Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) case management report to sample records.
2. Records were selected based on a variable timeframe to reach the desired sample size for the WorkSource office under review in that quarter. Records were also sampled based on the level of service delivery, giving preference to records with higher monetary risk services such as occupational skills training, on-the-job training, transportation, job search allowance, relocation allowances, Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA) and Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA) services.
3. Sample size and methodology: A sample of 80 records is selected and reviewed annually. The four quarterly samples cover at least four different regions of the state (20 records each quarter include cases from at least two certifications). See the [PY 2021 TAA monitoring schedule](#). The sample size methodology is based on a set number of participant records. The required data elements selected for review are identified on each PY 2021 program participant file checklist and are reviewed per resources available. The sample includes a mix of active and exited participant records.
4. Failures are documented on each participant file checklist as an item to address, with actions required to correct the individual file, or to correct the process moving forward.
5. Errors are identified in the monitoring response document as well as actions required from the WorkSource office under review. The WorkSource office has 30 business days to make corrections and respond. The monitoring response document also identifies staff training needs and areas for program improvement.

### January 2022 to July 2022 process

1. DATA Division staff provides the Monitoring unit with a participant record table that assigns a random number to each record in the “rnum” field four weeks prior to each WorkSource office monitoring entrance. The table includes the PIRL data values to be validated against source documentation.
2. The table is filtered by the “Enrollment Start Date” field to encompass a timeframe that includes all new enrollments since the last monitoring review up to the last day of the last quarter to ensure all records have data values on the current PIRL to validate. Using the “rnum” field to create a random sort of the filtered results, the first five unduplicated participant records are selected, or the number of records needed to reach the desired sample size detailed below.
3. Sample size and methodology:
  - a. Annually, a sample of 80 records will be selected and reviewed. The sample records will be distributed across four quarterly samples, within a calendar year. The sample records will cover at least five regions of the state each year ([PY 2021 TAA monitoring schedule](#)). Sample records will total 20 records reviewed for each quarter and cover at least two Trade certifications.
  - b. For each WorkSource office, the Monitoring unit reviews:
    - i. A total of at least five records will be randomly selected. (Note: records will be recorded on one Trade Act Program DEV worksheet for each WorkSource office for the local area to resolve any record failures.)
    - ii. If less than five records appear in the table, then all available records will be sampled.

- iii. If less than five records are required to reach the total sample size of 20 records for the quarter, then the number of records needed to reach 20 will be sampled.
  - c. The sample size methodology is based on a fixed number of participant records with all required data elements being reviewed per the resources available. The sample includes a mix of active and exited participant records.
- 4. Monitoring unit provides the DI Team with the sampled records to obtain the identified wage data elements that are data validated by the DI Team.
  - a. DI Team validates the following data elements: 1600-1607, 1614-1618 (1610, 1612, and 1613 elements are not being populated at this time), and 1700-1706.
  - b. Monitoring validates all other data elements as identified in each program's DEV worksheet.
- 5. Timelines and documentation of error resolution:
  - a. Once the review is completed, the Monitoring unit will provide the WorkSource office and the Program Operator with copies of the DEV worksheets showing items that failed and will require a response that identifies their efforts to resolve any failed items.
  - b. The DEV worksheets will identify passes and failures for each record by element. A comment will be added to each cell in the worksheet with a failure value, identifying the cause of the failure. WorkSource office failures will be color coded light orange, TAA Program Operations failures will be color coded lavender, TRA Program Operations failures will be color coded blue, and the ITSD Division and DI Team for MIS system issues will be color coded bright yellow.
  - c. The local WorkSource office will have 30 business days from the day they receive their DEV worksheet to resolve errors, document resolution and outcome, or reason for failure to resolve an item in their respective worksheets. The reply feature in each comment will be used to document and communicate the resolution, or reason for failure to resolve an element, or a corrective action plan.
  - d. The data element "Pass/Fail" column in the DEV worksheet indicates whether each data element passed or failed based on exceeding the 10 percent programmatic pass/fail ratio as prescribed in ESD Policy 1003, Revision 2. The results of DEV over the quarter will be reviewed with the TRA Program Operations, TAA Program Operations, ITSD and DI Team. If any element fails across the quarter, the owner of the respective failure will be required to develop and submit a corrective action plan for those element failures that exceed the 10 percent programmatic pass/fail ratio.
  - e. At the ESD State Trade Act Program leadership level, a quarterly DEV worksheet will be sent to the TRA Program Operations, TAA Program Operations, ITSD Division and the DI Team to use in submitting a response to the Monitoring unit within 30 business days from the day they receive their worksheet. The respective leadership group will send their completed worksheets and any required corrective action plan to the Monitoring Unit. The reply feature in each comment is used to communicate resolved errors, document resolution and outcome, or reason for failure to resolve an item in their respective program worksheets.

On an annual basis, following completion of the 12 LWDB monitoring reviews, the Monitoring unit reviewed the results of the full sample for each program to identify what elements exceeded the error rate. Those elements identified were included as technical assistance in our annual DEV training, with the exception of MIS system failures. The MIS systems failures are being addressed in the WIT replacement process.

At the conclusion of the PY 2021 data element validation, ESD assessed the effectiveness of the data validation process and updated procedures for PY 2021 to address any gaps, inconsistencies, and inefficiencies. ESD provided data element validation training during annual monitoring tool review sessions in September 2022. ESD's approach for the regular review of the quality of reported program data is addressed during annual, quarterly, and ongoing monitoring visits.

The method used for calculating error rates among data elements for Wagner-Peyser is established in state policy as above a 10 percent failure rate for any element under review. Data validation results are saved for five years. Source data for wages are destroyed immediately after use.

## Data quality control and integrity

Each quarter, ESD uses a combination of standardized SQL queries and repeated test submissions to the workforce integrated performance system (WIPS) edit check system to identify data requiring correction prior to submitting the quarterly Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL). Once records are identified for correction, records are sent out to area contacts who work with staff to ensure adequate training to correct existing errors and prevent future errors. If wide-spread data entry problems are identified, the configuration is reviewed to determine if additional safeguards can be added to the system configuration and additional training materials are developed and delivered to the field.

Additionally, where data is associated with critical areas of performance (e.g., measurable skill gains), the ESD Data Integrity (DI) Team creates specialized reports addressing data gaps, errors, needed corrections, and opportunities to improve business processes. Due to State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) agreement requirements, the DI Team validated the wage data elements for the records identified by the ESD Monitoring unit for review. The wage data elements are validated on a quarterly basis.

## Section VI: Waivers

### Waiver requirement from TEGL 5-18

Washington is not in receipt of any WIOA Title I-B waivers. The state did, however, request a Title I-B waiver for its upskill-backfill initiative on August 15, 2018, but the request was not acted upon by DOL because it was deemed unnecessary.

In PY 2021, Washington sought a waiver of subsection (b)(2) of the Wagner-Peyser Act regulation at 20 CFR 653.501, which requires that “(i)f the job order for the ES office incorporates offices beyond the local office commuting area, the ES Office must suppress the employer information in order to facilitate the orderly movement of workers within the ES.” The request was denied by DOL citing its interpretation of Wagner-Peyser regulations as limiting the Secretary’s waiver authority to those affiliated with Sections 8-10 of the Wagner-Peyser Act.

## Section VII: Rapid response activities

### Statewide rapid response

#### Statewide Rapid Response Team

The Employment Security Department (ESD) contracts with the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) and Washington Workforce Association (WWA) to work with the 12 workforce development areas (WDAs) on Rapid Response (RR) activities. This Statewide Rapid Response Team (SRRT) is made up of ESD’s Rapid Response Manager, Dislocated Worker Manager, and Trade Act Program Operator, WSLC Workforce Development Managers, and WWA’s Executive Director and Strategic Initiatives Manager. WSLC is a full partner, providing RR services to all impacted workers irrespective of whether they are union represented. The 12 local workforce development boards (LWDBs) across Washington coordinate and provide RR services in their areas, most typically through their business services teams.

#### Activities of this team and Rapid Response during PY 2021

- Description of RR and Layoff Aversion Activities:
  - Facilitate quarterly community of practice events with the RR Coordinators statewide to share best practices in RR/Business Services. The focus this year is on increasing equity and access in RR through enhanced language services.

- The RR system, which is locally focused on in Washington, came together to provide virtual RR sessions for a statewide separation of 850 fully virtual workers. Both presenters and impacted workers were located in various areas across the state. Surveys were distributed electronically to the impacted workers, time was given during the RR event to complete the surveys, and responses were distributed to the workers' local WDAs for follow-up and local services.
- RR/Business Services teams working with businesses on recruitment/retention including offering incumbent worker training (IWT) to businesses who, due to lack of experienced candidates, hired workers lacking all the skills for the job and who then risked losing their job without upskilling.
- Data on number of companies and individuals served:
  - Companies served: 718
  - Workers served: 3,168
  - RR events: 84
- Strategies for linking RR recipients to American Job Centers:
  - During RR Events:
    - Provide information packets and contact information for the RR Coordinator for follow-up.
    - Events include WorkSource partners to create familiarity with staff, so when customers come into the WorkSource office for services, they see a familiar face.
    - Follow-up with impacted workers using RR surveys.
    - Some areas hold the RR event in the WorkSource office to create familiarity with the center and services provided there. They can then use the WorkSource resource room computers to assist customers with getting started on their unemployment claim and job search.
  - Larger WDAs use referral portals in their websites to direct impacted workers to program staff.
  - Following public virtual "Life After Layoff" events, attendees are provided with all the information presented and referrals to WIOA and/or worker retraining as needed.
  - Follow RR events with job search workshops within a week to encourage engagement.
- How RR strategies and processes align with business engagement, sector strategy and career pathway efforts:
  - The RR program is integrated into the overall Business Services program and menu of business services.
  - Following layoff in a certain industry/sector, host a job fair with other local businesses in the same industry/sector for those workers interested in continuing in the same industry.
  - Focus on transferable skills that benefit both businesses and workers in matching to available jobs.
- COVID-19-related responses
  - Public, statewide RR events targeted to those workers impacted by vaccine mandates
  - Public "Life After Layoff" virtual sessions presented until January 2022 when demand for public virtual sessions declined.
  - Transitioning out of COVID-19 from all virtual to in-person and hybrid RR events focusing on emergent business needs for RR.

## National Dislocated Worker Grant activities

ESD, in partnership with three LWDBs, applied for and received several federal grant funds from the USDOL to help Washingtonians affected by the opioid crisis:

**Figure 2:** Opioid Crisis Disaster Relief Grant Funds

Washington state

Source: Employment Security Department

Grant	Grant recipient	Grant period	Grant amount	Grant status
Opioid Crisis Disaster Relief Demonstration NHE NDWG	Pacific Mountain LWDB & Workforce Snohomish LWDB	07/01/2018 to 10/31/21	\$4,892,659	Contract Closed; Expended \$4,593,842
Opioid Crisis Disaster Relief NHE NDWG	Pacific Mountain LWDB	01/01/2019 to 12/31/2021	\$886,860	Contract Closed; Expended \$886,860
Opioid Crisis Disaster Relief NHE NDWG	Workforce Southwest Washington LWDB	7/01/2020 to 6/30/2023	\$863,500	Expended Thru 6/30/22 \$478,750
Opioid Crisis Disaster Relief NHE NDWG	Pacific Mountain LWDB	11/01/2021 to 10/31/2023	\$800,000 first increment of \$1,785,474	Expended Thru 6/30/22 \$59,110

### Opioid Crisis Disaster Relief Demonstration NHE NDWG/\$4,892,659 (TEGL 12-17)

The projects operated by both the Pacific Mountain and Workforce Snohomish LWDBs supported targeted specific populations affected by opioid addiction such as homeless youth and adults, youth under the care of the state juvenile rehabilitation system, adults in and out of county jails, mothers addicted while pregnant, and individuals with mental health challenges. Additionally, grant funds supported training for people interested in working in professions that fight the opioid epidemic. Through building and nurturing strong community partnerships, both LWDBs facilitated the provision of wraparound services to affected individuals, including housing assistance, mental health and recovery services, and career and training services.

Together the two LWDBs achieved 121 percent of contract enrollments (732 of 605) and employed more participants at exit than anticipated with 109 percent of the goal (281 of 257).

### Opioid Crisis Disaster Relief NHE NDWGs (TEGL 4-18)

These projects were designed to provide employment services to eligible individuals impacted by the health and economic effects of widespread opioid use, addiction, and overdose. LWDBs expanded their regional partnership between ESD, local governments, non-profit organizations, regional health networks, and higher education entities to facilitate the provision of individualized career, training, and support services. Additionally, individuals were placed into disaster relief employment and/or transitional jobs to serve as *peer recovery navigators* to provide one-on-one peer support to participants through their engagement experience.

- **Opioid Crisis Disaster Relief NHE NDWG/Pacific Mountain LWDB/\$886,860**

Pacific Mountain achieved 165 percent of contract enrollments (132 of 80) and achieved a 72 percent employment at exit rate (60 of 83 exited individuals). Despite COVID-19 pandemic challenges, partners worked diligently to make swift adjustments to accommodate the changing environment and continue to serve grant participants.

- **Opioid Crisis Disaster Relief NHE NDWG/Workforce Southwest WA LWDB/\$863,500**

Workforce Southwest WA achieved 160 percent of contract enrollments (144 of 90) and employed more participants at exit than anticipated with 133 percent of goal (60 of 45 exited individuals).

- **Opioid Crisis Disaster Relief NHE NDWG/Pacific Mountain LWDB/\$800,000**

This project has had two quarters of implementation activity. Operator contracts are signed; 15 new health care partners were added to the support training and employment, and program models were completed, trained to, and implemented. No reportable services delivered through June 30, 2022.

## **COVID-19 Disaster Relief and Employment Recovery NDWG**

ESD received a period of performance extension on federal grant funds from the U.S. Department of Labor in May and June of 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Twenty-four million dollars (\$24 million) was awarded to the state in two \$12 million National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWGs) which have a performance period through June 30, 2023: the COVID-19 Employment Recovery NDWG and the COVID-19 Disaster Recovery NDWG. These two grants are intended to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic disaster by targeting dislocated workers and long-term unemployed individuals who have lost employment and/or are struggling to obtain employment because of the economic and societal impacts of COVID-19. All twelve of Washington's LWDBs have received funds as subrecipients under both grants. The Disaster Recovery (DR) grant focuses on response and recovery to the immediate aftermath of the pandemic, via fully subsidized temporary Disaster Relief Employment (DRE) positions, boosting local emergency response capacity. The Employment Recovery (ER) grant is longer-term in focus, aiming to expand the workforce development system's capacity to serve dislocated workers and support economic recovery.

The DR and ER COVID-19 NDWG grants are two-thirds of the way through their period of performance. During the July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 period:

- The ESD developed a comprehensive fund reallocation process in partnership with the NDWG Recovery and Coordination Team comprised of ESD, WWA, and the WTB. This process has allowed for a seamless timely return and reallocation of funds within the state to respond to changing pandemic effects on the ground quickly.
- Monthly convenings of LWDB program managers began in October 2020 and continued through June 30, 2022. These "Community of Practice" meetings ensure best-practices and lessons learned are shared among those closest to the work. Additionally, the meetings highlight ongoing successes, statewide updates, and peer-learning from other Region 6 states and beyond.
- ESD staff developed a comprehensive program dashboard in response to data needs expressed by LWDBs. This dashboard, available on [Washington's Workforce Professionals Center website](#), provides program performance details, demographic details of program participants, and comprehensive labor market details by LWDBs.

During the July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 period, service provision and expenditures in both grants picked up, but faced continuing and unexpected pandemic challenges. The physical WorkSource (American Job Centers) offices reopened for in-person services in midsummer 2021, then the Delta and Omicron COVID-19 variant waves both caused in-person activity to slow. LWDBs indicated that backlogs for occupational skills trainings, many of which halted entirely during the height of the pandemic, caused a bottle neck in skill development and subsequent participant employments. January through March 2022 saw a rapid uptick in activity and expenditures as LWDBs reported participant engagement, employer interest, and training availability all increasing as communities adapted more fully to pandemic impacts.

During March through June 2022, LWDBs communicated that employers are experiencing labor shortages in hiring and retention, and employer interest in work-based learning has waned as employers have limited capacity to provide supervision to placements.

ER expenditures and enrollments are on track to be met by June 30, 2023. By the end of June 30, 2022, there were 1,584 enrollments statewide of a planned 1,073, 148 percent of the quarterly target. Statewide accrued expenditures through June 30, 2022 are \$8,644,251.

For the DR grant, as of June 30, 2022, accrued expenditures were at \$9,871,142. Statewide enrollments were at 1,282, 167 percent of a planned 766. Total DRE positions were at 221 this quarter, 98 percent of a planned 225. The state is on track to meet all expenditure and performance targets by June 30, 2023.

## Section VIII: Statewide fund activities

### Governor's Statewide Activities funds

#### Career Connect Washington

In May 2017, Governor Inslee created the Career Connect Washington Task Force, composed of leaders from business, labor, government, non-profits, and education. The Task Force concluded that while Washington had many excellent career-connected learning programs, it lacked systemic supports to achieve the scale needed to have a transformative impact. It recommended an inclusive planning process to develop a strategic plan and policy recommendations to overcome the barriers to scale and expansion with quality. This planning process began in early 2018 and concluded in fall 2018.

The plan was transformed into legislation following a groundswell of support from stakeholders in every region of Washington. The legislation was passed in April 2019, along with significant funding to begin implementation. In its first biennium, Career Connect Washington (CCW) delivered significant results by facilitating, connecting, and motivating people across the state to make career-connected learning navigable, coherent, accessible, and high-quality.

The Career Connect Washington partnership has built: a statewide coalition of regional networks, program builders, industry associations, career-connected learning coordinators within the K-12 system, and industry champions; a program endorsement process; and a grant program to expand earn-and-learn opportunities for Washington's young people. Many of the best practices and partnerships established during the WIOA-funded Career Connect Prototype projects (described in previous annual reports) informed the new legislation and local strategy.

A cross agency workgroup is responsible for coordinating agency functions and external partnerships to scale up and expand high-quality career-connected learning opportunities in communities across the state. Program builders create, manage, and scale specific career-connected learning programs. Program builders expanding active programs are responsible for increasing both capacity and equitable access; those developing new programs are responsible for designing new endorsement-ready programs based on the skills and competencies required by employers. To date, 82 unique program builder proposals have been funded via eight requests for proposals. During PY 2021, at the direction of Governor Inslee, 28 proposals were funded using \$4.1 million of WIOA Title I Statewide Activities funds. These programs will provide access to training, credentials, and career opportunities for populations with barriers to employment in the advanced manufacturing, agriculture, automotive, construction, health care, hospitality, information technology, maritime, and life sciences sectors.

Industry and philanthropic leadership provide critical feedback from a private sector perspective on CCW work. This structure helps ensure that industry voice is represented throughout the system, to include state-based and national funders who contributed \$3 million for 2018 and 2019, \$2.2 million for 2020 and 2021, and continuing commitments through 2022.

During Program Year 2021, ESD staff worked side-by-side with CCW leaders as well as personnel from the Washington Student Achievement Council, the WTB, and the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries on federal grant applications to expand the impact of the CCW system. The U.S. Department of Commerce announced \$23.5 million of Good Jobs Challenge funding will be awarded to the Washington Student Achievement Council to support sector-based CCW program expansion and the USDOL recently awarded \$5.6 million of Apprenticeship Building America funds to ESD to develop new registered apprenticeship and apprenticeship preparation programs in partnership with CCW sector intermediaries.

#### Economic Security for All (EcSA)

EcSA is a poverty reduction and equity program that directly addresses the need for economic recovery, especially for those who have been kept furthest from opportunity. EcSA prioritizes services for people experiencing homelessness, people of color and rural communities. EcSA was launched in 2019 in four pilot areas across the state with the support of the Governor's Poverty Reduction Work Group (PRWG), multiple state agencies, and LWDBs. In 2021, Governor Inslee expanded EcSA to seven additional regions, covering most of the state.



EcSA brings multiple programs together at the local level to help people move out of poverty. EcSA partners with Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and focuses on serving participants that qualify for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. It began by listening to our living experts – those individuals who have lived experienced or are currently experiencing poverty in Washington. Local programs are continually improved from direct participant feedback captured through surveys, listening sessions and conversations happening with career specialists.

### *Adapting to COVID-19*

Due to COVID-19-related restrictions, the 11 participating LWDBs continued to develop programs that offered in-person and virtual opportunities to meet the needs of the vulnerable populations they serve. This included transitioning to virtual outreach, intake, and service delivery, and taking steps to address the underlying technology, digital literacy, and internet connectivity inequities that disproportionately impact low-income families. As sites began to partially re-open in 2021, the programs all increased enrollments as they were able to deliver services with a hybrid approach including in-person and virtual services. One of the many findings that surfaced during the pandemic was the discovery that virtual services are a critical resource for rural and vulnerable communities and necessary to improve equity in the system.

### *Promising developments since July 2021*

- LWDBs increased partnerships with local housing providers throughout the state to fill the gap that has existed in many areas for customers transitioning from homelessness to stabilization with housing and a career that supports sustainable full self-sufficiency.
- **Investment in equity** – LWDBs are building relationships with organizations and community groups that serve homeless and Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) communities. In Seattle-King County, they include requirements for their service providers to contract directly with organizations that have long-standing relationships in highly impoverished and/or BIPOC neighborhoods.
- **University of Washington Self-Sufficiency calculator** – ESD changed the program outcomes to fully utilize the calculator to set an accurate customized self-sufficiency wage goal for each participant that takes into consideration where they live and their total cost of living.
- **Breaking down silos** – observing momentum with engagement between state and local partners: - in part through the Human Centered Poverty Reduction design team including Washington College Grant pilot, Federal Waiver Request to the United States Department of Agriculture and a SNAP data-sharing agreement request with an LWDB.

With the inclusion of the additional WIOA Statewide Activity Funds award, EcSA is on track to serve more than 1,800 households to meet their self-sufficiency goals by March 2024

### **Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Employment Services)**

For key deliverables/expectations, key data/performance, success with new virtual team, serving employers and program success stories, see *Appendix 4* for more details.

### **Veterans and Military Families Program**

The USDOL Secretary of Labor, Marty Walsh and Assistant Secretary, James Rodriguez visited JBLM. YesVets and Taskforce12 hosted the 2022 Seahawks Military Community Fair. See *Appendix 5* for these stories and more.

## Appendix 1: Statewide performance reports

This section looks at specific statewide outcomes (participant counts, expenditures, employment and earnings) for Title I-B and III programs. A few notes may help with interpretation. Federal deadlines and the need for prompt reporting mean that the year-long periods used for some measures are not the same year-long periods used for others. Finally, since these are outcome measures, they concentrate on participants who have left WIOA programs and do not include those who are still participating.

Federal employment rates second quarter after exit and median earnings measures are calculated for participants who exited between July 2020 and June 2021. Federal employment rates four quarters after exit are calculated for participants who exited between January 2020 and December 2020.

Federal youth employment, education and training rates second quarter after exit and median earnings measures are calculated for participants who exited between July 2020 and June 2021. Federal youth employment, education and training rates fourth quarter after exit are calculated for participants who exited between January 2020 and December 2020.

Not all individuals who exited are included in performance measures for a variety of reasons. For example, a member of a reserve military unit was called to active duty and so prematurely exited from the WorkSource system.

### Results for WIOA adults

*Workforce Training Results* evaluates the labor market outcomes of program participants using their employment and earnings during the fourth quarter after leaving a program. When considering these outcomes, please note that there is considerable change across years in the labor market conditions.

The annual update of these analyses is underway, and the data for participants exiting for the most recently available year is published at: <https://www.wtb.wa.gov/research-resources/workforce-training-results/>

Unemployment insurance wage files were used to examine employment rates and earnings among participants who left programs during recent program years.<sup>3</sup> Data were collected from the unemployment insurance agencies in Washington and Oregon. Results are shown in *Figure 3*.

**Figure 3:** Employment and earnings of WIOA and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) adult participants in fourth quarter after leaving program Washington state, 2015 through 2020

Source: Employment Security Department/DATA Division, PIRL

Performance measure by exit year	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Employment rate <sup>1</sup>	69%	67%	66%	69%	59%
Employees in full-time job <sup>2</sup>	59%	64%	64%	60%	58%
Median quarterly hours	450	470	470	450	430
Median hourly wage <sup>3</sup>	\$16.52	\$20.76	\$23.05	\$23.35	\$21.82
Median annualized earnings <sup>3</sup>	\$29,700	\$37,100	\$39,900	\$38,900	\$36,700

<sup>1</sup> Rate does not include self-employment federal employment or military service. We estimate these figures understate total employment by approximately 10 percent.

<sup>2</sup> Full-time employment is defined as averaging 30 or more hours per week; percent is of those employed. Hours are only reported for Oregon and Washington state.

<sup>3</sup> Earnings and wages are inflation-adjusted to first quarter 2021 dollars.

<sup>3</sup> Employment rates based on matches are lower than those based on survey results. Employment Security records do not contain information on self-employment. The reported rates exclude employment in states that are not included in our matching process.

## Results for WIOA dislocated workers

In *Figure 4*, dislocated worker results vary with economic conditions and the characteristics of participants. Change can occur quickly from year to year as industrial conditions change and different groups of employees face layoffs. The most recently available Dislocated Worker data appears at: <https://www.wtb.wa.gov/research-resources/workforce-training-results/>

**Figure 4:** Employment and earnings of WIOA/WIA<sup>1</sup> dislocated worker participants in the fourth quarter after leaving program Washington state, 2015 through 2020

Source: Employment Security Department/DATA Division, PIRL

Performance measure by exit year	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Employment rate <sup>1</sup>	68%	73%	74%	73%	63%
Employees in full-time job <sup>2</sup>	71%	74%	72%	64%	60%
Median quarterly hours	480	490	483	450	440
Median hourly wage <sup>3</sup>	\$21.14	\$22.12	\$23.05	\$23.59	\$23.31
Median annualized earnings <sup>3</sup>	\$38,700	\$42,100	\$43,400	\$42,300	\$40,600

<sup>1</sup> Rate does not include self-employment federal employment or military service. We estimate these figures understate total employment by approximately 10 percent.

<sup>2</sup> Full-time employment is defined as averaging 30 or more hours per week; percent is of those employed. Hours are only reported for Oregon and Washington state.

<sup>3</sup> Earnings and wages are inflation-adjusted to first quarter 2021 dollars.

## Results for WIOA youth

*Figure 5* displays results for the WIOA youth programs. The WIA figures include both older and younger youth. Labor market results are presented for participants who were not enrolled in secondary education at exit. The most recently available youth data appears at: <https://www.wtb.wa.gov/research-resources/workforce-training-results>

**Figure 5:** Employment and earnings of WIOA and WIA youth participants in the fourth quarter after leaving program Washington state, 2015 through 2020

Source: Employment Security Department/DATA Division, PIRL

Performance measure by exit year	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Employment rate <sup>1</sup>	69%	67%	66%	69%	59%
Employees in full-time job <sup>2</sup>	59%	64%	64%	60%	58%
Median quarterly hours	450	470	470	450	430
Median hourly wage <sup>3</sup>	\$16.52	\$20.76	\$23.05	\$23.35	\$21.82
Median annualized earnings <sup>3</sup>	\$29,700	\$37,100	\$39,900	\$38,900	\$36,700

<sup>1</sup> Rate does not include self-employment federal employment or military service. We estimate these figures understate total employment by approximately 10 percent.

<sup>2</sup> Full-time employment is defined as averaging 30 or more hours per week; percent is of those employed. Hours are only reported for Oregon and Washington state.

<sup>3</sup> Earnings and wages are inflation-adjusted to first quarter 2020 dollars.

# WIOA – Adult

OMB Control Number 1205-0526  
Expiration Date: 05-31-2024

ETA-9169

Statewide Performance Report		Certified in WIPS: 10/3/2022 12:46 PM EDT			
PROGRAM WIOA Adult		TITLE (select one):			
STATE: Washington	Title I Local Area:	Title I Adult	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Title II Adult Education	<input type="checkbox"/>
REPORTING PERIOD COVERED (Required for current and three preceding years.)		Title I Dislocated Worker	<input type="checkbox"/>	Title III Wagner-Peyser	<input type="checkbox"/>
From ( mm/dd/yyyy): 7/1/2021	To ( mm/dd/yyyy): 6/30/2022	Title I Youth	<input type="checkbox"/>	Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Title I and Title III combined	<input type="checkbox"/>		

SUMMARY INFORMATION				
Service	Participants Served Cohort Period:	Participants Exited Cohort Period: 4/1/2021-3/31/2022	Funds Expended Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022	Cost Per Participant Served Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022
Career Services	14,526	11,999	\$11,931,717	\$821
Training Services	2,131	1,370	\$4,439,062	\$2,083
Percent training-related employment <sup>1</sup> :		Percent enrolled in more than one core program:		Percent admin expended:
6.7%		100.0%		72.3%

BY PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS													
		Total Participants Served Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022	Total Participants Exited Cohort Period: 4/1/2021-3/31/2022	Employment Rate (Q2) <sup>2</sup>		Employment Rate (Q4) <sup>2</sup>		Median Earnings	Credential Rate <sup>3</sup>		Measurable Skill Gains <sup>3</sup>		
				Cohort Period: 7/1/2020-6/30/2021		Cohort Period: 1/1/2020-12/31/2020		Cohort Period: 7/1/2020-6/30/2021	Cohort Period: 1/1/2020-12/31/2020		Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022		
				Num	Rate	Num	Rate	Earnings	Num	Rate	Num	Rate	
<b>Total Statewide</b>		14,544	12,010		66.6%		66.8%	\$8,212		66.4%		50.0%	
				Negotiated Targets									
				Actual	3,924	62.2%	5,230	57.5%	\$8,503	676	71.1%	994	54.9%
Sex	Female	7,197	5,872		1,895	62.0%	2,528	58.6%	\$7,697	261	63.2%	399	52.0%
	Male	7,019	5,868		1,941	62.3%	2,615	56.6%	\$9,315	406	77.2%	587	57.5%
Age	< 16	0	0		0		1	100.0%		0		0	
	16 - 18	79	58		29	63.0%	26	83.9%	\$6,722	6	66.7%	23	54.8%
	19 - 24	1,052	939		469	70.8%	444	65.9%	\$7,028	75	60.5%	166	63.6%
	25 - 44	7,361	5,937		2,079	64.0%	2,636	59.7%	\$8,556	349	72.6%	550	54.8%
	45 - 54	2,901	2,361		721	61.5%	1,189	58.8%	\$9,552	147	75.0%	157	52.5%
	55 - 59	1,294	1,086		308	58.2%	508	55.3%	\$9,243	52	72.2%	57	48.3%
	60+	1,857	1,629		318	49.1%	426	41.0%	\$8,239	47	68.1%	41	47.7%
Ethnicity/Race	American Indian / Alaska Native	457	363		103	56.6%	158	53.9%	\$7,736	20	64.5%	21	48.8%
	Asian	1,418	1,171		396	64.6%	455	58.7%	\$8,423	61	70.1%	105	56.1%
	Black / African American	1,228	854		303	59.1%	348	56.4%	\$6,873	65	64.4%	70	29.3%
	Hispanic / Latino	1,329	901		341	67.4%	468	63.5%	\$8,176	97	70.8%	211	58.9%
	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	327	270		82	63.6%	112	60.9%	\$7,767	12	52.2%	22	56.4%
	White	9,674	8,139		2,605	62.1%	3,720	57.3%	\$8,634	439	71.8%	673	61.4%
	More Than One Race	578	455		139	61.0%	175	54.7%	\$6,869	19	55.9%	40	54.1%

BY EMPLOYMENT BARRIER <sup>4</sup>												
	Total Participants Served	Total Participants Exited		Employment Rate (Q2) <sup>2</sup>		Employment Rate (Q4) <sup>2</sup>		Median Earnings	Credential Rate <sup>3</sup>		Measurable Skill Gains <sup>3</sup>	
				Num	Rate	Num	Rate	Earnings	Num	Rate	Num	Rate
Total Statewide	14,544	12,010	Negotiated Targets		66.6%		66.8%	\$8,212		66.4%		50.0%
			Actual	3,924	62.2%	5,230	57.5%	\$8,503	676	71.1%	994	54.9%
Displaced Homemakers	76	54		27	69.2%	39	51.3%	\$7,999	4	100.0%	1	33.3%
English Language Learners, Low Levels of Literacy, Cultural Barriers	1,296	874		305	59.1%	433	55.7%	\$7,902	75	68.8%	164	51.3%
Exhausting TANF within 2 years (Part A Title IV of the Social Security Act)	0	0		0		0			0		0	
Ex-offenders	1,367	1,005		406	59.0%	533	49.4%	\$7,061	95	72.0%	111	53.6%
Homeless Individuals / runaway youth	644	463		206	56.1%	282	50.0%	\$5,723	38	69.1%	40	44.9%
Long-term Unemployed (27 or more consecutive weeks)	331	247		88	60.7%	71	59.2%	\$9,201	29	60.4%	79	56.4%
Low-Income Individuals	3,566	2,541		1,017	60.6%	1,193	53.7%	\$6,905	249	72.8%	422	56.6%
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers	54	39		19	70.4%	24	63.2%	\$7,434	11	84.6%	10	50.0%
Individuals with Disabilities (incl. youth)	1,455	1,151		318	51.6%	427	49.0%	\$6,854	52	70.3%	71	52.2%
Single Parents (Incl. single pregnant women)	866	581		295	64.0%	309	60.0%	\$6,875	70	64.2%	124	48.1%
Youth in foster care or aged out of system	3	4		1	50.0%	1	50.0%	\$2,156	0	0.0%	1	100.0%

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**

Below is a summary of the state of Washington's PIRL submission:

- 2,052 errors were addressed with hardcoded values, in order to pass WIPS edit checks successfully.
  - 1,434 records were hardcoded with a value of zero, where the "Highest School Grade Completed" was unavailable.
  - 399 records were hardcoded with the "School Status at Program Entry" status, where the "School Status at Exit" status was unavailable.
  - 116 records were hardcoded to remove "Category of Assessment" when the pre-test wasn't present.
  - 89 records were hardcoded, in order to pass various WIPS edit checks successfully.
- A/RTAA data prior to May 2019 was not available for reporting due to technical issues.

<sup>1</sup> Applies to Title I only.

<sup>2</sup> This indicator also includes those who entered into a training or education program for the Youth program.

<sup>3</sup> Credential Rate and Measurable Skill Gains do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser program.

<sup>4</sup> Barriers to Employment are determined at the point of entry into the program.

Numbers entered into cells in this template are the same as the corresponding "report item number" on the report specification document. Clicking on each hyperlink will take the user to the plain text language.

**Public Burden Statement (1205-0NEW)**

Persons are not required to respond to this collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. Respondent's reply to these reporting requirements is mandatory (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Section 116). Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 30 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate to the Office of Policy Development and Research • U.S. Department of Labor • Room N-5641 • 200 Constitution Ave., NW, • Washington, DC • 20210. Do NOT send the completed application to this address.

# WIOA – Youth

OMB Control Number 1205-0526  
 Expiration Date: 05-31-2024

ETA-9169

Statewide Performance Report		Certified in WIPS: 10/3/2022 12:49 PM EDT			
PROGRAM WIOA Youth		TITLE (select one):			
STATE: Washington	Title I Local Area:	Title I Adult	<input type="checkbox"/>	Title II Adult Education	<input type="checkbox"/>
REPORTING PERIOD COVERED (Required for current and three preceding years.)		Title I Dislocated Worker	<input type="checkbox"/>	Title III Wagner-Peyser	<input type="checkbox"/>
From ( mm/dd/yyyy): 7/1/2021	To ( mm/dd/yyyy): 6/30/2022	Title I Youth	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Title I and Title III combined	<input type="checkbox"/>		

SUMMARY INFORMATION				
Service	Participants Served Cohort Period:	Participants Exited Cohort Period: 4/1/2021-3/31/2022	Funds Expended Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022	Cost Per Participant Served Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022
Career Services	1,621	1,027	\$14,205,082	\$8,763
Training Services	421	279	\$5,065,339	\$12,032
Percent training-related employment <sup>1</sup> :		Percent enrolled in more than one core program:		Percent admin expended:
11.1%		100.0%		49.0%

BY PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS													
		Total Participants Served Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022	Total Participants Exited Cohort Period: 4/1/2021-3/31/2022	Negotiated Targets	Youth Employment/Education/ Training Rate (Q2) <sup>2</sup>		Youth Employment/Education/ Training Rate (Q4) <sup>2</sup>		Median Earnings Cohort Period: 7/1/2020-6/30/2021	Credential Rate <sup>3</sup> Cohort Period: 1/1/2020-12/31/2020		Measurable Skill Gains <sup>3</sup> Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022	
					Num	Rate	Num	Rate	Earnings	Num	Rate	Num	Rate
<b>Total Statewide</b>		2,448	1,587			60.7%		60.0%	\$3,480		66.3%		50.0%
				Actual	845	57.5%	743	57.9%	\$4,567	326	43.4%	551	36.5%
Sex	Female	1,134	763		403	57.7%	347	59.0%	\$4,444	145	42.2%	243	33.6%
	Male	1,231	792		430	57.9%	381	57.6%	\$4,712	169	43.3%	287	39.0%
Age	< 16	30	15		3	37.5%	2	40.0%	\$1,863	0	0.0%	2	6.7%
	16 - 18	1,224	737		342	53.4%	338	59.9%	\$4,108	148	37.6%	331	36.8%
	19 - 24	1,194	835		500	61.0%	403	56.4%	\$4,971	178	50.1%	218	37.7%
	25 - 44	0	0		0		0			0		0	
	45 - 54	0	0		0		0			0		0	
	55 - 59	0	0		0		0			0		0	
	60+	0	0		0		0			0		0	
Ethnicity/Race	American Indian / Alaska Native	139	98		50	51.0%	52	54.7%	\$3,824	21	34.4%	23	30.7%
	Asian	185	110		70	58.8%	55	61.8%	\$5,353	25	43.9%	45	37.2%
	Black / African American	310	183		112	51.6%	100	54.3%	\$3,924	55	51.4%	68	31.8%
	Hispanic / Latino	713	488		262	63.7%	191	60.8%	\$5,020	73	37.6%	173	37.2%
	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	69	52		32	58.2%	29	69.0%	\$4,459	13	50.0%	18	36.7%
	White	1,523	977		507	57.9%	469	57.8%	\$4,341	203	42.9%	363	40.5%
	More Than One Race	194	109		67	56.3%	59	55.7%	\$3,885	34	48.6%	52	42.3%

BY EMPLOYMENT BARRIER <sup>4</sup>												
	Total Participants Served	Total Participants Exited		Youth Employment/Education/ Training Rate (Q2) <sup>2</sup>		Youth Employment/Education/ Training Rate (Q4) <sup>2</sup>		Median Earnings	Credential Rate <sup>3</sup>		Measurable Skill Gains <sup>3</sup>	
				Num	Rate	Num	Rate	Earnings	Num	Rate	Num	Rate
Total Statewide	2,448	1,587	Negotiated Targets		60.7%		60.0%	\$3,480		66.3%		50.0%
			Actual	845	57.5%	743	57.9%	\$4,567	326	43.4%	551	36.5%
Displaced Home makers	0	0		0		0			0		0	
English Language Learners, Low Levels of Literacy, Cultural Barriers	876	535		296	59.2%	267	58.8%	\$5,058	109	39.8%	225	37.1%
Exhausting TANF within 2 years (Part A Title IV of the Social Security Act)	0	0		0		0			0		0	
Ex-offenders	352	274		141	54.0%	105	52.2%	\$4,163	40	40.8%	58	33.3%
Homeless Individuals / runaway youth	330	248		125	53.6%	115	57.8%	\$4,070	39	44.3%	47	28.0%
Long-term Unemployed (27 or more consecutive weeks)	2	1		0		0			0		0	
Low-Income Individuals	871	521		250	53.8%	230	55.3%	\$4,401	100	45.2%	179	35.0%
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers	6	6		8	88.9%	6	75.0%	\$7,104	5	83.3%	2	100.0%
Individuals with Disabilities (incl. youth)	637	421		191	55.7%	190	58.5%	\$4,265	55	45.5%	95	30.4%
Single Parents (incl. single pregnant women)	196	126		79	59.8%	62	54.4%	\$4,166	38	59.4%	41	32.0%
Youth in foster care or aged out of system	99	76		25	43.9%	23	54.8%	\$4,392	8	40.0%	14	27.5%

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**

Below is a summary of the state of Washington's PIRL submission:

- 2,052 errors were addressed with hardcoded values, in order to pass WIPS edit checks successfully.
  - 1,434 records were hardcoded with a value of zero, where the "Highest School Grade Completed" was unavailable.
  - 399 records were hardcoded with the "School Status at Program Entry" status, where the "School Status at Exit" status was unavailable.
  - 116 records were hardcoded to remove "Category of Assessment" when the pre-test wasn't present.
  - 89 records were hardcoded, in order to pass various WIPS edit checks successfully.
- A/RTAA data prior to May 2019 was not available for reporting due to technical issues.

<sup>1</sup> Applies to Title I only.

<sup>2</sup> This indicator also includes those who entered into a training or education program for the Youth program.

<sup>3</sup> Credential Rate and Measurable Skill Gains do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser program.

<sup>4</sup> Barriers to Employment are determined at the point of entry into the program.

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**Public Burden Statement (1205-ONEW)**

Persons are not required to respond to this collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. Respondent's reply to these reporting requirements is mandatory (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Section 116). Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 30 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate to the Office of Policy Development and Research • U.S. Department of Labor • Room N-5641 • 200 Constitution Ave., NW, • Washington, DC • 20210. Do NOT send the completed application to this address.

# WIOA – Dislocated Worker

OMB Control Number 1205-0526  
Expiration Date: 05-31-2024

ETA-9169

Statewide Performance Report				Certified in WIPS: 10/3/2022 12:52 PM EDT			
<b>PROGRAM</b> WIOA Dislocated Worker				<b>TITLE (select one):</b>			
STATE: Washington		Title I Local Area:		Title I Adult		<input type="checkbox"/>	
REPORTING PERIOD COVERED (Required for current and three preceding years.)		Title I Dislocated Worker		Title II Adult Education		<input type="checkbox"/>	
From ( mm/dd/yyyy): 7/1/2021		To ( mm/dd/yyyy): 6/30/2022		Title I Youth		Title III Wagner-Peyser	
				Title I and Title III combined		Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation	

SUMMARY INFORMATION				
Service	Participants Served Cohort Period:	Participants Exited Cohort Period: 4/1/2021-3/31/2022	Funds Expended Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022	Cost Per Participant Served Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022
Career Services	7,056	5,430	\$15,547,461	\$2,203
Training Services	2,634	1,485	\$3,535,908	\$1,342
<b>Percent training-related employment<sup>1</sup>:</b>		<b>Percent enrolled in more than one core program:</b>		<b>Percent admin expended:</b>
7.4%		100.0%		60.6%

BY PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS													
		Total Participants Served Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022	Total Participants Exited Cohort Period: 4/1/2021-3/31/2022	Employment Rate (Q2) <sup>2</sup>		Employment Rate (Q4) <sup>2</sup>		Median Earnings	Credential Rate <sup>3</sup>		Measurable Skill Gains <sup>3</sup>		
				Cohort Period: 7/1/2020-6/30/2021		Cohort Period: 1/1/2020-12/31/2020		Cohort Period: 7/1/2020-6/30/2021	Cohort Period: 1/1/2020-12/31/2020		Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022		
				Num	Rate	Num	Rate	Earnings	Num	Rate	Num	Rate	
<b>Total Statewide</b>		7,183	5,542		72.2%		72.8%	\$9,579		71.3%		50.0%	
				Negotiated Targets									
				Actual	2,196	64.8%	2,163	61.9%	\$10,419	700	75.4%	1,347	57.3%
<b>Sex</b>	Female	3,268	2,533		933	63.0%	984	62.0%	\$8,515	218	65.5%	415	50.2%
	Male	3,779	2,886		1,226	66.5%	1,144	61.9%	\$12,266	474	81.4%	911	61.3%
<b>Age</b>	< 16	0	0		0		1	100.0%		0		0	
	16 - 18	9	7		6	85.7%	4	100.0%	\$3,126	1	100.0%	2	50.0%
	19 - 24	527	401		190	70.6%	145	70.4%	\$8,130	49	79.0%	142	65.4%
	25 - 44	3,325	2,520		1,123	67.9%	1,010	64.2%	\$10,635	362	75.7%	715	58.7%
	45 - 54	1,579	1,232		493	67.1%	568	66.7%	\$11,345	172	74.5%	264	52.5%
	55 - 59	781	607		227	60.5%	255	59.4%	\$11,488	70	78.7%	131	55.5%
	60+	962	775		157	44.7%	180	42.3%	\$8,491	46	68.7%	93	53.4%
<b>Ethnicity/Race</b>	American Indian / Alaska Native	175	148		56	64.4%	53	57.6%	\$9,525	18	69.2%	30	56.6%
	Asian	785	583		234	66.1%	195	65.9%	\$11,318	47	62.7%	178	60.3%
	Black / African American	664	389		147	58.3%	125	59.5%	\$8,515	47	61.8%	90	33.2%
	Hispanic / Latino	858	541		262	72.0%	262	70.4%	\$10,776	125	81.2%	241	61.3%
	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	133	125		63	72.4%	41	56.2%	\$10,552	15	71.4%	22	59.5%
	White	4,627	3,735		1,457	64.8%	1,531	61.6%	\$10,508	478	76.8%	851	61.0%
	More Than One Race	226	183		76	62.3%	62	56.4%	\$11,465	17	54.8%	46	54.8%



BY EMPLOYMENT BARRIER <sup>4</sup>												
	Total Participants Served	Total Participants Exited		Employment Rate (Q2) <sup>2</sup>		Employment Rate (Q4) <sup>2</sup>		Median Earnings	Credential Rate <sup>3</sup>		Measurable Skill Gains <sup>3</sup>	
				Num	Rate	Num	Rate	Earnings	Num	Rate	Num	Rate
Total Statewide	7,183	5,542	Negotiated Targets		72.2%		72.8%	\$9,579		71.3%		50.0%
			Actual	2,196	64.8%	2,163	61.9%	\$10,419	700	75.4%	1,347	57.3%
Displaced Homemakers	65	45		22	66.7%	35	50.0%	\$6,599	4	100.0%	1	12.5%
English Language Learners, Low Levels of Literacy, Cultural Barriers	606	442		162	60.0%	178	66.4%	\$8,672	57	76.0%	104	48.4%
Exhausting TANF within 2 years (Part A Title IV of the Social Security Act)	0	0		0		0			0		0	
Ex-offenders	442	332		161	67.4%	128	53.6%	\$8,996	66	79.5%	85	63.4%
Homeless Individuals / runaway youth	166	117		48	65.8%	46	47.4%	\$6,991	15	68.2%	27	60.0%
Long-term Unemployed (27 or more consecutive weeks)	1,198	773		286	67.0%	182	64.8%	\$9,914	95	70.4%	284	47.0%
Low-Income Individuals	1,289	949		402	65.8%	363	60.8%	\$8,090	136	76.0%	207	54.6%
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers	44	19		8	100.0%	7	87.5%	\$11,358	3	75.0%	22	71.0%
Individuals with Disabilities (incl. youth)	606	453		136	55.3%	141	52.4%	\$9,125	36	65.5%	65	48.5%
Single Parents (Incl. single pregnant women)	337	226		98	70.5%	87	62.6%	\$8,555	43	78.2%	67	48.2%
Youth in foster care or aged out of system	1	1		0		0			0		1	100.0%

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**

Below is a summary of the state of Washington's PIRL submission:

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  - 1,434 records were hardcoded with a value of zero, where the "Highest School Grade Completed" was unavailable.
  - 399 records were hardcoded with the "School Status at Program Entry" status, where the "School Status at Exit" status was unavailable.
  - 116 records were hardcoded to remove "Category of Assessment" when the pre-test wasn't present.
  - 89 records were hardcoded, in order to pass various WIPS edit checks successfully.
- A/RTAA data prior to May 2019 was not available for reporting due to technical issues.

<sup>1</sup> Applies to Title I only.

<sup>2</sup> This indicator also includes those who entered into a training or education program for the Youth program.

<sup>3</sup> Credential Rate and Measurable Skill Gains do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser program.

<sup>4</sup> Barriers to Employment are determined at the point of entry into the program.

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**Public Burden Statement (1205-0NEW)**

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# WIOA – Wagner-Peyser

OMB Control Number 1205-0526  
 Expiration Date: 05-31-2024

ETA-9169

<b>Statewide Performance Report</b>		Certified in WIPS: 10/3/2022 12:40 PM EDT	
<b>PROGRAM</b> Wagner-Peyser		<b>TITLE (select one):</b>	
<b>STATE:</b> Washington	Title I Local Area:	<input type="checkbox"/> Title II Adult Education	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>REPORTING PERIOD COVERED</b> (Required for current and three preceding years.)		<input type="checkbox"/> Title I Dislocated Worker	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Title III Wagner-Peyser
From ( mm/dd/yyyy): 7/1/2021	To ( mm/dd/yyyy): 6/30/2022	<input type="checkbox"/> Title I Youth	<input type="checkbox"/> Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation
		<input type="checkbox"/> Title I and Title III combined	

SUMMARY INFORMATION				
Service	Participants Served Cohort Period:	Participants Exited Cohort Period: 4/1/2021-3/31/2022	Funds Expended Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022	Cost Per Participant Served Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022
Career Services	74,447	63,260	\$ 17,373,532	\$233
Training Services				
<b>Percent training-related employment<sup>1</sup>:</b>		<b>Percent enrolled in more than one core program:</b>		<b>Percent admin expended:</b>
7.9%		27.7%		N/A

BY PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS												
		Total Participants Served Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022	Total Participants Exited Cohort Period: 4/1/2021-3/31/2022	Employment Rate (Q2) <sup>2</sup>		Employment Rate (Q4) <sup>2</sup>		Median Earnings	Credential Rate <sup>3</sup>		Measurable Skill Gains <sup>3</sup>	
				Cohort Period: 7/1/2020-6/30/2021		Cohort Period: 1/1/2020-12/31/2020		Cohort Period: 7/1/2020-6/30/2021	Cohort Period: 1/1/2020-12/31/2020		Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022	
				Num	Rate	Num	Rate	Earnings	Num	Rate	Num	Rate
<b>Total Statewide</b>		75,602	64,065	Negotiated Targets	68.5%		67.3%	\$7,150				
				Actual	22,703 61.0%	33,186 58.4%	\$8,516					
<b>Sex</b>	Female	36,159	30,487		11,063 61.4%	15,206 58.2%	\$7,444					
	Male	37,668	32,043		11,141 60.6%	17,268 58.5%	\$9,699					
<b>Age</b>	< 16	33	17		5 38.5%	6 50.0%	\$1,863					
	16 - 18	1,491	965		476 56.8%	565 60.9%	\$4,141					
	19 - 24	6,353	5,543		2,638 65.9%	3,372 64.8%	\$6,453					
	25 - 44	34,280	28,567		10,493 62.1%	15,193 60.2%	\$8,790					
	45 - 54	14,827	12,604		4,491 63.3%	7,319 61.2%	\$9,790					
	55 - 59	7,648	6,647		2,201 60.7%	3,392 56.4%	\$9,357					
	60+	10,970	9,722		2,399 50.4%	3,339 44.5%	\$7,889					
<b>Ethnicity/Race</b>	American Indian / Alaska Native	2,360	1,902		556 54.9%	908 53.4%	\$7,913					
	Asian	6,857	5,924		2,125 61.7%	2,693 59.0%	\$8,917					
	Black / African American	6,400	4,755		1,504 54.4%	2,046 54.1%	\$6,874					
	Hispanic / Latino	11,881	9,771		3,851 71.7%	5,564 61.3%	\$7,680					
	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	1,490	1,205		425 65.6%	597 60.4%	\$7,191					
	White	45,224	38,315		13,542 60.1%	20,630 57.8%	\$8,670					
	More Than One Race	2,417	1,862		614 57.8%	822 53.6%	\$6,936					

BY EMPLOYMENT BARRIER <sup>4</sup>												
	Total Participants Served	Total Participants Exited		Employment Rate (Q2) <sup>2</sup>		Employment Rate (Q4) <sup>2</sup>		Median Earnings	Credential Rate <sup>3</sup>		Measurable Skill Gains <sup>3</sup>	
				Num	Rate	Num	Rate	Earnings	Num	Rate	Num	Rate
Total Statewide	75,602	64,065	Negotiated Targets		68.5%		67.3%	\$7,150				
			Actual	22,703	61.0%	33,186	58.4%	\$8,516				
Displaced Homemakers	81	59		27	67.5%	39	50.6%	\$7,999				
English Language Learners, Low Levels of Literacy, Cultural Barriers	8,354	6,744		2,615	66.9%	3,665	57.6%	\$7,422				
Exhausting TANF within 2 years (Part A Title IV of the Social Security Act)	0	0		0		0						
Ex-offenders	4,814	3,804		1,328	54.3%	1,904	49.9%	\$6,783				
Homeless Individuals / runaway youth	2,746	2,023		689	51.4%	1,054	47.4%	\$5,577				
Long-term Unemployed (27 or more consecutive weeks)	1,248	807		295	66.6%	190	63.1%	\$9,906				
Low-Income Individuals	12,601	9,439		3,257	56.8%	4,547	52.3%	\$6,537				
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers	2,377	2,163		985	80.0%	1,371	58.9%	\$7,295				
Individuals with Disabilities (incl. youth)	6,504	5,092		1,527	50.0%	2,160	48.6%	\$6,852				
Single Parents (Incl. single pregnant women)	2,797	2,068		855	60.2%	1,063	57.3%	\$6,699				
Youth in foster care or aged out of system	103	79		25	43.1%	23	53.5%	\$4,392				

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**

Below is a summary of the state of Washington's PIRL submission:

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<sup>2</sup> This indicator also includes those who entered into a training or education program for the Youth program.

<sup>3</sup> Credential Rate and Measurable Skill Gains do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser program.

<sup>4</sup> Barriers to Employment are determined at the point of entry into the program.

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**Public Burden Statement (1205-0NEW)**

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## Appendix 2: Evaluations, surveys and studies

### WTR Background

**Organizational unit responsible:** Research Unit, WTB

**Methodology:**

<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/workforce.training.and.education.coordinating.board/viz/WorkforceTrainingResultsfortheDataExplorer2021/WTR>

**State partners involved in planning and feedback:** 12 LWDBs, Employment Security Department, Department of Social and Health Services, Labor & Industries, Office of the Superintendent for Public Education, and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

**Workforce training results (WTR) funding:** As the WTR evaluation examines the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Title I programs in addition to non-WIOA programs, part of the cost of the evaluation is paid out of the state set-aside.

**Coordination with partners:** WTB has worked with all of the LWDBs and relevant agencies, particularly the Employment Security Department. The effort has been to ensure that the data is accurate as well as meaningful at the local level. The results are produced and made available for review annually in the fall.

**Cooperation with DOL:** All WTR analysis and results have been made available when requested and all surveys and requested site visits have been accommodated.

### Customer satisfaction and net impact evaluations

The Washington Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTB) conducts three evaluation studies on a staggered schedule. Two of the research studies focus on customer needs and satisfaction, while the other seeks to determine the return on investment for participants in workforce training and education programs, taxpayers, and society. These include:

- The Employer Workforce Needs and Practices, and Satisfaction Survey (the Employer Survey)
- Workforce Training and Education Program Participant Satisfaction Survey (the Participant Survey)
- The Net Impact and Cost-Benefit Evaluation of Washington State's Workforce Development Programs (The Net Impact Study)

The employer and participant surveys are conducted on a rotating basis every two years, while the Net Impact Study occurs every four to five years. The Employer Survey was last published in early 2020, the Net Impact Study in early 2021, and the Participant Survey is currently under development and has an expected publication data in mid-to-late 2022. The workforce training and education programs evaluated are:

- Community and technical college career and technical education programs
- Adult Basic Education programs
- Private career school programs
- Apprenticeship programs
- Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) federally funded programs
- WorkSource Employment Placement programs
- WorkFirst services through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation at the
- Department of Social and Health Services

As WIOA Title I is included in these evaluations, all of them are partially funded by the WIOA state set-aside. They are all used to assess customer sentiment, which is then used as part of the continuous improvement process for one-stop certification process.

## **The Employer Workforce Needs and Practices and Satisfaction Survey**

The Employer Survey is a scientific survey designed to identify employer needs and practices, as well as employer satisfaction with workforce system services<sup>4</sup> to better meet the needs of its customers. The findings, which are generalizable to employers on average in the state, helps clarify the workforce system's value proposition, customer pain points, areas of improvement, and domains of strength, as well as estimates for employer awareness of these services. The primary research objectives are:

- Assess the difficulty Washington employers have in finding qualified applicants
- Estimate future needs for skilled employees
- Identify types of training that employers provide themselves.
- Assess employer awareness and engagement with the Workforce System

The Employer Survey uses a combination of mail, phone, and online collection. The latest survey sample included 30,000 records and achieved a 6.5 percent response rate. A sufficiently large number of survey mail-outs were required to reliably sample from all 12 workforce development areas. Several factors were identified as contributing to lower response rates in the past, including survey length, bad address data, and lack of an explicit survey follow-up strategy. Past improvements that boosted survey response rates included reduced survey length, supplemental web-survey options, telephone follow-ups, and a cover letter within the mailed-out survey package indicating co-sponsorship supported by the Association of Washington Business (AWB) and Washington Chamber of Commerce Executives (WCCE). These past improvements were applied for the redesign and administration of the 2020 survey.

Local Workforce Boards and State agencies charged with administering Workforce Development Programs were consulted on the questionnaire development. The survey is used in the preparation of strategic state-level workforce development plans and in the strategic plans of the Workforce Development Councils serving 12 local workforce areas in Washington. The Governor and state Legislature have used past survey estimates to prepare the budget related to workforce development in the state.

Project Budget was approximately \$200,000, with an additional estimated 480 FTE staff hours allocated to the project at a cost of about \$33,600

The 2020 Employer Survey yielded key insights regarding opportunities for improvement in service delivery:

- Seventy percent of Washington employers claimed that finding qualified talent was their biggest workforce challenge.
  - Manufacturers are 12 percent more likely than all other employers to report recruitment as their biggest challenge.
- Small employers (less than 20 employees) make up 90 percent of businesses and employ 20 percent of the Washington labor force.
  - Small employers are 10 percent more likely than larger employers to report recruitment as their biggest workforce challenge.

<sup>4</sup> The "State Workforce System" means the employment and training programs that are provided through WorkSource offices, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Department of Services for the Blind, and Community and Technical Colleges, Private Career Schools, and Apprenticeship programs across the state, along with informational and other resources provided by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board and the Employment Security Department.

- Seventeen percent of small employers that reported recruitment as their biggest workforce challenge also reported having to turn down new business opportunities because of that challenge. Only 2 percent of larger businesses turned down new business opportunities because of recruitment challenges.
- Larger employers have access to more recruitment tools.
  - Seventy percent of employers that increased recruitment efforts reported successful outcomes to address recruitment challenges.
- Thirty percent of larger employers use WorkSourceWA, whereas only 9 percent of small employers do.
  - Eighty percent of employers that automated certain job functions reported successful outcomes to address recruitment challenges.
  - Seventy percent of employers that lowered job requirements reported successful outcomes to address recruitment challenges.
- Thirty-six percent of Washington employers are unaware of the state’s workforce system services.
  - Twenty-six percent of employers claimed to not use state workforce system services because they think the services do not fit their needs.
  - Twelve percent of employers claim job candidates from the state workforce system would be the wrong fit for their organization.
- Larger employers are 13 percent more likely to report turnover and retention as their biggest workforce challenge.
  - Eleven percent of employers that report turnover and retention as their biggest challenge also report having turned down new business opportunities because of that challenge.
- Seven percent of employers reported training and professional development as their biggest workforce issue.

The complete employer survey report is thorough and includes a full description of the technical methodology and in-depth findings. The report is available through the WTB website: <https://www.wtb.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/2020-Employer-Survey-FINAL-4-27-2021.pdf>

## **Workforce Training and Education Program Participant Satisfaction Survey**

The Participant Survey is currently under development and will closely follow the methodology of the Employer Survey. Questionnaire design is being done in collaboration with State Workforce System partners. The objectives are to measure:

- Participant satisfaction with services provided.
- Job/occupational relevancy of training and education services, i.e., usefulness of skills gained.
- The extent of which training and education services helped the participant get a job and receive better compensation.

Data gleaned from these measures will be combined with program administrative data to determine equity gaps in service delivery, best practices, and areas of improvement. The starting sample size for each program is 1,300, with a target of 210 completed surveys for each of the 8 to 12 programs being evaluated. This target is consistent with past Participant Survey response rates of between 10 percent to 50 percent.

Project budget was approximately \$120,000, with an additional estimated 480 FTE staff hours allocated to the project at a cost of about \$33,600.

## **The net impact and cost-benefit evaluation of Washington state’s workforce development programs**

The WTB serves as the state’s objective evaluator of public investments in workforce development and maintains a dashboard of annual performance outcomes. Every four to five years, the WTB takes a closer look at the state’s workforce development system to evaluate how well it is serving its customers by measuring the direct economic impact programs have on participants and the broader public.

The Net Impact and Cost-Benefit Evaluation study is rigorous and detailed. While most evaluations of workforce system programs identify average participant outcomes like earnings and employment, this study takes it a step further by using a quasi-experimental design to estimate the causal relationship between programs and participant outcomes. The findings produce employment, earnings, and social assistance outcomes that are attributed to program participation itself by isolating other influencing factors, such as prior employment history, education, gender, or race. This makes it possible to calculate the average net benefit of these programs for individual participants, and a return on investment to society and taxpayers.

Prior studies were contracted out to third parties at significant cost. In 2018, the WTB's research unit successfully replicated findings from previous studies to determine the feasibility of bringing the study in-house, and within an acceptable level of staff time. Bringing the study in-house was made possible by increased staff expertise and technical know-how in econometric research design, statistical programming, and project management. An independent review was conducted to validate the evaluation methodology used. This new approach yields several advantages:

- Substantial cost-savings.
- Standardization of research design and evaluation methodology.
- Study repeatability and reproducibility.
- Increased research unit capabilities.

These improvements make it feasible to conduct the study on a more frequent basis and make incremental improvements to the process with acceptable fiscal commitment. Independent reviews can be conducted periodically to preserve the integrity of the study.

The findings of this study reveal – in direct quantitative terms – the economic impact of workforce development programs. More frequent and consistent net impact and cost-benefit evaluation of these programs will be helpful to ongoing economic recovery, and workforce planning efforts.

The programs evaluated serve around 343,000 Washingtonians per year at an average total cost of \$2.6 billion, which includes federal and state funds plus student tuition. The direct social impact – the total economic impact of these programs – is a net gain of \$14.5 billion over five years, for a social return on investment (ROI) of \$5.60 per \$1.00 spent.

From a taxpayer perspective the total cost is about \$1.6 billion, with an estimated net gain in federal, state, and local tax revenues of \$1.1 billion over five years, rising to \$3.3 billion over 10 years, which is a net five-year taxpayer ROI of \$0.67 per dollar spent, and a 10-year ROI of \$2.02.

The programs evaluated in this study address different populations with different needs and barriers. Because of these differences, comparing program ROI, as a means of ranking program efficacy or allocating public resources between these programs, requires a closer look at participant barriers — and outcomes — over time. Findings from more frequent and regularly conducted studies will help track specific program performance, measuring improvements or setbacks over multiple years and provide insights into larger trends in Washington state's workforce development system.

Project budget for the independent peer review was \$50,000, with an additional estimated 960 FTE staff hours allocated to the project at a cost of about \$67,200.

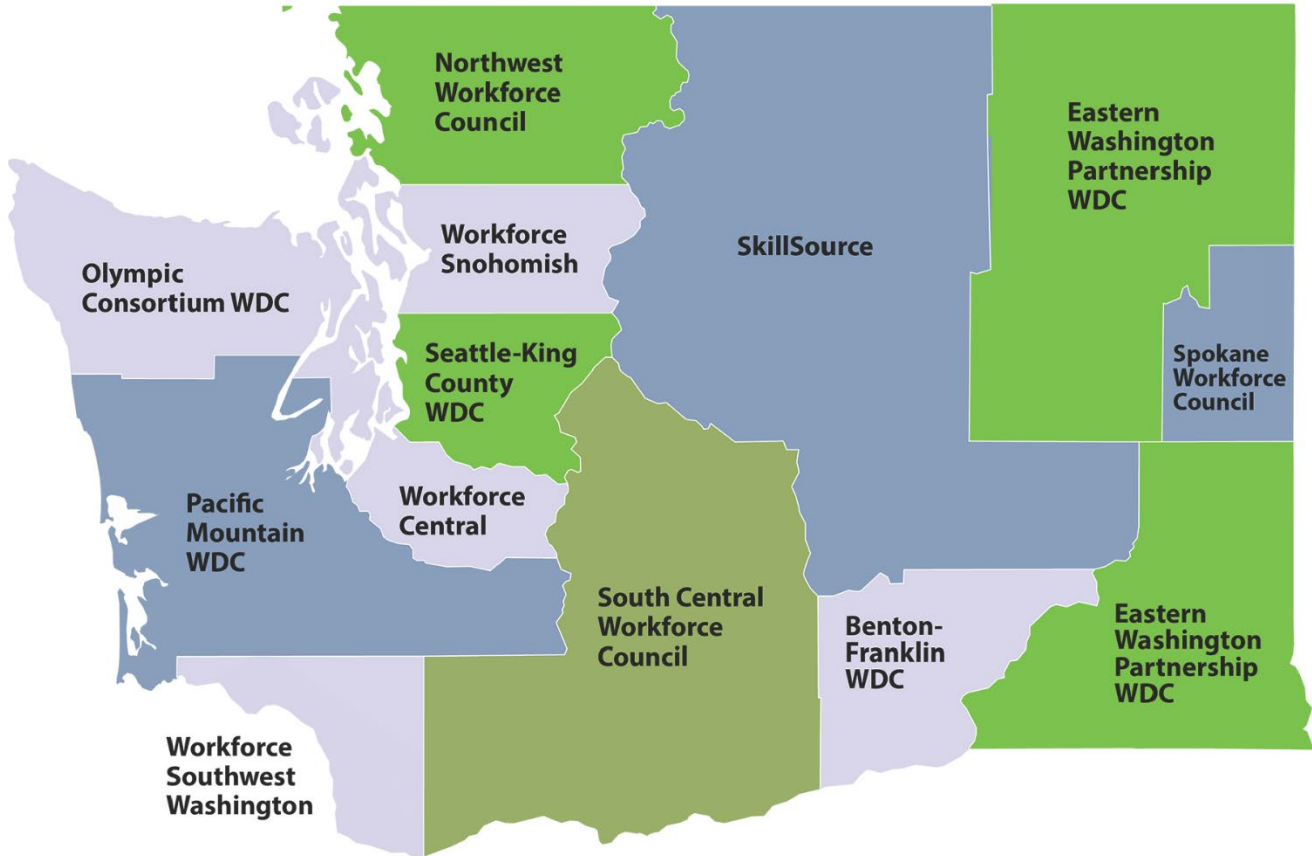
The complete report is available through the WTB website: [https://www.wtb.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Net-Impact-Study\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.wtb.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Net-Impact-Study_FINAL.pdf)

## **Economic Security for All (EcSA) evaluation summary**

Evaluation components and the goals of the evaluation is provided in much more detail in *Appendix 7*. Also included in *Appendix 7* is the EcSA Initial Evaluation Report and the EcSA Midpoint Report for your review.

## Appendix 3: Washington’s Local Workforce Development Boards

Summary overviews highlight local work from the LWDBs.



Each of the 12 certified Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) oversee their respective areas ensuring the workforce system focuses on the local economy. LWDBs are authorized by Local Elected Officials and Board members are appointed by the Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO). Boards are governed by business majority, and local business leaders chair the Boards. LWDBs serve local needs; are responsive to the thinking and demands of local business and community leaders. As community-based organizations, they are grounded by the values and commitments of the people they serve to the vitality of that region.

LWDBs are the strategic visionaries for local implementation of WIOA legislation and funds. They convene a diverse set of public and private stakeholders to develop workforce solutions that drive the economic prosperity for their residents, businesses and industries. LWDBs analyze economic and labor force data to identify targeted industries and determine where talent gaps exist; cultivate the local partnerships needed to fill those gaps; and pursue the resources necessary to execute local workforce development strategies, interagency initiatives, projects and programs. Their oversight of the local service delivery system, including WorkSource, requires they determine strategic outcomes and local performance standards.

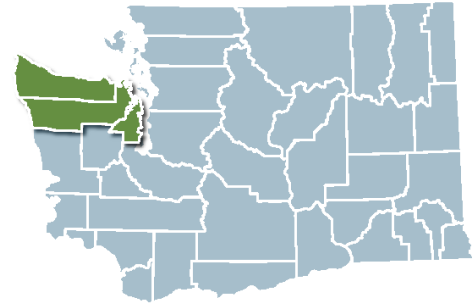


LWDBs understand that workforce development must directly focus upon overcoming the barriers that limit people and our economies. Equitable recovery and prosperity require strong focus on the untapped, underutilized talent of Black, Asian, Latinx, and other communities of color; and those who are impacted by poverty and the justice system.

LWDBs are a group of community leaders appointed by Local Elected Officials and charged with planning and oversight responsibilities for workforce programs and services in their area. These Boards are made up of individuals representing business, education, economic development, organized labor, community-based organizations, state agencies, and local government. Washington has twelve local workforce areas to support locally-driven decisions and programs. These Boards play multiple roles in their communities in support of the local workforce:

- **Convener:** Bringing together business, labor, education, and economic development to focus on workforce issues and promote strategic alignment. These collaborations strengthen our local economy.

- **Workforce Analyst:** Developing, disseminating, and assisting with the analysis of current labor market and economic information and trends in industry sectors in partnership with the Employment Security Department and local community-based organizations.
- **Broker:** Bringing together community stakeholders to solve common problems; aligning systems and strategies; forging new relationships between business and education.
- **Community Voice:** Articulating the issues for the needs of a skilled workforce. Demonstrating and speaking to the effectiveness of training programs.
- **Capacity Builder/Investor:** Enhancing the region's ability to meet the workforce needs of local employers through the utilization of federal and state funds.

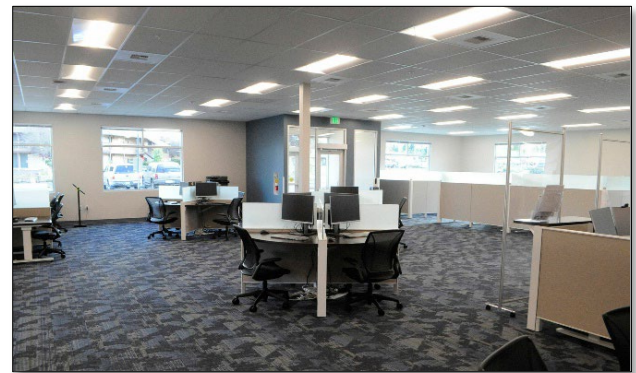


## Olympic Consortium Workforce Development Board

*Serving Clallam, Jefferson and Kitsap counties*

### New WorkSource Centers open in Clallam and Kitsap counties

This year was a very exciting time for the Olympic Consortium Workforce Development Council serving Clallam, Jefferson and Kitsap counties. One of our proudest accomplishments came with the opening of our two new state-of-the-art WorkSource facilities in the region.



*Beautiful new resource room at WorkSource Clallam in Sequim, Washington.*



*WorkSource Kitsap's new building in Silverdale Washington.*

While continuing to serve our business and job seeker customers, staff packed up, relocated, and opened our new WorkSource Centers in Silverdale and Sequim. While operations remained mostly virtual for much of the year, the center's team of workforce professionals found new and innovative ways to assist our business and job-seeking customers.

### Outstanding services to businesses

Finding quality talent to keep the region's businesses thriving has always been a huge part of what we do, and this year was no exception. The year saw our bells ringing (when a job seeker provides a return to work or gets a conditional offer, the customer rings the bell and all staff stop their work, stand up and clap) at hiring events throughout the year.

Despite the impact of the pandemic, our dedicated Business Services teams worked hard to provide our communities with great opportunities to interact with the region's top employers and apply for positions at one of our many specialized recruitment events and job fairs. Some of the employers who participated in our virtual and in-person events included: McKinley Paper Company, Craft and Technical Solutions, Fleet and Family Services, Safeway, TriTek Systems, TaskForce Delivery (Amazon Partners), Trident Refit Facility, Consumer Direct Care Network, Craft and Technical Solutions (PSNS contractor), Harbor Freight, Lockheed Martin, Northwest Center (Navy contractor), WestSound WorkForce Jacobs (PSNS contractor) All Ways Caring HomeCare, YMCA,

McLaughlin Research Group, Personnel Touch Care Giver, Orchard Foods, United States Postal Services, Skookum Contract Services, and the Washington Department of Corrections.

The year cumulated with a multi-day, on-site hiring event for a new store location of WINCO in Silverdale with 182 job seekers attending, and 105 hires!

### Services the pandemic-Olympic teams step up for our customers

While the pandemic caused most of our offices to close, our teams were still able to find ways to help their customers succeed. Here are just a few examples of how they went above and beyond:

- Kitsap Community Resources (KCR) remained opened and continues to offer our customers service out of our Port Orchard Satellite WorkSource Center in-person during the pandemic.
- KCR provided GED courses and exams during the pandemic, reaching across program operators to provide opportunities for youth, adult, and dislocated workers to complete their GED.
- KCR's WIOA program saw quite an increase in veteran participants. Two of their veteran customers were able to attend commercial driver school and both completed the training and earned their Class A licenses. They are now currently employed as heavy truck drivers making great wages to help provide for their families.
- Youth and Economic Security for All (EcSA) provider, Olympic Educational Service District 114 (OESD), connected with youth in parking lots and parks during the pandemic. OESD staff delivered food from local co-ops and distributed to youth participants.
- OESD also worked with community partners in Jefferson County to acquire space for in-person meetings with youth, which allowed for social distancing safety guidelines to be followed and still deliver in-person programming to participants.
- Employment Security Department (ESD) employees transitioned in-person workshops to virtual without missing a beat. Additionally, they launched new programs such as Surviving Job Loss. This informative class prepares participants to recognize and manage the emotional effect of job loss that can have an impact on self and

others. Identifying resources available and practical steps to prepare to move on to the next phase in career transition.

### Strong partnership with PSNS

The Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility (PSNS & IMF), established in Bremerton in 1891, has a long and rich history. During World War I, the shipyard built hundreds of ships, including two minesweepers, seven submarines, 25 submarine chasers and 1,700 small boats. In World War II, the shipyard repaired the five battleships that survived the attack on Pearl Harbor and serviced nearly one-third of the entire U.S. fleet.



#### *Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Bremerton, Washington.*

In 1901, the shipyard's leaders recognized the opportunity to develop workers from the local community, thereby ensuring the workers had the required experience and expertise. They chose six men to serve as apprentices and receive hands-on training and instruction.

Today, PSNS and IMF is the biggest naval shore facility in the Pacific Northwest, and one of the largest industrial installations in the state. It is the only shipyard capable of deactivating and recycling nuclear-powered ships.

Each year, about 200 students graduate from the PSNS and IMF apprenticeship program. Graduates receive two journey-level worker certificates – one from the U.S. Department of the Navy and one from the U.S. Department of Labor – as well as an associate degree in technical arts from OWDC partner Olympic College, which oversees the academic portion of the program. Having the opportunity to grow their careers at such a prestigious employer is a major draw for apprentices.

Over the years, WorkSource has expanded its partnership with PSNS. In addition to shepherding many WIOA customers through the apprenticeship program by providing much needed support and wrap-around services; our team assisted with several hiring events over the year for the shipyard and many of its contractors. This partnership continues to grow and bring great living wage opportunities to our community. At one such event, WorkSource Kitsap assisted our U.S. Navy partners with a hiring for multiple positions. There were 93 job seeker/applicants on site and 24 offers were made. Additionally, we hosted the U.S. Navy for an engineering hiring event that had 24 job seekers/applicants on site and 15 offers of employment were made.

### **Investing in our future – services to youth**

The OWDC via contractor Olympic Educational Service District 114 (OESD) has been operating youth program activities in the employment and training field for over 30 years. During that time, our Pathways to Success has refined its methods and approaches to youth development to the point at which the current model of career assessment, academic remediation and work experience is highly effective.

This year we were able to seriously bolster our youth services to the region by receiving the Economic Security For All (EcSA) Grant from the ESD. EcSA is an initiative using WIOA funding for building and testing locally developed approaches for streamlining access to existing services and benefits, helping more low-income families move out of poverty. The OWDC decided to use this grant to assist the youth of our region to self-sufficiency.

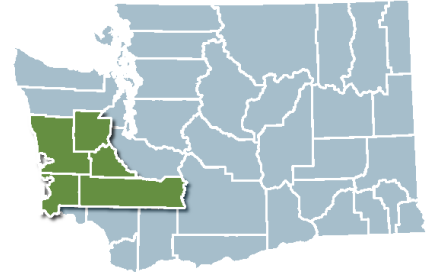
Pathways To Success and the EcSA projects serve youth and young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 residing in Clallam, Jefferson and Kitsap counties.

It is our mission to provide the youth of our communities with the opportunity to gain the necessary skills to build their futures through education, job training and career development.

It is also our goal to provide committed, responsible, and productive workers to the employers of our communities.

Evan came to WorkSource looking for assistance to get into employment using his welding training. He had completed high school with a welding certification

but was working for a grocery chain and needed help to make the change into his actual career field. Evan has worried that some employers might not accommodate his delay in processing. After enrollment in the EcSA program, his navigator was able to help Evan review and market his skills and abilities, updating his resume so they would be the first thing an employer would notice. They also worked on his financial goals. He lives at home but would like to live on his own in the future. After several mock interviewing sessions and job search, he was able to interview with a local furniture business and was hired! He is excited to be working for a company that will allow him to use his desire to weld and work with his hands. His starting wage was \$17.00 per hour, with an annual income of over \$35k. He looks forward to advancement in the future, and his employer is extremely happy with his diligence and work ethic.



## **Pacific Mountain (PacMtn) Workforce Development Council**

*Serving Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, Pacific and Thurston counties*

### **The One Workforce Initiative**

In June of 2021, WorkSource PacMtn returned to in-person services and began a journey to reshape the customer's experience. PacMtn's commitment to continuous improvement set the stage for a customer-informed overhaul of Integrated Service Delivery. Modeling the Advancing a One Workforce Vision and Strategy (TEN 13-20, January 4, 2021), PacMtn devised a strategy to reduce duplicative services and move to an investment model that positions Title 1B resources where clients are being served without the need of a referral. This co-enrollment strategy connects those most in need to the full resources of the WorkSource system.

The One Workforce initiative is a demand-driven system. To fully understand the impact of the pandemic, PacMtn updated its 2019 cluster study and used the resulting data to focus the Business Solutions team on career pathway development. Under guidance of the One-Stop Operator and the One-Stop Operations board subcommittee, system partners developed a service delivery model focused on connecting clients to demand occupations aligned to job orders. The move to a "pull" system positions job seekers on specific opportunities versus the old "push" model that is disconnected from local demand. One Workforce PacMtn launched in May 2021, with implementation of the model beginning in July of 2022.

### **Focus on job orders**

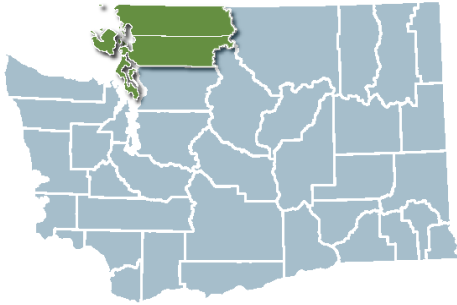
In the spring of 2021, PacMtn piloted a comprehensive cohort training model in partnership with local employers and ANEW, a local non-profit focused on connecting non-traditional job seekers to employment in construction. Continuing this work in PY21, PacMtn leveraged Employment Recovery NDWG funding to scaleup this programming effort to serve nearly 70 clients. WIOA primary performance indicators for these clients are trending higher than dislocated worker performance in all categories. This highly successful approach informed our career pathway model and solidified our focus on job orders.

### **Focus on food security**

Food security programming continued in PY 2021. This highly successful work experience program informed additional efforts related to American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding in the region. Under guidance of [Thurston Strong](#), a regional collaboration focused on pandemic-related recovery services, similar initiatives focused on work experience, were funded by Thurston County. The Job Champion Network program supports the recovery and expansion of services of local non-profits by placing WorkSource clients in paid work experiences that support the organization's service objective. Similarly, the Journey 2 Jobs program provides peer navigator training and work experience for unhoused residents in Olympia, WA. This programming effort connected new housing-focused partners with the WorkSource system and provides key linkages to system resources for unhoused clients. Launched in spring of 2021, these programs are already having significant impact in the community.

## **Workforce development for justice involved**

PacMtn has provided workforce development services for justice-involved individuals since 2009. This work continued in PY 2021 with significant changes related to COVID-19, new investments, and the launch of PacMtn's One Workforce strategy. The challenges individuals face pre- and post-release from incarceration is exacerbated by barriers to equitable access of employment services and resources. The impacts of justice involvement extend deep into families and into the lives of children. Addressing these gaps could lead to the reduction of recidivism and poverty. Expanding upon PacMtn's innovative certified peer counselor approach, which incorporates individuals with lived experience, PacMtn secured Pathways Home 3 funding to expand pre-release services and strengthen the connection to the WorkSource system post-release for those being served. This change fully integrates justice-impacted work into the One Workforce strategy and connects clients to the full resources of the system.



## Northwest Workforce Council

*Serving Island, San Juan, Skagit, and Whatcom counties*

Community response to the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the usual business practices of the state's economy. This also included WIOA I-B programs. Outreach and engagement with customers (both job seekers and businesses) was immediate and was particularly affected. Despite closures of state facilities and many businesses in response to COVID-19, a highly evolved partnership within the region remained intact. While this partnership continued in some form during the pandemic, and is now rebuilding, the pandemic scramble changed each partner's focus. Out of necessity, partners redirected resources to develop the capabilities and processes that would enable them to deliver their services virtually. As a result, job seeker referrals quickly diminished. Needing to expand customer traffic within the workforce system, which, in turn, increases the sources of referrals to WIOA programs, the Northwest Workforce Council (NWC) developed new virtual outreach channels and reinitiated established practices as safety restrictions began to be relaxed. Similarly, new practices for engaging with customers were introduced to accommodate ever-changing COVID-19 safety requirements.

Building on lessons learned at the onset of the pandemic as a result of the aluminum production facility sudden closure affecting more than 700 local workers, responsiveness to the customer in new ways was both a necessity and a priority. To that end, streamlined processes in outreach, recruitment, intake, and in the provision of individualized WIOA services were instituted. Customer convenience and simplicity are hallmarks of the redesigned customer contact process.

The COVID-19 pandemic permeated through program years. As COVID-19 restrictions began to ease, it became apparent that employers were looking for skilled workers in a labor shortage economy.

Businesses were reporting many of the job seekers were not sufficiently skilled for available job openings. As a result, emphasis has been placed on expanding and streamlining employer access to work-based training resources. New marketing strategies to connect with business were instituted with options for both upskill and back-fill training techniques. A streamlined remote access gateway has proven of benefit to employers throughout the region.

NWC continues to hone communication language and channels, targeted messages, and advertisements/announcements to customers. To that end, using a Google Ads grant, NWC has extensively publicized key services provided through WIOA. A reinvented mix of reaching customers appears to be positive and sustainable. Much work lies ahead in redefining the mix of partner interaction with one another in benefit of quality customer service in the concept of the one-stop environment. The following are several highlights of the work begun:

### I. Hearing directly from WIOA customers

In order to have informed discussions and discover whether current outreach and case management approaches are serving WIOA Title I-B customers well in the backdrop of the volatile economic conditions, including repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, NWC implemented an initiative to elicit direct feedback from participants enrolled in a WIOA I-B program. To accomplish this, an online survey was conducted among individuals who participated in Adult and Dislocated Worker WIOA I-B programs during the 2019, 2020, or 2021 program years (July 2019 through June 2022). This group includes some participants who engaged with WIOA pre-pandemic, some who engaged during the pandemic, and some who engaged after restrictions began to be lifted. As a point of reference, it was in early March 2020 when public and private closures were substantially put into place. An additional goal for this project was to explore the potential to re-engage with past customers and offer them the option to reconnect and re-engage with program services. (Of the 160 customers who responded, nine of those who had exited asked for a follow-up call.) Participants who responded to the survey were also given information to encourage referrals of friends and family.

In the survey instrument, the rating for questions used a Likert scale: 1 (not at all likely) to 5 (extremely likely). Six (of 12) questions were open ended. Responses were anonymous. Respondents had the option of requesting follow-up by giving their contact information. The following outlines key elements of the WIOA I-B participant survey effort:

- A strong response rate (11.7 percent) was achieved. This is important because it implies that participants have a motivating connection to the organization. It is also important because a larger number of responses enables analysis by subgroup, leading to a better understanding of the survey results.
- Respondents to the survey rated the WIOA support they received highly (mean score of 4.16 on a scale of 1 to 5), and are highly likely to recommend these services to others (mean score of 4.26 on a scale of 1 to 5) demonstrating that they feel WIOA I-B provides services of value.
- Overall, there was a high level of both satisfaction and agreement with statements describing elements of the customer's experience (e.g.: treated with respect; feeling connected and informed while participating: etc.).

Even with remarkably positive feedback, this customer satisfaction survey offers opportunities for improvement, as well as valuable insights into the customer experience.

## II. Supporting the community response to the pandemic

In direct response to the pandemic, a WIOA national disaster relief grant was immediately put into local communities to deliver humanitarian relief. Unique needs could be accommodated to meet the expanding demand for services by those most adversely affected by the pandemic. Within the region, each county's chief local elected official sent announcements to their community providers that these disaster relief funds were immediately available in the form of subsidizing wages for additional workers (who needed to meet certain qualifications) to directly support their pandemic mitigation efforts. Each county responded differently, with varying focus areas, including health departments, food banks and a community-based organization (CBO) providing housing and nutrition assistance. In the

midst of such a tumultuous environment, coupled with complex grant requirements, 37 disaster relief positions were created. NWC responded to all the necessary additional support required in order to secure the workers who assisted in the disaster relief in their respective communities.

Significant benefits to local communities was achieved through this combined effort: 91 percent of the funding went directly to subsidized wages and benefits to pandemic relief workers. Of those workers served, 60 percent had income below the poverty level prior to their service in the program; A substantially higher percentage than the overall population of the region were persons of color (30 percent), and over 80 percent entered full-time employment or post-secondary education. Feedback from entities who hosted these workers has been resoundingly positive, noting what a huge benefit to the communities was provided with the addition of each worker.

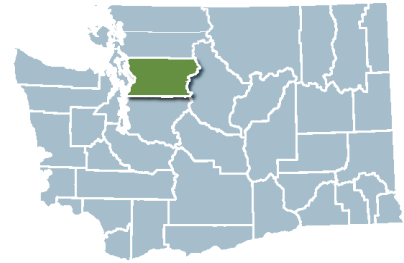
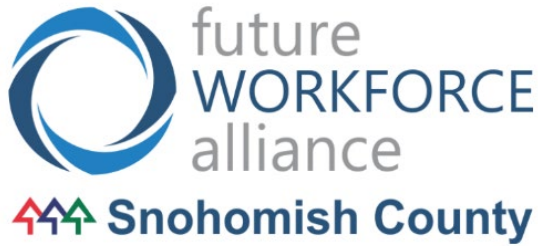
## III. Increasing access and inclusion

A standing committee of NWC, the Regional Access Advisory Committee (RAAC), keeps a vigilant eye on issues of access, both programmatic and physical. Working in collaboration with the Partner Management Team a new and improved "library of tools" and "tip sheets" were developed for each WIOA target populations utilizing information derived through both interviews with individuals with the named characteristic and with agencies who serve the population. The "tip sheets" on WIOA target populations helps workforce system partners have ready access to specific information about these populations as they serve them.

Simplifying the formatting was an additional feature of the initiative. This feature helps all partner staff when connecting through the partner intranet knowledge management system called DAWN (Dynamically Aligned Workforce Network).

The new and improved library of tools offers WorkSource partners real-time access to an expansive desk guide (accessible from wherever they work) which includes resource links, tips for working with WIOA target populations, and other relevant support material. DAWN now contains a new section dedicated to meeting the needs of each WIOA target population and promoting enhanced capacity in providing customer service.





*Serving Snohomish County*

## Future Workforce Alliance

In 2021, the economic and labor force conditions in Snohomish County began to recover as businesses and individuals navigated the post-COVID-19 environment. As employers across most major industry sectors in the county sought to rebuild their workforces, the complexities workers faced in the post-pandemic economy were highlighted.

The Snohomish County Future Workforce Alliance's focus on facilitating an equitable recovery and employer and worker resiliency catalyzed efforts in PY 2021 to transform the workforce system to respond and adapt to the new economy. These efforts took on a variety of forms, including:

- Pivoting WIOA Title I Business Services from reactive to proactive through the establishment of a Business Retention and Expansion team consisting of delegates from Workforce Snohomish, Snohomish County, and local economic development.
- Investing in and expanding employer-connected training programs that leverage transferable skills and support increased access to high-quality, family sustaining jobs and career paths.
- Incorporating community voice and persons with lived experience into policy, program development, and service delivery to align with community needs.
- Strengthening community-engaged practices for service delivery, with emphasis and investment in community-based organizations that serve as trusted partners in effectively deploying re-training and re-employment services.
- Increasing emphasis on collaboration with regional workforce development councils in Seattle-King County and Pierce County (Workforce Central), reflecting the needs of our customers.

## Business engagement

To more deeply understand business needs, Workforce Snohomish and Snohomish County established the Business Retention and Expansion team to strengthen the connection between economic and workforce development in the county. This team is the first step in the plan, created in partnership with Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council and Workforce Central (Pierce County), to establish regional sector tables for use across Puget Sound.

The Business Retention and Expansion team pairs delegates from Economic Alliance Snohomish County, Workforce Snohomish, and Snohomish County to survey businesses in targeted sectors. The team researches key industry employers, including conducting interviews of key stakeholders to understand its current and future workforce needs; this interview is intended to enable an immediate response for services to the business customer, as well as aggregate information across the targeted sector. This forecast approach will enable the Future Workforce Alliance and Workforce Snohomish to shift from reactive to proactive investments to support business demand for workers and skills.

## Employer and job seeker-responsive training

To help assist workers impacted by the pandemic, Workforce Snohomish with the support of the Future Workforce Alliance, sought out innovative training programs that would attract enrollments and result in high quality, family-sustaining careers. Cybersecurity and data analytics were selected, with the express intent to open these pathways to individuals from a wide variety of educational and career backgrounds.

**Cybersecurity.** In 2021, Workforce Snohomish partnered with FOUR18 Intelligence to pilot the Tradecraft program in Snohomish County. The sixteen-week program focused on cultivating real-world cyber threat detection and mitigation skills, and increasing the supply of Cybersecurity Analysts. Unique in its design, the Tradecraft program is a fully-online program that utilizes real-world threat data to feed a gamified platform integrated with industry-standard tools that provides an experience equivalent to performing cyber analysis professionally, but with a rich and constantly changing stream of real threats and direct coaching feedback from professional practitioners. Additionally, the program facilitates its participants in engaging directly with an employer on problems addressing the employer's needs. The emphasis is on providing hands-on experience with real-world threat data combined with employer engagement and teamwork across the student cohort. It entails cybersecurity foundational instruction throughout the duration of the program, supported by professional mentors (practicing Cybersecurity Analysts) from FOUR18 Intelligence and an intern's potential employer host. All participants received a full-time paid internship as they worked on the platform and consulted with their enrolled peers, employer, and mentor in investigating live threats and developing scripts to actively monitor them including, notably, attempted Russian cyberattacks against Ukraine during the first month of their invasion.

Participants received industry recognized professional credentials from organizations including MITRE Corporation and the Cyber Workforce Alliance as well as mock interviews, resume editing, job placement support, and support with follow-on federal subsidies to employers to aid in their job search. The program had a 100 percent retention and completion rate. Participants have begun to receive employment offers and stated jobs in cybersecurity. In addition, the success of this inaugural program has resulted in follow-on talent pipeline agreements with major federal cyber contractors and spurred the launch of a local cyber services company.

**Data Analytics.** Data analytics uses various techniques to organize and translate business data into information for concrete action plans that are of critical importance to business as they recover from the pandemic and strengthen their resiliency. Data Analysts provide context and interpret data that supports data-informed

decision making and drives strategic advantage. The persistent demand for data analytics talent takes form both in the occupation itself and as a skill for individuals to leverage their professional backgrounds and education to progress their career.



*The inaugural Data Analytics Graduating class.*

In response to this identified demand and the need to increase accessibility of the pathway to a wide range of individuals, Workforce Snohomish partnered with NW Innovation Resource Center (NWIRC), Dr. Nella Ludlow, and WSU- Everett to design and deliver an intensive 20-week hybrid bootcamp in Data Analytics. One hundred percent of the nine participants completed the program and received a certificate from WSU- Everett. NWIRC supported all participants with developing their resumes and engaged in mock interviews with employers. The effectiveness of the program and support provided by NWIRC is evident as participants have begun to receive job offers.

## Community engagement

In 2021, Workforce Snohomish commissioned a year-long community voice research study. In addition to soliciting input on the perception of WIOA Title I services and access to re-training and re-employment services in the county, the study was dedicated to ensuring that community voices informed the way programs are implemented. The feedback from individuals and community-based organization has, and will continue to have, long-lasting influence on service delivery, continuous improvement, and board policy in Snohomish County. In addition, the Future Workforce Alliance Board will charter a committee in PY 2022 to support the implementation of the Board's Strategic Action Plan and system transformation.

## Conclusion

As we navigate a post-pandemic economy, the Future Workforce Alliance and its partners seek to transform the system to afford employers access to skilled talent, strengthen employer and worker resiliency and foster equitable access to high-quality careers through employer and community-engaged partnerships.



## Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County

*Serving Seattle-King County*

### Economic and labor force conditions

The Program Year 2021 (PY 2021) economic and labor force conditions in Seattle-King County continued the story of pandemic response and recovery.

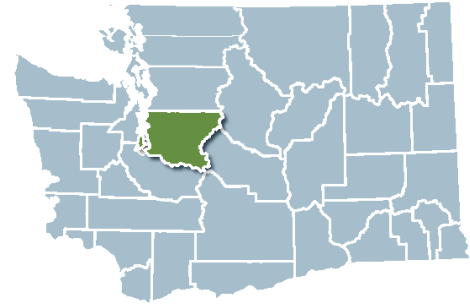
The WDC of Seattle-King County continued its work to transform workforce development in the Puget Sound with racial equity at the center, with a central backbone organization to catalyze a collaborative, regional partnership between stakeholders – business, labor, philanthropy, education, and community – which leverages and aligns resources to increase equity and maximize outcomes.

COVID-19 accelerated the urgency of this work and the need for an equitable economic recovery plan to address stark income inequality and racial disparities in job loss, and the disproportionate representation of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), and immigrant and refugee communities in low-wage jobs.

The guiding principles for this plan are:

- Center racial equity
- Elevate job quality
- Systems change
- Cross sector integration
- Strategic advocacy and innovation

The WDC has explicitly centered racial equity in our work and this commitment is shared across our five lead agencies and consortia partners. Through their community outreach efforts in PY 2021, our partners recruited target populations, immigrants and refugees, BIPOC, and other individuals disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. We utilized our [region's COVID-19 dashboard](#), the [Regional Strategic Plan](#), and solicited input from communities to inform our engagement outreach strategy.



Disaggregated data allows the state and our region to identify racial gaps in workforce outcomes, so we look forward to partnering with DOL, Washington state, and ESD on identifying a process to systematically confront racial inequities in workforce outcomes and jointly create programs and solutions to address them.

### Priority: Delivering quality services to refugees and immigrant populations

Since 1975, Washington state has welcomed nearly 150,000 refugees from 70 different countries. Annually, Washington state welcomes more than 30 different nationalities. From October 2021 through February 2022, Washington welcomed 3,205 Afghan arrivals. 2,583 of them resettled in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. King County's top spoken languages (other than English) are: Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Somali, Russian, Korean, Ukrainian, Tagalog, and Amharic Arabic.

The WDC has identified four near-term priority areas to support our immigrant and refugee strategy.

#### *System coordination*

We need to build stronger partnerships with workforce system partners. To that effort, a workgroup was formed with the Washington State Refugee Coordinator's Office. We also co-hosted an Immigrant and Refugee Summit and held Afghan Arrivals Coordination meetings.

#### *Language access and advocacy*

We need equitable language access services. To that effort, a workgroup was formed for emergency translation of UI insurance. We added translation and interpretation costs into our WorkSource operator contract. We also solicited a multi-lingual electronic intake form to bridge digital services and language access gaps.

### *Access to work-based learning (WBL)*

We need to invest in and scale up subsidized employment programs. More specifically, we need to connect high-skilled immigrants and foreign-educated professionals to launch long-term careers. We are facilitating WBL partnerships in opportunity sectors. Additionally, braiding funding between WIOA and non-WIOA helps to bridge gaps in service for this population, which often lacks necessary paperwork to be immediately eligible for state and federal programs.

### *Digital equity*

We need to incorporate digital equity goals into workforce development. To that end, we have placed digital navigators at WorkSource locations. We have also developed a digital equity asset map. Finally, we have created a digital needs assessment tool to support staff with providing resources to clients.

### **Featured client story – Afzal**

Afzal is a refugee from Afghanistan who arrived in King County in October 2021, after being evacuated from Kabul as the country fell to the Taliban and spent three months in a refugee camp near El Paso. With support from Jewish Family Services (JFS), Afzal was resettled to King County. But when he arrived, he was heavily depressed. He had worked as an English teacher in Afghanistan, had a passion for computers, and wanted to find a job that matched his skillset. He was a great candidate for training and job placement, but JFS didn't have training funds, so he was referred to Neighborhood House, which is a key service provider in King County's workforce development system.

Working with Neighborhood House and case manager Nadezhda, Afzal was enrolled in King County Veterans, Seniors, and Human Services Levy (VSHSL), which provided flexible funding to cover basic needs such as rent and transportation while Afzal completed paperwork to make him eligible for state and federal programs. Once he became eligible, Afzal was enrolled in Economic Security for All (EcSA) and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult programs, which allowed him to receive bundled job search and training support. He was enrolled in Skillspire Coding Academy with EcSA funds, where he was able to explore his interests in coding and "learn how things are made."

After working a survival job as a dishwasher, Afzal landed a job with the International Rescue Committee as an English language learner educator, channeling his teaching expertise to help recent arrivals to the U.S. (mostly youth) adjust to language and culture, and achieving his goal of finding work fit for his experience. Afzal's story demonstrates the potential of braided funding and the flexibility of program co-enrollment.

### **Priority: Invest in digital literacy and infrastructure**

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, all service providers shifted to delivering services remotely and implemented procedures for remote program enrollment. But with the accessibility of the vaccine and the reopening of in-person services at WorkSource locations, service providers shifted to offering job seekers both remote and in-person career navigation options. For participants that experienced technology access barriers, providers provided access to devices, technical support, and other related digital support to meaningfully engage in services virtually. The YWCA, for example, made its computer labs available and offered digital literacy training to participants to ensure they could make progress toward their career goals. From the YWCA's report: "Staff noted that technology supports increased program accessibility and specifically called out the benefits of Zoom, Teams, and donated/free laptops. The staff has also found Google Classroom, JobScan, Big Interview, Smartsheet, OneDrive, and Coursera to be useful tools and resources." And ACRS, through its AmeriCorps facilitator, worked hard to help participants experiencing technology access barriers in setting up professional email accounts while providing one-on-one training on how to use the Internet, Microsoft Teams, set up email accounts, and connect to hotspots using their laptops.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing digital access inequities that disproportionately impacted BIPOC communities, immigrants and refugees, and other low-income individuals. And the WDC has been working to systematically incorporate digital equity goals as part of economic recovery efforts in our region. We launched the [Digital Equity Asset Map](#) to allow frontline staff and community members to locate existing digital literacy resources in Seattle-King County. We co-designed with community partners and WIOA service providers, a digital needs assessment to

assess the digital needs of job seekers seeking to enroll in WIOA programs. We are also in the process of bringing two AmeriCorps members as digital navigators at two WorkSource locations. This work continues and we are committed to closing the digital divide in our region.

### **Economic Security for All (EcSA)**

The U.S. Department of Labor reports that low income is the top barrier to employment. EcSA is an initiative of the Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD) designed to develop replicable models to measurably reduce poverty. The program began in 2019 as four collective impact pilot projects seeded by Governor Inslee using federal WIOA funds. In January 2021, the program expanded to the full state, accompanied by additional investment of WIOA statewide funds. We launched our EcSA program in October 2021.

The EcSA model in Seattle-King County is guided by the Regional Strategic Plan. The Sea-King EcSA model focuses on job quality and equitable economic recovery.

BIPOC, immigrant and refugees and other populations disproportionately represented – opportunity youth and justice-involved individuals primarily living in the following six zip codes in Seattle and South King County: 98188, 98148, 98178, 98108, 98118. Other zip codes in Auburn, Kent, and Federal Way will also be prioritized.

Starting July 2022, EcSA is expanding to become State EcSA, and shifting to flexible state funds allowing for innovation and new ideas in program design.

### **COVID-19 disaster recovery**

At the heart of this grant was the creation of humanitarian relief employment, and through a thoughtful community engagement plan, we did just that. We are proud of the work, collaboration, and intentionality behind our community engagement efforts to meet the urgency of the COVID-19 pandemic. This grant allowed us to support our region's vaccination work through the creation of temporary disaster relief positions that provided ongoing outreach and resources to communities hardest hit by COVID-19, with a particular focus on BIPOC, immigrants and refugees, and low-income individuals experiencing barriers to access.

The WDC and our service providers worked closely with eight food banks, 22 CBOs, two state agencies, and King County to provide humanitarian relief employment to 67 job seekers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Forty-six percent of the positions centered around critical community outreach efforts to communities most impacted by the pandemic, including COVID-19 vaccine education, and 35 percent and 18 percent focused on roles that supported food security, and COVID-19 relief efforts, respectively.

In addition, 43 disaster relief employment participants exited the program with unsubsidized employment and 26 of the 67 humanitarian relief positions became permanent employment opportunities for participants. For example, a participant at King County Public Health secured a full-time position as a project program manager II on the Place-Based Strategy team. And the operations specialist at the IRC, the attendant counselor at DSHS, the vaccine ambassador at the Afghan Health Initiative, and the digital navigator and community outreach worker at Evergreen Goodwill all obtained permanent employment at their respective sites.

As of June 30, 2022, Seattle-King County WDC formed a wide range of Disaster Relief Employment partnerships. Our five service providers worked closely to support 33 organizations providing humanitarian relief services in the community and of the 67 humanitarian positions that were funded by this grant, 26 became permanent employment opportunities for the participants, while 17 other participants obtained unsubsidized employment.

In addition to disaster relief employment services, our team of service providers worked diligently to provide a wide array of services, including access to career services, training, and supportive services. At the end of this grant, 247 were enrolled, 145 participants exited with employment, and 103 accessed vocational skills training in information technology, commercial truck driving, accounting, certified nurse assistant, medical billing and coding, paralegal, computer software, and other training, and 127 participants accessed support services, including rental assistance, access to laptops, transportation, clothing, tools, car repairs, and other types of support services.

## COVID-19 Employment Recovery

At the heart of this grant was a person-centered approach to service delivery, and we are proud of the work of our service providers, their collaboration, and intentionality behind their community outreach to meet the urgency of the COVID-19 pandemic and support those hardest hit by the pandemic.

Seattle-King County WDC met and exceeded all program performance targets. Our team of service providers enrolled and supported 294 participants. They provided career services, support services, training, and access to WBL opportunities. We leveraged the community engagement plan developed under the Disaster Recovery Grant to develop new WEX and OJT partnerships. This strategy resulted in 19 participants building new skills. Some of the WBL partnerships developed include Fred Hutchinson Cancer Care Center, El Centro de la Raza, and the International Rescue Committee. All permanently hired their WEX participants. In addition, 121 accessed training in a variety of sectors with growth opportunities.

As a result of this work, we:

- Cultivated partnerships with employers who provided 19 WBL opportunities
- Utilized the SMART framework for community outreach
- Embedded the feedback of organizations and employers in program design
- Direct outreach to employers and workforce partners
- Direct involvement of the WDC in leading partnership development efforts
- Maintained close communication with employer partners, which included conversations and encouragement to hire WBL participants.

## Boeing – On-the-job (OJT) training

AJAC has served 10 individuals who began their apprenticeship training at an AJAC employer partner during the quarter, to whom we plan to issue a wage reimbursement upon completion of the apprentices' first 200 to 300 hours of training (depending on starting wage). Key challenges/barriers identified during the quarter include:

- Family care-giving responsibilities (including both children and aging parents)
- Unsure of career goals
- Limited English proficiency

Two apprentices served under the grant are Vietnamese-speaking individuals who have limited English proficiency. AJAC staff report that these individuals have needed help translating some information in enrollment forms and/or AJAC promotional materials, and that sometimes participants' spouses will help to translate on an as-needed basis. The employer is incorporating a technology platform where employees can request translation assistance on the job, and AJAC is beginning to explore short-term English as a Second Language (ESL) trainings that can be offered in conjunction with AJAC apprenticeship classes to help improve communication skills; we are actively working with ACRS (Asian Counseling Referral Services) to develop these supports that can be offered to workers and/or employers next year.

AJAC leverages the following resources to serve apprentices:

- Washington state Aerospace Apprenticeship Operational Funding (through the SBCTC)
- Washington state full-time equivalency (FTE) funds that are generated through apprentices' participation in AJAC classes (and awarded credits through partnering colleges)
- Washington College Grant for Apprenticeship (state financial aid through the Washington Student Achievement Council)
- Federal Department of Labor Apprenticeship: Closing the Skills Gap

AJAC is also working with local WIOA youth providers to leverage WIOA funds (in-school youth and out-of-school youth), as well as the DSHS, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to support an AJAC bridge program (Manufacturing Academy) that includes an educational stipend and a paid internship upon completion of the manufacturing academy. Individuals who complete the internship and are hired full-time at the company where they are employed, will also be served under the OJT 2.5 grant, where employer partners will receive the wage reimbursement once the individuals are hired full-time and work at least 200 hours.

As described above, financial resources from the OJT 2.5 grant are being used as an incentive to current and prospective AJAC employer partners to sign new apprentices and hire individuals out of AJAC pre-apprenticeship and youth apprenticeship programs. The OJT funds help to provide additional resources to employers as they onboard and train new workers, and to help ingratiate AJAC to employers as an entity that can mobilize public resources on their behalf and better connect these employers to the public workforce system.

OJT 2.5 resources will also help to fill some of the “gaps” in youth pre-apprenticeship programs that include educational stipends for teaching assistants (former MA students who are now helping to teach the class) and other students who cannot be co-enrolled with leveraged WIOA youth programs that typically provide the educational stipend.





## WorkForce Central

*Serving Pierce County*

WorkForce Central has always looked to improve service to the Pierce County community, but the COVID-19 pandemic added a new lens through which many new opportunities for refinement were identified. To better meet the needs of our community, we needed to hear the voice of customers, partners, and staff about how we were serving and doing work and what we were missing. We also had to recognize that we could not do it all – but that did not mean the work did not get done! We listened to our experienced partner providers and educators and the incredible customers who shared their voices so we could improve, expand, and create! You will see all the exciting work we have done this year based on the voices and feedback from our community.

### Diversity, equity, access, and inclusion

WorkForce Central is on a journey to bring more equity and diversity into the Pierce County workforce development system. We have approached this goal and stretched in a number of ways, from outreach to our underrepresented communities to updating policies and procedures and bringing in system partners to focus on serving our local communities of color. Most importantly, we are making sure customer voices and communities have an opportunity to be heard when it comes to programs and services.

Internally, our staff has taken steps to increase their knowledge and understanding of Diversity, Equity, Access, and Inclusion (DEAI) work. Below is a timeline that highlights some of our journey:

- **RFP technical review – July 2021**

The technical review process for request for proposals (RFP) was changed to be more equitable. Instead of eliminating proposals that

don't meet submission requirements, we now alert organizations to errors and give three working days to correct and re-submit proposals.

- **Vacation and PTO equity – August 2021**

WorkForce Central changed its policy to provide equal accrual of vacation and paid time off (PTO) hours to all employees, no matter their tenure with the organization. Changes went into effect January 2022.

- **Lunch and Learn – August 2021**

A series of ongoing bi-monthly lunch and learn opportunities began for staff and partners to engage in discussions around DEAI.

- **Seeing White podcast – August 2021**

Staff began participating in cohorts covering the Seeing White podcast with weekly discussions about racism and DEAI education.

- **Facilitation training – August 2021**

Staff members began training and coaching sessions to use results-based facilitation; a collective impact facilitation model, which supports groups to move from talk to action and reach collaborative results.

- **Translation on website – August 2021**

A translation feature was added to the WorkSource Pierce website allowing users to view the information in 17 different languages other than English. An existing translation feature on the WorkForce Central website was updated at the same time to include more languages and to be more visible.

- **Support for new contracts – August 2021**

Began providing additional technical assistance and support to new contractors who have less experience and infrastructure to effectively manage performance, reporting, and fiscal requirements that accompany federal funding.

- **PCCETF guest speakers – September 2021**

The structure of Pierce County Community Engagement Task Force meetings was expanded to feature a special guest speaker at each meeting who shares information on cultural diversity, local initiatives, events, organizations, educational material, and more.

- **Survey on public website – October 2021**

A feedback survey was added to the WorkSource Pierce website allowing users to indicate the ease of access to information on the site and give specific information about any difficulties they encountered. This feedback informs ongoing updates to the website structure and how information is shared.

- **Professionally facilitated Me and White Supremacy Book Club – November 2021**

WorkForce Central staff held a professionally facilitated book club focused on the book “Me & White Supremacy.” Additional book clubs are held based on staff interest.

- **Universal intake form – April 2022**

A universal intake form was created to decrease the number of times that Collaboration for a Cause participants must write down their personal information when navigating between partnering organizations. This assists the providers with speeding up the referral process through direct connections of the clients being served.

## **Bridging the gap between job seekers, workers, and employers**

### *Virtual job fairs*

2021 saw some shift in our virtual event delivery. We finished calendar year (CY) 2021 performing monthly job fairs that provided space for job seeker interaction with 142 employers. These employers engaged with over 886 registered job seekers. Employers were able to hold informational interviews, engage in dialogue with job seekers, and

review resumes via our virtual event platform. In CY 2022, we pivoted our virtual event schedule to a quarterly basis to focus more on one-on-one employer interactions and service strategies.

### *Connecting employers into the community*

Workforce Central’s Business Solutions team has worked diligently to move the ball forward on partnerships, projects, and customer service. Working with our Community Engagement team, we identified a strong need for employers at our mobile *One-Stop Collaboration for a Cause* events. This past year, Business Solutions recruited over 60 employers for the events who engaged with more than 710 job seekers in attendance.

### *Young adult internship program*

The Hire Pierce County (HPC) Next Gen program was a tremendous success. Through June 2022, more than 254 young adults were enrolled in the program, with 192 placements into internship opportunities. The HPC Next Gen program has paid more than \$491,910 in young adult wages and provided 32,794 internship hours to 61 local businesses to date.



*Graduates of the Wativersity Water System Operator Training cohort hold up their certificates.*

### *Industry training programs*

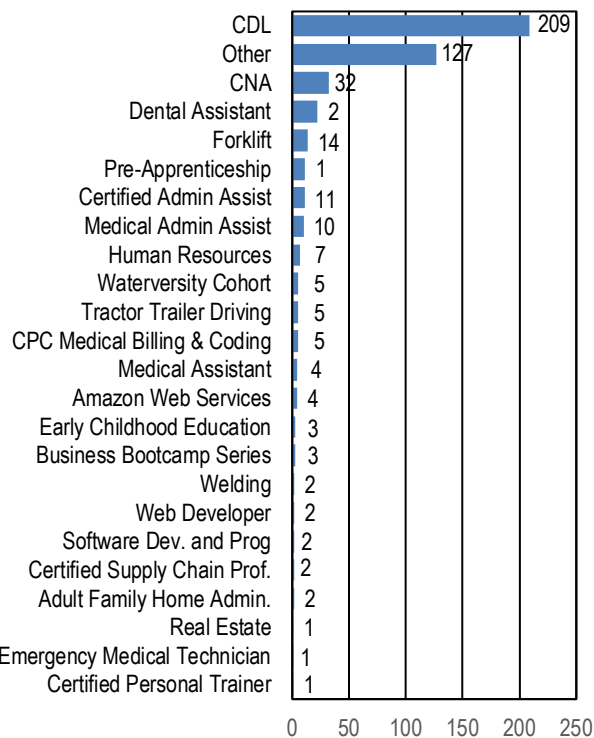
Employers across high-demand industries throughout Pierce County are seeking qualified job seekers to fill positions that provide living-wage employment. In August 2021, WorkForce Central responded to this need by building a strong pool of technical training providers through an RFP process to deliver employer-driven, rapid reskill and upskill cohort trainings to build the talent pipeline in these high-demand occupations.

In April 2022, the first Introduction to Health care Employment and Apprenticeship Training Program began, and in July, the first Wativersity Water System Operator Training began. By the end of 2022, Business Solutions plans to introduce two additional industry training programs with Aerospace Joint Apprenticeship Committee (AJAC) and training providers in the technology sector.

***Employer reskill/upskill fund***

As recovery has progressed, the gap between available workers and open job opportunities has created significant sustainability challenges for employers. This workforce shortage has impacted the supply chain and inflation. To assist employers in retaining workers, we developed an employer reskill/upskill fund (incumbent worker program) designed to increase business and employee competitiveness and avert layoffs. This will allow businesses to maintain their workforce, averting potential layoffs, by funding existing staff to obtain the skills and credentials needed to retain and grow in their employment.

**Training Services, Certificates and Credentials**



*Training Services, Certificates, and Credentials obtained by customers in Pierce County from all programs between July 2021 – June 2022.*

We have developed the program model for this reimbursable grant, and the first grant is underway. Our goal is to use this pilot time to improve and fine-tune the processes, messaging, and outreach of the program. We have accepted our first application closing in Q1 2022 to 2023, which proposes to fund training for CDL certification for a small minority-owned business. This will help the business to grow by cutting reliance on contractors. Two additional applications expected to close in Q1 2022 to 2023 will focus on de-escalation training and specialized machine drilling.

***Dislocated workers and disaster recovery***

The dislocated workers program supports workers who are unlikely to be re-employed in their previous occupations. These individuals need to find new careers, fit experience into new roles, and get the training and credentials required for a new profession. WorkForce Central, in partnership with Career TEAM, provides services to dislocated workers in Pierce County through traditional workforce development funding. The award of two federal National Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker grants provided an additional \$2,384,168 to expand employment and training efforts in Pierce County. From July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2022, the program served more than 522 dislocated workers with individualized support, helping them on their path to a new career.



*A WorkSource Pierce partner assists a customer at the One-Stop center in Tacoma.*

***Young adult services***

In 2021, WorkForce Central contracted three additional young adult service providers to join the WorkSource Pierce system. Each new service provider

offers a unique set of services including a focus on serving young adults in traditionally underserved communities. The four young adult service providers, Palmer Scholars, Northwest Education Access, Korean Women’s Association, and Career TEAM are working together in 2022 to provide wraparound services to young adults in Pierce County.

***Economic Security for All (EcSA)***

The EcSA grant was originally secured in 2019 with a goal to lift 250 families out of poverty in the 98404 zip code. Since then, the program has expanded to all of Pierce County, helping those experiencing poverty. By the end of the first program round in early spring 2022, nearly 300 people were connected to jobs, training, financial literacy coaching, education, and resources to build a better future. While enrolled in the EcSA program, customers are provided with career guidance, labor market information, career research assistance, short-term training, job search and job placement assistance, interview preparation, resume building, personal branding and networking assistance, resource and partner referrals, paid internships, and on-the-job training.

***COVID-19 hunger relief***

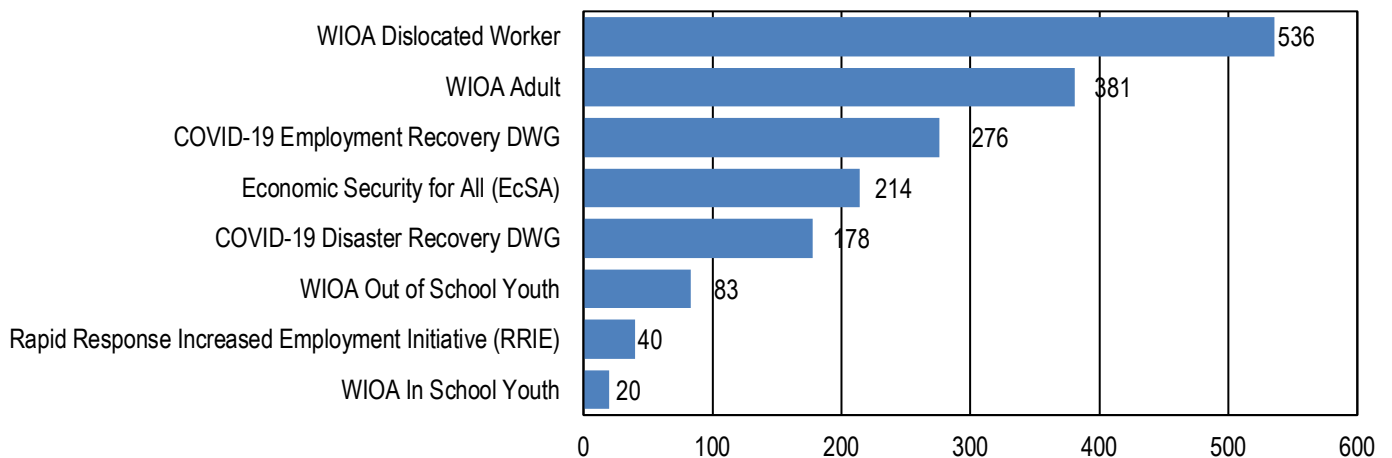
WorkForce Central, in partnership with Valeo Vocation, was awarded a community development block grant for COVID-19 hunger relief to aid local emergency food system partners with creating and filling positions directly related to feeding people in

Pierce County. This grant fully funds 23 full-time positions through January 2023. As of June 2022, the grant was funding 15 positions that pay more than minimum wage. As the community continues to feel the impacts of COVID-19 in the form of increased food costs, food scarcity/insecurity, and hunger, these placements serve to directly support the work of food distribution to people with low to moderate income.

**Community engagement**

The Pierce County Community Engagement Task Force is powered by WorkForce Central and is a collaboration of nearly 200 members from organizations throughout Pierce County who are actively engaged and committed to bring equal and inclusive access to services to the community. This year, the task force continued efforts to support community engagement, DEAI within organizations, and the distribution of resources to communities in need. The task force met virtually every other month to move forward with group initiatives, host educational speakers, and connect community organizations. Task force initiatives committees met monthly to work on projects such as *Collaboration for a Cause* and planning for the 2023 *Lens of Equity Summit*. Beginning in October 2021, the task force started a bimonthly email newsletter, *The LOOP*, which features updates on current and future initiatives, community events, and more.

**Community Members Served**



WorkForce Central served 1,153 community members in Pierce County between July 2021 and June 2022.

### *Leading a movement for DEAI*

The task force continued our DEAI efforts this year. In May 2022, the task force presented at the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP) conference, discussing how to build a diverse workforce through a lens of equity.

### *The Corner*

The task force hosted *The Corner*, a podcast/video series featuring interviews with local organizations, businesses, and individuals to highlight their work in the community. It provides an opportunity to learn about those doing the work in our community, the programs they represent, and what we can do to support their work.

### *Collaboration for a Cause*

Four *Collaboration for a Cause* events were held throughout the year in Tacoma, Puyallup, and Fife. These events provide much-needed resources and services to Pierce County's most hard-hit areas, helping move people out of poverty and into stability and self-sufficiency. Through *Collaboration for a Cause* events this past year, over 710 community members were served, with 472 referrals to community partners for education, training, housing, employment, and more.

- *Collaboration for a Cause 5.0*, held in August 2021 in Tacoma, provided resources, referrals, and wrap-around services for Pierce County families. One hundred and twenty-five (125) community members attended the event, with approximately 80 registrations and 40 people referred to services.
- *At Collaboration for a Cause: Winter Warm Up*, held in December 2021 in Tacoma, over 175 people attended to receive coats, hats, socks, gift cards, food, and a connection to organizations assisting with employment, education, vaccinations, child care, services for those with disabilities, and more.
- In April 2022, *Collaboration for a Cause: Puyallup Edition* served 91 households and over 200 attendees in Puyallup. Over 40 vendors and service providers came to the event, offering services in employment, education, health care, and more. The task force piloted the passport form, which enabled us to send direct referrals

through the 211 common referral system and individual referrals to employers and organizations. Roughly 30 people were connected to employment and career pathways.

- *Collaboration for a Cause: Fife Edition* served 210 people in June 2022 in Fife. The task force, in partnership with Project Homeless Connect, received 432 referrals for education, training, housing, employment, and more utilizing the passport form and enhanced connections through the 211 common referral system.

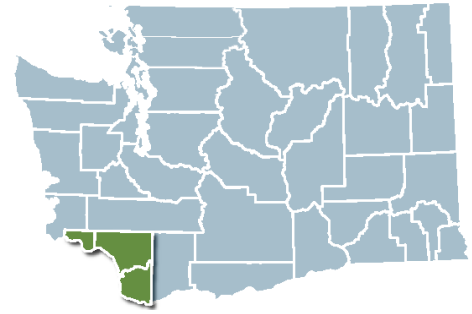


*125 - WorkForce Central staff and members of the Collaboration for a Cause planning team pose after a successful event.*

WorkForce Central is excited to continue growing in collaboration with all of our partners, customers, educators, and businesses! We cannot wait to see what is around the next corner and look forward to all the exciting work to be done in our community!



workforce  
SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON



## Workforce Southwest Washington

*Serving Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties*

As Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW) celebrates its 20th year of workforce development, we remain committed to our strategic plan and its three pillars of business growth and recovery, economic mobility, and systems change.

With unprecedented shifts in social and economic structures, WSW continues to provide leadership and investment to ensure Southwest Washington continues to be a competitive and vibrant community as we strive to create a region where economic prosperity and growth exists for every person.

### Business recovery

**Quality Jobs Initiative** – WSW and its Oregon workforce board partners have been tackling the issue of job quality since 2021 and recently released the region’s [Quality Jobs Framework](#), a blueprint of actionable, detailed strategies for companies to improve their jobs and work conditions and attract workers.

An equitable economic recovery must include strategies and actions that address long-standing inequities and economic disparities – a theme central to the framework – while also helping businesses navigate the post-pandemic economy. The framework will help increase the number of good jobs and improve the regional economy for everyone, especially those hit hardest by the pandemic.

- A sufficient income to afford a decent standard of living.
- Safe and inclusive working conditions that offer employees dignity and respect while encouraging their workplace engagement.
- Predictable hours to minimize hardship on employees and their families.
- Comprehensive benefits that increase economic security and improve health and overall well-being.

- Accessible and transparent hiring and onboarding to ensure employers and employees are set for success.
- Training and advancement opportunities to build skills and access new roles and responsibilities.

The Quality Jobs Framework provides a regional approach to (1) defining quality jobs, (2) provide guidance on standards companies can adopt, (3) identify resources to help businesses implement in accordance with their workplace needs, and (4) develop a roadmap of actions, steps and metrics.

In support of its Quality Jobs Initiative, WSW has made training funds available for companies that are making local jobs better for women and individuals from historically excluded communities and can demonstrate the actions they have taken in support of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Training must be of high value and warrant a pay increase for employee participants.

### Economic mobility

To support its economic mobility strategic plan goal to promote equity for every individual by providing access to high-quality employment and advancement opportunities, WSW is forming new partnerships to inform our investments and seeking to support programs that holistically serve families and communities.

**Opioid recovery** – WSW partners have made strides in the effort focused on individuals who have been dislocated from work due to opioid addiction. Our WorkSource partners continue to develop intentional connections with community partners such as LifeWorks, Clark County Public Health, and the Recovery Café to ensure that individuals who are in recovery know about workforce services and how to access them.

**Economic Security for All (EcSA)** – WSW’s EcSA grant, called “Thrive” locally, continues to provide training and support services like rent assistance, work clothing and child care, to Cowlitz County families experiencing poverty. To aid our most rural population, services are being expanded to Wahkiakum County.

**Aiding rural youth** – To ensure young adults in Cowlitz County have access to career and employment services, WSW is funding an employee from the [Next youth career and employment center](#) to provide services for young adults ages 16 to 24 at the Goodwill Work Opportunity Center in Longview and at the WorkSource center in Kelso.

**Navigating to work** – To support educational and human services partners in building on relationships with the area’s businesses and industries, and to connect students and job seekers to the workforce system and its resources, WSW pays a portion of the salaries for navigators at all three of our region’s higher education facilities – Clark College in Clark County, Lower Columbia College in Cowlitz County and Washington State University Vancouver. The navigators serve as a liaison between businesses and students, helping companies fill open jobs and develop internships and connecting students with local employment and work experience opportunities. Wahkiakum County department of health has an employee partially funded by WSW to help residents connect to employment.

**Youth investments** – To increase the number of young people in Southwest Washington with access to quality summer work experiences, WSW invests in two paid internship programs. The Future Leaders Project (FLP), a 200-hour paid summer internship for college students from historically underrepresented communities, placed 10 students this year. SummerWorks, a 100-hour internship for young adults ages 16-21, placed youth with approximately 40 businesses. Before the internship begins, youth complete a 40-hour job readiness course that touches on time management, communications and teamwork, among other topics. These work experiences assist in preparing the region’s young people for the future of work, guiding them on a path to greater economic mobility.

**Digital literacy** – As we learned during the COVID-19 shutdown, workers who could do their jobs from home fared better than those who could not work remotely. To that end, WSW formed a partnership with LinkedIn Learning to increase access to online training and assist 500 adults and graduating students to prepare for post-COVID-19 jobs, especially those requiring digital skills. Through LinkedIn Learning, individuals can participate in short-term training in pre-designed career pathways that lead to skills local businesses have told us they need. Businesses in Southwest Washington can take advantage of WSW’s partnership with LinkedIn Learning to train their existing employees.

### **Systems change**

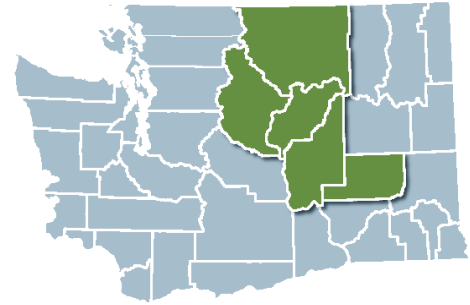
**WIOA populations** – WSW and its peers in the Washington Workforce Association (WWA) are striving to create a more equitable workforce system. At the recommendation of WWA, Governor Jay Inslee issued a directive including Black, Asian, Native Hawaiian, Compact of Free Association (COFA) nations, and Pacific Islander communities; Latinos; LGBTQ communities; expectant persons; and veterans as workforce focus populations for planning and performance accountability. This means the workforce system must develop strategies and processes to show how it is improving access to services specifically for individuals from these communities. WSW will continue to advocate for additional changes to create a more workforce equitable system.

**Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)** – WSW funded a series of DEI trainings for staff at WorkSource and the Next youth career and employment center, intended to spark open conversations about DEI and support staff in viewing the workforce system, its programs, services and impacts on customers through an equity lens.

**Data sharing agreements (DSAs)** – WSW worked with state agencies DSHS and ESD to receive the first official DSA for SNAP-enrolled individuals living in Southwest Washington. This DSA will enable WSW subcontracted partners to perform targeted outreach to individuals focused on connecting them to quality employment and offering a path to self-sufficiency.

**Workforce Impact Fund (WIF)** – As the state moves toward economic recovery, WSW and its peer LWDBs are working alongside state agencies, the governor’s office, state Workforce Development Board and others to secure stable, flexible and reliable state funding to enable local workforce boards to implement solutions to increase economic opportunity and an equitable economic recovery through a [WIF](#). The fund would significantly expand employer engagement and investments in highly skilled, job-ready individuals, intensify focus on and outreach to priority at-risk and underserved populations, and grow work experience and earn-and-learn opportunities.





## North Central Workforce Development Board-SkillSource

*Serving Adams, Chelan, Douglas, Grant and Okanogan counties*

### Business engagement and workplace training

Businesses both large and small across North Central Washington were affected by the coronavirus pandemic, with many closing their doors, laying off staff, or reducing hours. As conditions improved, SkillSource led business engagement strategies in the five counties to assist employers in re-engaging with the workforce. Multiple online career events using the Brazen virtual job fair platform, as well as in-person events, impacted over 375 local businesses and organizations with over 650 career seekers making direct contact.

In addition, since the beginning of the pandemic, SkillSource has facilitated 33 separate incumbent worker training events serving over 270 employees and 23 separate employers across North Central Washington. These vital services assisted businesses in upskilling their existing workforces to higher wage, higher-skilled positions, improving marketability and profit at greatly reduced cost.

As new employees began work, SkillSource trainers assisted them and their new supervisors with on-the-job training. Individuals (105) received on-the-job training during the pandemic, with 84 percent of those employees successfully completing their training and retaining employment.

### Workforce collaboration

Collaboration among workforce partners during the pandemic was more critical than ever. Ongoing efforts to streamline access to critical services continued in new ways. SkillSource led the collaboration effort and regularly convened partners throughout the workforce area to improve collaboration and customer access to employment, education and training, career counseling

and other important services. When the pandemic impacted all partner services, leaning on the collaboration initiatives was essential in continuing to serve our communities.



*Lupe Sanchez, Regional Manager, OIC of WA, welcomes partner agency staff to a workforce collaboration convening and inter-agency van tour.*

Survey results show customer awareness and understanding of workforce resources increases dramatically when customers encounter a staff person who asks the correct questions and speaks knowingly about partner resources. As a result, focus was on enhancing the “no-wrong-door” concept with three main goals: 1) Staff training tool which provided a concise, consistent and conveyable description of partner programs and services; 2) Workforce collaboration summits in each sub-area to educate each other about partner services; 3) Van tours which allow staff from various agencies to visit partner locations. During the pandemic, the tours were provided virtually and became a vital part of communicating the ever-changing services available in our communities.

In Chelan and Douglas counties, where One-Stop services are provided through a network of affiliates, these efforts were paramount to staying connected and

effective. An in-person event convened 30 partner representatives in May 2022 to discuss new strategies to emerge strong from the pandemic; two in-person van tours have highlighted health care and employment/education partners; and an in-person summit is scheduled for May 2023 to include up to 200 partner staff.

### Overcoming impacts on credential attainment

In March 2020, all secondary and post-secondary educational programs in Washington state were put on hold or drastically curtailed due to the pandemic. This impact was felt by youth and adult program customers as well as the community at large. Individuals trying to earn a high school equivalency (HSE) were left behind when GED testing was unavailable and the options for alternative testing sites were limited and hours away. Accessing testing presented both financial and transportation barriers to those who needed to obtain their HSE.



*At 17, Skyler Miller came to SkillSource to finish his high school education. He achieved that and so much more: work readiness, paid work experiences, and eventually a full-time job as a locksmith technician at Keyhole Security.*

After realizing the lack of access to HSE testing, SkillSource sought approval as an official Pearson Vue Testing Center. SkillSource completed the rigorous standards and were approved as the Region’s testing center and began testing services in March 2021. The positive impact was felt throughout our rural communities. One business in an outlying city offered their employees time off to test with a wage increase upon the staff earning their HSE. The SkillSource Open Doors program graduated 20 students within three months, and other individuals drove up to three hours to take a test because of lack of accessibility in other workforce areas. Since offering official GED testing services, more than 80 customers have obtained their HSEs, and many others have started the process toward this goal.

### Staying connected

During the pandemic, SkillSource found innovative ways to serve youth and meet their needs despite the challenges of navigating COVID-19 restrictions. SkillSource funded and provided equal access to high-speed internet, computers, and other tools for digital learning for the Open Doors Reengagement students. The agency loaned 94 Chromebooks and 13 hotspots to students for online studies to maintain critical connection for continued learning. Youth needs were met via Zoom calls, texting, email, Facebook, and even socially-distanced home visits. Staff established “parking lot” study sessions, online leadership classes, and virtual project-based learning activities in which WIOA enrolled youth helped community partners deliver virtual services. Youth also participated in Virtual events such as job fairs, a hospitality summit, and a college and career expo which provided additional career exposure. The pandemic presented a multitude of challenges, and SkillSource answered the need through creative solutions.

### Creating opportunity for rural communities

Small, rural communities are often underserved by social resources, education providers and training agencies. The city of Mattawa, located along the Columbia River in Grant County, is a fast-growing small town with high percentages of low-income families and farmworkers. Those hoping to increase their education, learn English language skills, or enter occupational training, frequently need to travel 60+ miles to access services. Seeing a need and a desire from the community for training, SkillSource brought

commercial driver license classes to the community in partnership with Big Bend Community College (BBCC) and many other community partners through the governor's discretionary grant, Economic Security for All (EcSA).

Local community leadership including the Port of Mattawa, the Mayor's Office, and the Wahluke School District, welcomed classes and the chance to help train the community. Using semi-trucks from BBCC's Moses Lake campus and classroom space donated by the Port of Mattawa, six students entered training within minutes of home. Each trainee was provided with a uniform and safety equipment. In addition, each received financial counseling to plan meeting future goals including the purchase of a first home, assisting a sibling to attend college or paying off debt. Within six weeks, all students successfully completed training and earned their Commercial Driver's License. Six months later, all are working full time in the local transportation industry, and some are making over \$80,000 a year driving cross-country, long-haul routes.

The long-term impact of bringing classes to the community has been substantial. Through initial inquiries with the community, a need for English as a Second Language (ESL/ELL) classes was discovered. Partnership with BBCC ensured that ESL classes were reestablished in the community starting in 2021. In addition, BBCC hopes to offer more classes in the fall of 2022 including office classes, welding and accounting.



*Mattawa students and BBCC CDL instructor getting prepared for a day of skill building in rural Grant County Washington.*



## South Central Workforce Development Council

*Serving Kittitas, Klickitat, Skamania and Yakima counties*

### Unprecedented labor market

The South Central Workforce Council (SCWDC) has a long-standing history of providing valuable and essential employment and training resources in Kittitas, Klickitat, Skamania, and Yakima counties. But the COVID-19 pandemic hit our region hard. We went from responding to record high unemployment in 2020 to addressing record low unemployment just over a year later.

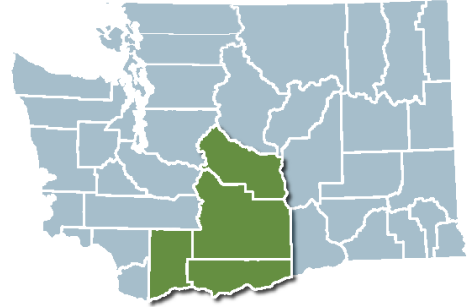
Likewise, over \$1.5 million of state and federal funds were shifted to other areas of the state. This, coupled with the closure of WorkSource centers until July 2021, and continued federal pandemic unemployment assistance until September 2021, made our work even more challenging. Still, we pivoted and innovated to aid our workers, industries, and communities.

In July 2021, reopening began slowly. Soon businesses began clamoring for employees, especially hourly, entry-level, and mid-level positions in manufacturing, hospitality, food service, and health care. In response, we had several in-person job fairs taking extra care to make sure the events were always safe requiring masks and social distancing. The events were well attended and had representation from businesses across a wide range of industry sectors.

### Making the impossible possible

Thanks to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), people of all ages and backgrounds can easily access connections to employment, education, training, and support services. WIOA can make the impossible possible.

- John was unemployed, low income, and justice-involved, and a skills assessment indicated that his literacy skills were below the eighth-grade level. He told his career development counselor that he



wanted to "make a good living and do it honestly." Together the two determined that the best career path would be to obtain a Commercial Driver's License (CDL).

- John enrolled in CDL training and finished the course in about a month. He was able to get a job immediately after graduation and started saving for his own truck. After buying his own rig, he filed paperwork to open his own business and is now hauling goods in his truck, bringing home up to \$7,000 per week in his dream career.
- A low-income single parent, Rosalinda, worked as a teacher's assistant but continued to struggle financially. She found her hours, wages, and opportunities for advancement were limited because she lacked a technical credential in education. Thanks to the WIOA Adult program, Rosalinda enrolled in the Early Childhood Education program at Yakima Valley College (YVC). She excelled in school and obtained her AAS in Early Childhood Education.
- After applying for several jobs without success, Rosalinda became discouraged. Her career development counselor helped her revise her resume and practice interviewing. She was hired by Inspire Learning Center, has since moved into a lead teaching role, and loves her work. She is financially self-sufficient, no longer on food benefits, and is finally able to provide for her children.
- Alicia worked in a vision center while attending community college. COVID-19 restrictions led to reduced hours and an eventual layoff. As a single mother, the layoff hit especially hard. Initially, the only thing that kept her family afloat was extra pandemic unemployment assistance (PUA) benefits.

Thanks to the Employment Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant (ERDWG) program, she was able to buy her textbooks and her career development counselor helped her refresh her resume so she could look for survival employment.

This support covered the gaps in financial aid so Alicia could continue her studies at YVC. She has since completed all the required classes for admittance into the Medical Assisting program and found part-time employment as a Medical Assistant Registered which will provide her with valuable hands-on experience. "I really don't know what I would have done...", said Alicia. "I felt like all my plans were going to be cut short due to something I couldn't control. I am very thankful for the help I have gotten from my counselor and her ongoing support."

### **Economic Security for All (EcSA)**

Statistics indicate that almost two million children, adults, and families in Washington state struggle to make ends meet. Poverty is real; often moving from one generation to the next. The EcSA grant doesn't just address the symptoms of poverty (like homelessness), rather it strives to connect people with local wraparound services to help individuals develop new coping mechanisms and get the support necessary to achieve self-sufficiency.

- Kinshasa had a history of homelessness and drug and alcohol abuse. As a single mother, she tried attending community college to change her life, but old habits got in the way. She failed all her classes and eventually dropped out in 2015. Thanks to the help from a local treatment program, Kinshasa is now in recovery and working with a career development counselor to become a Substance Abuse Social Worker. Thanks to WIOA and EcSA, she received financial assistance and is doing well. She also completed a Life Skills class to develop coping skills and financial literacy. She and her son have moved into permanent housing. And although graduation is still a way off, she and her son have a stable life.

### **SCWDC wins State Stewardship Award**

On September 1, the SCWDC was presented with a Stewardship Award by Washington state Auditor, Pat McCarthy. No more than a dozen of such awards are presented annually.

McCarthy recognized SCWDC for its "dedication to good government" praising the council's management of public funds. "It is apparent that the council management and staff want to be good stewards of public funds and accountable to the citizens of Washington." McCarthy recognized work toward "the shared goal of government that works better, costs less, and earns greater public trust."

### **Wage and benefits survey**

Rises in the state minimum wage, COVID-19, and irregular unemployment levels disrupted the Yakima Valley labor market. To secure accurate labor market data, the SCWDC partnered with the Yakima County Development Association and the Yakima Chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management to engage the Social & Economic Sciences Research Center at Washington State University to conduct a wage and benefits survey. Fifty-three businesses participated in the 2022 Yakima County Wage and Benefits Survey: *Distribution, Food Processing, Manufacturing, Packing, Warehousing*. The survey includes information on demographics, health care benefits, paid time off, hiring practices, and hourly wages and salaries for over 105 occupations, and all information in the report is summarized so that no individual business can be identified.

### **Integrated service delivery**

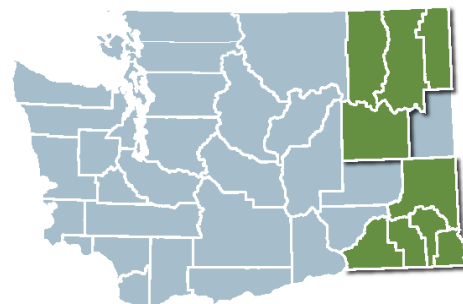
The SCWDC implemented an Integrated Services Delivery (ISD) model that provides career services to meet the needs of the individual customer by combining staff from various community and WIOA partners in functional teams inside WorkSource Yakima and Sunnyside.

To further advance our ISD model, the SCWDC utilized ERDWG funds for a "greeter" for both Yakima and Sunnyside WorkSource One-Stop centers, along with an Integrated Services Program (ISD) coordinator. The greeter is responsible to interview and triage customers to ensure a connection with appropriate programs with a focus to increase services to the BIPOC population. The ISD coordinator organizes the functional teams and ensures customers are greeted in a timely manner and with a welcoming smile.

To assist in the implementation of SCWDC's ISD model, teambuilding and morale-boosting activities have been administered by the ISD coordinator. This includes a friendly game of Pictionary or WIOA Jeopardy, competition on who gets the most surveys, and a chance for coworkers to acknowledge others via a Positive Vibes board. There has been a significant increase in partnership and staff enjoying their work and each other. The vibe within our centers has increased the welcoming of and friendliness to our customers.

The One-Stop operator and ISD coordinator constructed and implemented a WorkSource Resource Guide of all required WIOA partners, with the intent to expand to include other local community services in the future. The Resource Guide is for Resource Room staff to become familiar with program eligibility and to provide a warm hand-off to WorkSource partner services. This has led to an increase in WIOA program enrollments.

# Eastern Washington Partnership



## Eastern Washington Partnership

*Serving Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Garfield, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Stevens, Walla Walla and Whitman counties*

### Eastern Washington Partnership highlights Program Year 2021

The Eastern Washington Partnership (EWP) workforce development area (WDA) is comprised of nine counties in Washington, including Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Garfield, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Stevens, Walla Walla and Whitman. These counties are located on the extreme eastern border of the state, reaching from Canada to Oregon along the Idaho border. The area is over 14,000 square miles in size, approximately 21 percent of the state, yet only 3 percent of the state's population resides there. The economy is improving although some counties were hit by major closures.

The EWP's diversity, in terms of its geography, resources and demographics, make it unique among other workforce areas in the country. Within the area, there are sub-regions with distinctly individual identities, different natural resources and singular economies. Each sub-region has some of its own key industries with discrete workforce training needs. Labor markets vary within the area and are determined by resources unique to each region. Natural resources such as timber production and mining historically have been drivers of the economy in the northern counties. Wheat, grain and specialty agricultural crops, along with wind generation farms, highly contribute to the economic base in the south. Intellectual capital has contributed to the prosperity of the central region.

While recognizing internal differences, the nine counties and sub-regions also share many industry and labor features. Common across nine counties and emerging as an economic driver are industries that manufacture an array of goods, including food processing equipment, aluminum boats and high-tech electronic instruments. The process of turning

agricultural crops into foodstuffs is also considered part of the manufacturing sector. All counties export goods or services to a greater or lesser degree and are reliant on a strong warehousing and transportation sector. With multiple hospitals, numerous clinics, nursing home facilities and the need for home health care, a wide spectrum of workers are needed in the Health care sector. Over the last year, all of these industries have been rebounding from the effects of COVID-19.

Here are some highlights of efforts to meet the workforce needs of the region during the last year.

### COVID-19 system response

WIOA system partners from the Employment Security Department (ESD), Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Blue Mountain Action Council, Rural Resources Community Action, Community Colleges of Spokane and Walla Walla Community College, continued to offer a hybrid of in-person and virtual service delivery. Service delivery was ever changing as offices navigated the various mandates and requirements to be fully operational while ensuring that communication pathways continued to benefit customer coordination.

Over the course of the year, system partners made significant advances in providing services in a virtual setting. Various methods were implemented to provide the WorkSource menu of services to customers through virtual workshops; the understanding and capabilities gained enhanced our efforts to better serve our communities in outlying areas. In addition to adapting to a virtual service model, we have also taken this time to reevaluate how we communicate with each other and customers, how we track data at the local level, how we take that data and connect it, and then provide a more targeted approach to our work. Challenges still exist with customer capacity, ability and resources to fully benefit

from services virtually. Digital literacy resources have been identified and are available to support customers. In-person service delivery continues to expand offering assistance using personal protective equipment and social distancing. Communication and collaboration among partners increased as we became aware of each other's challenges and opportunities to serve customers.

ESD staff are actively outreaching to unemployment claimants, starting with those that have exhausted or have been filing for unemployment the longest. Distribution of newsletters through email provides information and links to job opportunities and information from WorkSource system and other community partners.

Resources from National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG) for Disaster Recovery and Employment Recovery ended with services through WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker program continuing to support customers. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Hunger Relief support continues to fund three positions (Food Bank Assistant Operators) with the Blue Mountain Action Council at a food distribution warehouse that provides support to food banks in a five-county region.

### **Responding to business needs**

As employers began to right size from the initial impacts of the pandemic, and in some cases expanded to meet a resurgence in the economy, the demand for business services shifted from UI-related questions back to recruitment and placement of job seekers into open positions. Virtual job fairs and hiring events were offered and delivered locally as well as in collaboration with statewide and regional partners.

Beginning in the fall, demand for in-person job fairs and hiring events returned. Previously, demand for large hiring events was minimal and often focused on one employer. That changed significantly. In October, WorkSource Walla Walla co-hosted a 30-employer, open air job fair in downtown Walla Walla. It was repeated in May with 40 employers and over 200 job seekers. The events were co-hosted with the Walla Walla Chamber of Commerce and the Walla Walla Downtown Foundation. WorkSource Walla Walla and the Walla Walla Community College co-hosted a career and internship networking event with over 30 employers participating. The Colville WorkSource partnered with the Community Colleges of Spokane to

host a 20-employer job fair and participated with NEW Health, WSU Extension and Tri-County Health District in a job fair designed to highlight the opportunities in health care with the three organizations. The greatest success came from events hosted at the Colville WorkSource specific to a single employer. Northeast Washington (NEW) Health and Providence Health each had separate hiring events in the facility. Each event was small with about 10 to 15 participants. Participants were recruited with specific openings in mind, and each time over 50 percent of the participants left with job offers in hand. Providence was so please they held a second event only three months after the first one.

Business Services teams continue to collaborate to provide resources to our business customers. A third team has been formed to serve the Clarkston-Pullman area and has been meeting twice a month to identify resources and develop opportunities to host hiring events. All three teams have members representing WIOA Titles I, II, III and IV providers, community colleges, economic development, libraries and other community-based organizations. One clear result of the Business Services teams is that demand for on-the-job training has increased and WIOA Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker staff have been successful in providing employment-ready candidates

### **Serving specialized populations**

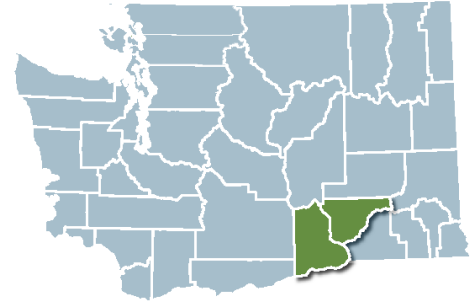
EWP has always had a model based on a network of partners and locations throughout the area for service delivery instead of relying on a center-based service delivery model. The model has proven to be successful in serving rural populations.

EWP values our veteran customers and is fortunate to have Disabled Veteran's Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVER) with a passion to serve. Additionally, the Colville WorkSource is home base to a Tribal Veterans Specialist, one of two statewide, funded by Employment Security. The Tribal Veterans Specialist serves veterans from the Colville, Kalispel and Spokane Tribes in the area as well as veterans from the Yakima Tribe in the South Central WDA. The collaboration and outreach to veterans has opened opportunities to offer WorkSource services to tribal members.



Challenges of delivering services in a virtual setting to limited English proficient (LEP) populations were many. It became evident that providing services with bilingual staff as well as in person, when possible, were critical to meeting the needs of the LEP customer. Coordination and collaboration with partner staff from EWP, as well as from Benton-Franklin WDC, helped to provide necessary services to LEP customers seeking assistance with UI and job placement.

Services to youth has rebounded from the impacts of the pandemic. With the Curlew Job Corps welcoming students back to the center and Open Doors programs returning to capacity, opportunities to assist youth with education goals has increased. The greatest surprise was finding employers willing to take youth with limited or no work experience and train them in their vacant positions.



## Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council

*Serving Benton and Franklin counties*

### Mission

The Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council promotes a prosperous community by providing a progressive workforce system.

### Vision

The Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council contributes to our prosperous community by elevating human potential.

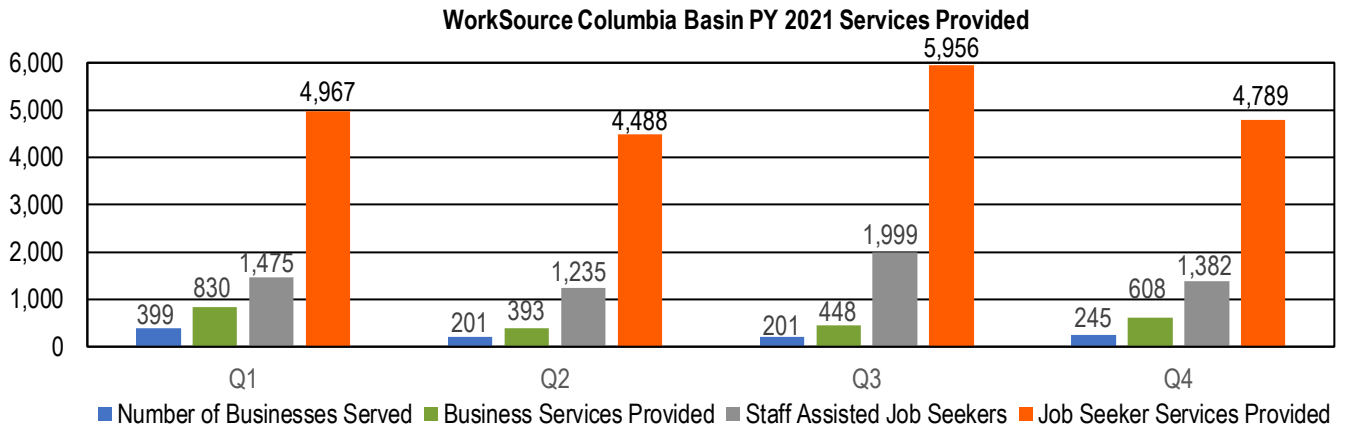
### Customer connectivity and outreach

The Benton-Franklin workforce system continues to look for ways to engage with the community and expand our outreach. In PY 2021, a content calendar was developed for WorkSource Columbia Basin to drive customer engagement. This content calendar included themes throughout the week including “Motivation Monday,” “Hot Jobs Tuesday,” “WorkSource Wednesday,” and “Thirsty (for knowledge) Thursday.”

Since the beginning of 2022, Facebook reach has increased by 9.8 percent, page visits by 42.5 percent, and new likes by 38.7 percent.

Engagement was also increased on LinkedIn, with more posts and engagement conducted on the platform than any prior year. In partnership with ESD, Benton-Franklin also hosted a pilot program for LinkedIn Learning in PY 2020 and continued to participate in the program when it became available statewide at the beginning of PY 2021. Over the course of the year, 196 participants were invited to LinkedIn Learning, 122 activated their licenses, 889 courses were viewed, and 204 were completed. Licenses were often used for incumbent workers and professional development opportunities. From PY 2020 to PY 2021, staff-provided business services increased by 29 percent, staff assisted job seekers by 26 percent, and services to job seekers increased an incredible 99 percent. Regular use of Survey Monkey and QTRAC inform the system via customer surveys favorite services, best practices, and areas of improvement.

The chart displays quarterly numbers of businesses and job seekers served, as well as number of services provided.



## Expanding employer engagement

The Business Services team worked with Hanford employers to develop a virtual career fair called “One Hanford,” in March to promote Hanford contractor job opportunities and summer internships in a single event. Seven Hanford contractors participated. This hiring event was highly attended this year, with 1,510 individuals registering, 74 percent attending (1,119 customers), 17 employer-scheduled interviews, and over 1,000 total chats. Collaboration between Hanford employers, WorkSource offices across Washington and Oregon, Columbia Basin College (CBC), Washington State University Tri-Cities (WSUTC), Veterans programs, and Goodwill made this event successful.



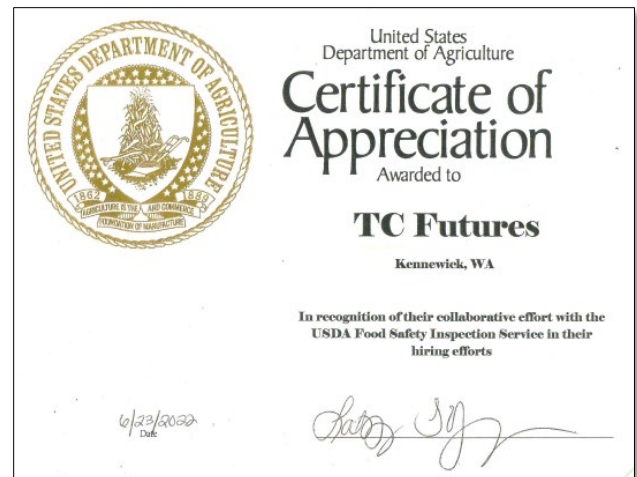
Flyer for One Hanford Virtual Career Fair, branded with CBC, WorkSource, WSU, Goodwill and participating businesses.

## Youth re-engagement center

TC Futures, the youth re-engagement center for Benton-Franklin counties, continues to expand and grow in staff and services, offering GED testing, work experience, apprenticeships, and training opportunities. In the third quarter of PY 2021, TC Futures expanded their footprint to the adjacent suite in their existing building, and set up a second testing room approved by Pearson Vue. This doubled their testing capacity, and as a result, have increased how many students can attain their GEDs each month. From PY 2020 to PY 2021, out-of-school youth enrollments have increased by 15 percent and the employed and secondary exits have increased by 50 percent.

## TC Futures hiring events

TC Futures hosted, in partnership with the WorkSource Columbia Basin Business Services team, a hiring event for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Safety Inspection Service. USDA staff traveled from Colorado to recruit for their open Food Inspector positions. TC Futures held a three-day hiring event. USDA was highly satisfied with its experience at TC Futures and awarded the center a certificate of appreciation.



Certificate of Appreciation awarded to TC Futures signed by USDA on June 23, 2022.

## Blending of resources via WIOA co-enrollment

The pilot round of Economic Security for All (EcSA) closed out in March 2022, and a second round, or Federal EcSA, started in April 2022. While the EcSA pilot had a focus in rural Franklin County, Federal EcSA allows for eligible participants from both Benton and Franklin counties to participate in the program. EcSA continues to serve rural communities, single Latina mothers, Latinx communities, and families living in poverty to increase the availability of employment, retraining, and essential supportive services to unstable households. The program was designed to establish four pillars of support in transportation, health care, child care, and employment and training.

## Success story – Oliver Brown

Oliver Brown is a 36-year-old resident of Franklin County and a single father of two who was struggling to get back on his feet after relocating from Oregon. Despite being a business owner in the past and attempting college, Oliver ended up working in the restaurant industry as a server and eventually parted ways due to negative workplace experiences. Oliver knew that he could be doing more in life and was looking to start an actual career – all he needed were the resources to help him do just that.



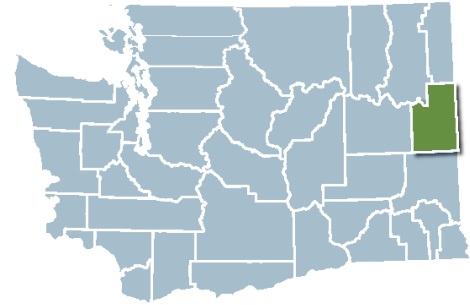
*Oliver Brown in front of an Arctic Glacier Semi Truck*

Oliver was connected to the EcSA program in March 2022, and he enrolled by the end of the month. He had a clean driving record at the time and was a perfect candidate to participate in a training session. Given the rising costs of CDL training in recent years, along with fluctuations of program funding, co-enrollment into the WIOA Adult program was necessary to ensure the client had as much support as possible available to him. Oliver was placed into CDL training in May 2022, thanks to contributions from EcSA and the WIOA Adult program, and he acquired a CDL Class A in its entirety. While training, the EcSA program assisted Oliver with supportive services for clothing, boots and general workwear for when he would start working.

Oliver found employment rather quickly upon training completion, landing a job at a local ice packing factory and shipping ice to stores throughout the Tri-Cities. The job was physically demanding, and Oliver noticed he was doing more manual labor than driving. The hours were also intense which left him with little time to see his children, so he started looking for other driving opportunities with the support from his EcSA Case Manager. Oliver soon found a job in Tacoma with PM Farms driving back and forth from Portland, OR that worked with his schedule and offered higher pay for less hours. He makes \$250 per trip, which nets him \$500 a day, and with 12-hour workdays, results in an hourly salary of \$41.66. Oliver has options available to him when it comes to insurance packages, and he gets the weekends off to be with his children.



# SPOKANE WORKFORCE COUNCIL



## Spokane Workforce Council

*Serving Spokane County*

### Introduction

To ensure we meet the ever-changing needs of our community, during the 2021 to 2022 program year, the Spokane Workforce Council (SWC) continued to prioritize equity and diversity, staff safety and wellness, assisting employers with their growing need for talent, promoting workforce services, and assisting with the transition to hybrid services. As our community moves toward recovery in the “*post*”-pandemic world, the WorkSource Spokane One-Stop Campus, (consisting of [WorkSource Spokane](#), [Talent Solutions by WorkSource Spokane](#), [Next Generation Zone](#), and the [Resource Center of Spokane County \[RCSC\]](#)) has been focused on providing solutions for those most impacted by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Program Year 2021 performance and achievements of the workforce system in Spokane County included:

- WorkSource Spokane served 3,300+ job seekers with WIOA-funded services, and the RCSC served 1,742 customers
  - Funding, which included Economic Security for All (EcSA) and the Disaster Workforce Grant in addition to WIOA Title I, was \$575,297 invested in training for 255 individuals
- The Next Generation Zone served 326 young adults with WIOA-funded services
  - Individuals who earned their GEDs – 133
  - Individuals who completed a work training program and earned an industry-recognized credential – 19
  - Individuals who achieved positive outcomes through employment or post-secondary education – 84

- Consultants at Talent Solutions by WorkSource Spokane served 1,052 unique businesses
  - Businesses provided with WIOA-funded services – 2,695
  - Hiring events, which included three large-scale community job fairs – 19

In a February 2022 issue of the Spokesman Review, the Inland Northwest’s largest newspaper published SWC [CEO Mark Mattke’s op-ed](#) and captured the attention of elected officials, highlighting the need for additional resources through the creation of a new *Workforce Impact Fund* that local workforce development boards (LWDBs) can deploy to expand services and better meet our communities’ needs across the state and accelerate the economic recovery. All 12 LWDBs are actively strategizing on ways to connect with more businesses and identify and develop responsive solutions to their workforce needs; reach underserved communities to improve access to training, in-demand credentials, family-sustaining jobs, and increase the talent pool for all businesses in Washington state.

The SWC also partnered with other media news outlets to support the local workforce system. The SWC is collaborating with Fox28 Spokane to deliver *Workforce Wednesday* segments during the *Good Day* morning show, has contributed labor market and unemployment data to various published articles, and created a [library of success stories](#) filmed from the perspective of our customers.

The SWC is excited to share additional projects and initiatives organized into three main categories; workforce professionals directly supporting community members, partnerships that benefit business customers, and care for our community and workforce system partners.

## Workforce professionals directly supporting community members

### *Post-secondary scholarships provided to aspiring underserved young adults*

The SWC was awarded \$125,400 from the Innovia Foundation through its *Cultivating Potential Sustaining Fund* to provide scholarships to underserved young adults who will pursue post-secondary educational opportunities. In addition to the support of the scholarship, these young adults were co-enrolled into WIOA Title I to help develop academic and career objectives, provide access to educational opportunities, and guide students to successfully achieve their goals and positively impact their communities. View the [“Year One” report for this initiative.](#)

### *Wrap-around supportive services provided by HHAA 2.0 Grant*

The RCSC received a second round of *Homeless Housing and Assistance Act (HHAA)* funding from Spokane County in the amount of \$311,000 to provide rental assistance to customers accessing career services and support. As of August 31, 2022, RCSC housing specialists had provided \$215,084 in rental assistance to 118 families while RCSC career navigators connected customers to employment with family-supporting wages. “I was amazed what they have there (at the RCSC). It has almost everything you think of. It’s great. A game changer,” said Mandie Burke, former RCSC customer. [View her success story.](#)

### *The return of in-person signature events and activities*

The KHQ/WorkSource Job Fair, our region’s largest hiring event, was offered virtually rather than in person during the COVID-19 pandemic. But in May of 2022, when safe to do so and at the request of businesses and job seekers, the job fair returned as an in-person event combined with a second day as a hybrid virtual offering. The in-person event created opportunity for 650+ job seekers to connect with 107 hiring businesses, with the virtual event allowing for additional connections between more community members and area businesses. Other in-person activities returning to in-person status included workshops focused on enhancing customer employability, [Embark: A Celebration of the Journey](#) which highlights GED and work training graduates from the Next Generation Zone, and monthly hiring events at the WorkSource Spokane One-Stop Campus.



*The Spokane Convention Center was the site of the in-person May 11, 2022 KHQ/WorkSource Job Fair.*

## Partnerships that benefit business customers

### *A targeted hiring event for a targeted industry*

The WorkSource Spokane One-Stop Campus partnered with Eastern WA Providence Health Care to host an exclusive hiring event in December 2021. Candidates met with hiring managers to discuss the opportunity of employment at Providence hospitals for diverse roles such as patient transporters and registered nurses. “We were able to offer 14 people positions on the spot... we had about 50+ people come through the event. We could not even imagine in one three-hour event to offer 14 (jobs) on the spot,” said Asia Stephens, Providence Health Care HR business manager. [View their success story.](#)

### *Connecting job seekers to pathways in the construction industry*

The Inland Northwest Associated General Contractors has partnered with SWC and KREM 2 News, Spokane’s CBS-affiliate, to launch *Trade Up 2 Construction*. This initiative highlights local construction careers and the hard-working people in our region who perform them. It creates a distinct pathway to construction career opportunities through a comprehensive website, construction job board, and career navigation resources. Local workers will be recruited into high-paying construction career opportunities. This initiative coincides with a new report released by AGC of America that shows the severity of construction workforce shortages in Washington state and across the country.

## *Workforce roadmaps with the JPMorgan Chase Foundation*

The SWC can provide real time analyses of local economic conditions to help industries understand the factors affecting their businesses to help them remain competitive. Additionally, the SWC was funded by JPMorgan Chase Foundation to develop Workforce Roadmaps for the health care, manufacturing, and information technology industries, which were released in March 2022. These roadmaps provide area businesses with workforce data and trends and five-year growth projections to help each targeted industry thrive. [View our Workforce Roadmaps.](#)

**DON'T JUST GUESS**  
USE OUR RELIABLE DATA TO INFORM YOUR NEXT BUSINESS DECISION!

**CUSTOMIZED REPORTS**  
Data and information that guide your future business development opportunities.

**COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS**  
Market comparisons that ensure your wages position you to attract the right talent.

**SPOKANE WORKFORCE COUNCIL**  
spokaneworkforce.org

Download our Workforce Roadmaps or request a tailored labor report!

The Spokane Workforce Council is a proud partner of the American Job Center Network and an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

*An ad appeared in the 2022 Spokane Journal of Business' Market Factbook annual magazine, and various other publications and digital streams promoting our ability to provide labor market intelligence to local businesses.*

## *Career Explore NW website with KSPS PBS*

[Career Explore NW](#) provides local career-focused information and educational resources through a series of videos which help job seekers find the right career path. As a primary project partner with KSPS PBS, the SWC provides labor market information for each industry and career spotlight video on the website. The project received recognition by winning the National Education Television Association (NETA) National Public Media award for educational resources for communities. The project was judged against many other projects from PBS stations across the country. Career coaches across the One-Stop campus utilize this resource through one-on-one services and embedded workshop presentations.

## **Care for our community and workforce system partners**

### *Workshops at the RCSC for vulnerable community members*

The RCSC is the Spokane region's only social services One-Stop center and partners with 19 community and social services partners to deliver diverse services and resources to the Spokane community in one convenient location. The collaborative effort in a shared space is unique and allows customers' needs to be met from end to end.

- Roadmap to Success, in partnership with Pioneer Human Services, is a course for justice-involved community members which guides them to develop the necessary skills to find and keep employment while maintaining healthy, productive lives. The three-week job readiness course includes essential skills development, employment portfolio development, explaining your background, and employment readiness and skills assessment.
- Revive Center for Returning Citizen's five-Series Seminar, in partnership with Revive Center for Returning Citizens, are monthly cohort courses designed for individuals who have been impacted by the criminal legal system. Class topics include addressing trauma, systemic oppression, historical contexts, and current impacts of structural racism. Customers will grow, decrease barriers to mental health stability and emotional well-being, and increase inclusion with a thriving community.
- Financial Literacy Workshop Series, in partnership with federal credit unions and established financial institutions, are no-cost courses offered at the RCSC's Financial Stability Center to the community. These courses can help customers meet the requirement of completing financial literacy education, regardless of the community program.

### *Mental health professional on-site at the Next Generation Zone*

In partnership with Northeast Washington Education Services District 101 (NEWESD101), a part-time behavioral health Student Assistance Professional (SAP) was placed at the Next Generation Zone beginning in December 2021. This staff member is at the center two days a week and brings mental health services onsite for young adults. The SAP hosts individual counseling, group socioemotional learning

sessions, teaches a course in the Next Generation Zone’s 21st Century Skills Academy about conflict resolution and self-advocacy in the workplace, works with academic instructors and our career specialists to implement socioemotional learning in our classrooms, and hosted a mental health walk in the spring of 2022. The SWC is grateful for NEWESD101 for advocating and funding this position, which brought much needed expertise on mental health and referrals to the center, and are looking for ways to expand funding to allow the SAP to be onsite full time.

***Support for the professionals that serve the community***

Care and support for the staff across our WorkSource Spokane One-Stop Campus has been a high priority throughout the last year. The SWC has provided the following educational sessions to promote individual well-being and support of others:

- *Leadership Training*, including developing a “why” statement, situational leadership, team development strategies, and leading by influence and *GROW Model* coaching.
- *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Training*, including specific sessions on implicit bias, microaggressions, and cultural competency.
- *WorkSource System Conference 2022*, an all-day conference for all Spokane workforce system professionals to network and attend breakout sessions relevant to their roles and the support provided to customers.
- *Self-Care Courses*, including trauma-informed practices.

The goal of these educational sessions is to fill gaps in professional development that occurred during COVID-19 and equip leaders and staff with tools and perspectives to perform in this challenging environment. Self-care, restoration, and reconnection were themes throughout all sessions.



*WorkSource Spokane One-Stop Campus Leadership Training, cohort #1, led by SWC COO Dawn Karber (front row, right end) and SWC VP of System Advancement (Front row, left end).*



## Appendix 4: Title III – Wagner Peyser Act Program (Employment Services)

### Agency garners big successes with new dedicated virtual team

In March 2020, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ESD Employment Connections (EC) team members responsible for providing employment services shifted to 100 percent telework. This prompted EC leaders to quickly adopt a virtual service delivery model. When EC team members returned to physical WorkSource Centers in June 2021, EC Director Jairus Rice stated his commitment to “find the best balance of in-person and virtual service delivery to meet both our staff and our customers’ needs.”

In October 2021, Director Rice appointed a Virtual Service Delivery Manager, Anne Goranson, to further develop this new service delivery arm. She began working closely with EC’s regional directors to design a hybrid service delivery model that continued to build on the gains that had already been made. Existing teams providing Live Chat, Virtual Trade Act, and re-employment services for injured workers under a Labor and Industries contract combined to provide services as a newly established EC Virtual Services Team (VST). Statewide workshops, Virtual Job Fairs and statewide Veterans Employer Services were added to their menu of services. The virtual services team’s focus is to partner with EC’s local teams to enhance service delivery efficiency and effectiveness to the benefit of the customer. The VST supports EC programs by connecting with local offices to supplement work across the whole state, particularly when local offices are experiencing temporary or long-term staffing or service needs. As an additional entry point to services for customers throughout the state, they routinely refer customers who will benefit from local connections.

In addition to providing support for local offices who have experienced high vacancy rates, the VST is committed to finding innovative ways to improve the customer experience. This team brings positive energy to that work and is dedicated to designing delivery strategies with the customer in mind. Customer and team needs differ across the state. As this team evolves, customer feedback will inform how to best meet those needs and use virtual options to engage even more effectively with customers.

### Key deliverables/expectations

- Ensure a design that is customer focused
- Expand virtual capacity to deliver EC services to WorkSource customers
- Create an additional avenue for customers to connect with the WorkSource system
- Support and promote collaboration of services statewide
- Help customers save money on gas and child care
- Identify ways to streamline and identify best practices, and make them accessible to WorkSource leaders
- Maximize effectiveness with customers who are the best fit for virtual services
- Help customers identify their next steps
- Connect customers to local WorkSource services to help customers overcome employment challenges and access services they need

### Key data/performance

During PY 2021 (July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022), the VST:

- Provided 301 statewide virtual Job Hunter workshops to 17,710 customers with support from office facilitators
- Served 251 employers through statewide Veterans Employer Representative
- Assisted 17,453 customers through Live Chat, receiving an average satisfaction rating of 4.82 out of 5.0
- Provided re-employment services to 174 injured workers with Labor and Industries claims
- Supported 343 workers through the virtual Trade Act counselors
- Supported 50 local and statewide virtual job fairs serving through the statewide Virtual Job Fair Coordinator, serving 1,221 employers and 7,193 job seekers

## Successes

The VST concept has been a tremendous success and is very well received by our WorkSource customers. The customer feedback speaks for itself:

“Awesome, knowledgeable, and efficient.”

“Helped me figure out what I needed to do and helped me with all my questions! It was better than I expected.”

“The presentation was very smooth, well written, and easy to understand. Great job.”

“Super helpful and found a solution for me in under 90 seconds!”

“Absolutely wonderful! She gave me a ton to work with and made me feel very confident in where to start my job search!”

“The best part of the online workshop was getting tips on how to showcase my resume, cover letter, using keywords from job postings and resourceful websites that can assist with improving your resume.”

“Outstanding! Provided me with the information I needed to solve my problem.”

“Genuinely showed great care and was happy to help me. I would give her more than 5 stars!”

“Swift, personalized, and real. I got the answer I needed.”

“Love the Zoom meetings and would be nice to have after the COVID-19 to save on gas and time in the future. You have more of a choice with the day, the time and what subject.”

The VST has been a helpful and inventive complement to local WorkSource centers. The EC Division continues to demonstrate cutting edge service delivery by finding innovative ways to serve our customers and enhance the customer experience.

## Wagner-Peyser success stories from around the state

### Team effort pays off

Glenn came to WorkSource after separating from his employer. He was enrolled in WIOA as a dislocated worker and had his RESEA appointment two weeks later. As a creative, experienced project manager with proven problem-solving, leadership, communication and decision-making skills, he shared his passion for leading diverse cross-functional teams, helping organizations accomplish key goals on time and on budget. He looked at openings, considered labor market information and updated his resume. He attended Strategies for Success (SFS) and Financial Capabilities classes with **Marie** and was remembered for contributing to the class.

Remarkably, his ETO records show that he received support from no fewer than 14 people around the state, from his separation in September to his return to work in December. Great teamwork.

Glenn shared this about his time in SFS, “Today I accepted a job that comes with a healthy increase over what I was making! Thanks to both of you amazing women, for the inspiration and dedication you give so many of us when we are out of work. I don’t know if anyone takes the time to tell you this, so I will: You both make a difference, and you are appreciated more than you can know.”

### Partners in job search

Kirk began engaging with WorkSource in early August, and he started with a Strategies for Success (SFS) workshop right away. He participated in other workshops as well, and upon being enrolled in WorkFirst, he received a referral to WIOA services. He continued with SFS and strengthening his resume with his WorkFirst counselor, **Shannon**, who writes, “This gentleman had come to us not knowing what he wanted to do or what his next steps were. However, once we started talking about options, he was curious about the process of both completing assessments for insights and about informational interviewing. We wrapped other WorkSource services around his needs. He did become

determined to get an employment success portfolio together, including a professional resume, and then understood the need to tailor it to specific job opportunities and personalized cover letters. He put his efforts into mock interviewing, right down to heart felt thank you notes. All of this hard work led, of course, to him landing the job that he wanted – not just a job, but a better job – in just over three weeks. This was, in fact, the only company that he applied with.” This is an example of the collaboration and effort of **Shannon** and **Kirk**.

## Turning to hope

### *Transferable skills lead to a job*

Losing a job can be traumatic and finding the right role and returning to work is exciting. The time spent between those two points is stressful and hurdles can pop up. In the Colville WorkSource affiliate site, we believe every step taken towards removing one’s barriers to employment are steps to success.

Jennifer came into the office one morning clearly upset, distraught from her long drive, overcome with anxiety and feeling downright defeated. She had nowhere to go, no one to call, no money in her pocket, and on the brink of having no hope. She was warmly welcomed when she opened our door, and we recognized that she needed to conquer her crisis and move forward with confidence. She was faced with physical limitations and restrictions, unable to qualify for unemployment or paid family leave and with a limited work history, she felt lost.

WorkSource was here to offer her a new and different perspective. Over the course of just a few short weeks with regular visits to the resource room and assistance from multiple employment specialists, Jennifer was able to reconstruct her resume to reflect those transferrable skills she was unaware she possessed. She learned about her abilities and gained the self-assurance to job search in a different way, exploring careers she never dreamed she would be capable of achieving. She blossomed in character, spirit, and poise and is now successfully employed as a Deputy Clerk in the Stevens County Courthouse, earning \$18 per hour. We are so proud of Jennifer’s perseverance and determination.

### *Applying what you learn*

This SFS participant had been out of work for about 3 years due to a workplace injury. That, on top of being isolated during the pandemic, had really taken a toll on her. She completed all six SFS modules, the WOWI Assessment, and attended the virtual workshop Basic Online Applications.

A staff member spoke with this customer via video call, reviewed her resume and suggested edits in addition to creating a second and/or third resume, depending on positions she wished to apply for. The customer listened to advice on targeting her resume and layout suggestions. The customer continued to refine her resume and receive support from WorkSource as needed. The customer applied to several jobs both locally and remotely.

She recently wrote this to WorkSource Skagit: “I wanted to let you know that after interviewing with the recruiter at the Everett Clinic last week, she referred me to the recruiter with the Polyclinic because I live in Seattle, and she only had openings available in Everett, Kirkland and Bellevue and recognized those would be difficult commutes. I interviewed with the recruiter from the Polyclinic this morning, and she then referred me on to the hiring manager, who called me this afternoon to discuss the opening she had. During our conversation, she offered me the job!!!! She is trying for a Feb 14th start date and sent this information on to the recruiter to let her know. I was offered a PSR float position in primary care with the Ballard location – literally 2 blocks from my house – and the Broadway clinic downtown. This comes with a \$2,500 sign on bonus, bus pass, is full time, Mon-Fri with the possibility of becoming a hybrid/remote position in the near future. I am SO EXCITED!!!!!!”

## Landing a great job

### *Shattering preconceived notions*

Foster had his initial RESEA appointment on May 3, 2022, and his follow up on May 26. Foster’s goal is working for the state as a Customer Service Representative. Foster shared that he appreciated the state’s commitment to be a safe and inclusive workplace. He was encouraged to attend the Work for Washington Workshop at WorkSource Thurston County.

Foster had this to say: “Hi **Duana**, I am so happy to say that I accepted a job offer as a Public Benefits Specialist with Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) today! I wanted to reach out to you right away because you made my experience with WorkSource so, so positive. As a kid, I saw adults go through unemployment, and it always felt like a really frightening experience, but you gave me such great resources and were a very positive force during my job search. I’ll be recommending visiting the resource room to anyone looking for job resources.”

### *Successful handoff from RESEA to VETS*

**Paul**, a Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist, met a customer through a referral from **Amy**, who was doing a Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment for this customer in early April 2022. The customer had been laid off from his former employer and was completing the review process for continued unemployment benefits when **Amy** learned he recently retired from the Army National Guard and had some great education for the technology sector.

**Paul** shared about the services available through the Jobs for Veterans State Grant and the customer decided that case management would be a good way to build on his skills and network with the community.

The customer was determined to get a challenging, good-paying job, so he continued to return to the WorkSource center and to get resume and cover letter advice from almost all staff at the center.

Paul’s role was to remain engaged in the process with the customer, so he could put his best foot forward with top companies. He applied for around 25 jobs, getting multiple interviews, and he finally interviewed with the state’s Washington Technology Solutions (WATech) agency for a Lead Virtualization Infrastructure Administrator position, paying \$108,000 per year with excellent benefits. They interviewed him on Tuesday and made the job offer on Friday. He was headed to Olympia for orientation and to pick up equipment for his new remote position within a few days.

WorkSource staff proved invaluable structure to his future career path. The ability to create partnerships between agencies is critical for our customers.

## **Serving Employers**

### *Opportunities created*

**Cindy**, a business services staff person at WorkSource (WS) Yakima County, shared about working with a company that was hiring for 12 positions. Jeff called her needing to fill 10 sorter positions and two laborer positions. Cindy worked closely with Jeff to provide business services in the form of a job posting and recruiting advice. After obtaining as much detail as possible for the “Hot Job” posting, **Cindy** sent it out to the WS Yakima and Sunnyside staff and partners. Once the job was posted, there were constant referrals to this post from WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Case Managers, WorkFirst coaches, Labor Exchange and from the greeter. It was truly a team effort.

With the help of all of us here at WorkSource, Jeff called back two weeks later to let them know they had an abundance of applicants and were ready to make job offers for all 12 positions. They let us know the hiring managers were very “pleased.” They even attended the Yakima Job Fair and plan to attend the Stand Down veteran job fair. **Cindy** will continue to work with this employer in the future to continue connecting job seekers to new job opportunities.

## Appendix 5: Veterans

### Veterans and Military Families Program

Excess PY 2020 Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) funding supported nine additional field staff to temporarily support offices as they reopened. This included adding two additional Consolidated Veterans Service Representatives (CVSRs) to support Tribal Veterans experiencing significant barriers to employment in Central and Western Washington, building onto the existing Tribal CVSR in Eastern Washington, ensuring these underserved Veteran populations have access to all that WorkSource has to offer, whether that is seeking training and employment or finding talent to fill critical position needs for our Washington employers.

Rebounding from COVID-19 restrictions, the WorkSource centers supporting the state's five major military bases: Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM), Fairchild Airforce Base, and Naval bases Everett, Whidbey Island, and Kitsap, have all resumed varying levels of on-site support for transitioning service members (TSMs). Both JBLM and Fairchild AFB have permanently assigned positions (0.5 Disabled Veteran Outreach Program [DVOP] and 3.5 Labor Exchange [LEX] at JBLM; 0.5 DVOP and 0.5 LEX at Fairchild), while each of the offices supporting the three Navy bases provide regular presentations at the Transition Assistance Programs and/or Capstone and other activities. All locations support military family members with a system of warm handoffs that connects service members and their families with the American Job Center (AJC) closest to their future home location, whether in or out of state.

The WorkSource centers serving these bases continue to innovate service delivery for their customers, including providing intensive one-on-one services to determine next steps after military separation and connecting with partner agencies and both community-based, and nationwide resources. This includes the development of supplemental workshops customized to address separation challenges for TSM's, military spouses, and dependents (including transferring specialty certifications and licenses to Washington state).

JVSG staff continue to develop and partner on creating both in-person and virtual hiring events, including the YesVets partnership working with the Seattle Seahawks and [Taskforce12](#) for both an annual in-person hiring event at Lumen Field and a statewide virtual event, hosting 100 statewide YesVets registered employers. Staff also coordinate with Department of Defense (DoD) recruiting staff to provide federal USAJobs workshops, partnering with on-base hiring events; catering to the need for Veterans to apply their military experience and bring their talents to the federal workforce.

Recent [changes within DoD](#) now allow honorably discharged service-connected disabled Veterans access to military bases. This opened the gates for referrals of additional eligible customers, who live in closer proximity to our Washington bases, enabling access to DVOP and LEX staff which includes extending services to those Veterans struggling with homelessness and in need of both employment and housing solutions.

The JBLM "inside-the-gate" WorkSource center continues to be a national standard of interest for other states seeking to implement a similar model, as evidenced by a recent visit by the USDOL Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh and Assistant Secretary James Rodriguez. JBLM additionally provides weekly outstation support to wounded military members assigned to the Soldier Recovery Unit, connecting them with employment readiness skills needed to successfully transition from the military to living wage civilian careers.



*2022 Seahawks Military Community Fair, hosted in partnership with YesVets and Taskforce12. 100 YesVets registered employers attended this event to offer Veterans, transitioning service members, Reserve, Guard, and their family members a career opportunity pathway. Learn more at [YesVets.org](#)*

In PY 2021, DVOP case managers and CVSRs provided individualized services to 1,410 eligible customers; 897 (63.6 percent) of those customers were enrolled in a DVOP or CVSR caseload, which included a comprehensive assessment and the development of individualized plans to assist this customer in overcoming barriers to employment. Of the 897 case managed customers, 253 (28 percent) were co-enrolled in a WIOA-funded program. Compared to PY 2020, growth was experienced in PY 2021 as both customers served and caseload enrollments increased by 30 percent, and WIOA co-enrollments grew by 109 percent.

## Appendix 6

### State WIOA-related policies and guidance issued in program year 2021

1. WorkSource System Policy 1003, Revision 2 (Data Element Validation) – 7/1/21
2. WorkSource Information Notice 1021 (Reinstatement of UI Work Search Requirements) – 7/1/21
3. WorkSource Information Notice 0073, Change 25 (WIOA operating guidance issued to date by DOL through TEGs, UIPLs, and TENSs) – 7/2/21
4. WorkSource Information Notice 0122 (PY21 WIOA Title I-B Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker Federal Award Terms) – 7/6/21
5. WorkSource Information Notice 0073, Change 26 (WIOA operating guidance issued to date by DOL through TEGs, UIPLs, and TENSs) – 7/13/21
6. WIOA Title I Policy 5415, Revision 1 (WIOA Title I Performance Sanctions) – 7/16/21
7. WorkSource System Policy 1024 (Infrastructure Funding Agreement and State Funding Mechanism) – 7/19/21
8. WorkSource Information Notice 0073, Change 27 (WIOA operating guidance issued to date by DOL through TEGs, UIPLs, and TENSs) – 8/2/21
9. WorkSource System Policy 1020, Revision 1 (Data Integrity and Performance Policy and Handbook) – 8/9/21
10. Trade Adjustment Assistance Policy 3005 (2021 Relocation Allowances) – 8/11/21
11. Trade Adjustment Assistance Policy 3010 (2021 Job Search Allowances) – 8/11/22
12. Trade Adjustment Assistance Policy 3015 (2021 Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance) – 8/11/22
13. Trade Adjustment Assistance Policy 3020 (2021 TAA Overpayments and Waiver of Recovery) – 8/11/21
14. Trade Adjustment Assistance Policy 3025 (2021 Denial and Appeals of TAA) – 8/11/21
15. Trade Adjustment Assistance Policy 3030 (2021 Health Coverage Tax Credit) – 8/11/21
16. Trade Adjustment Assistance Policy 3010 (2021 OJT and Other Work-Based Training) – 8/11/21
17. Trade Adjustment Assistance Policy 3040 (2021 Fundamentals of Trade Readjustment Allowances) – 8/11/21
18. Trade Adjustment Assistance Policy 3065 (2021 Approval of Training) – 8/11/21
19. Trade Adjustment Assistance Policy 3070 (2021 Assessment) – 8/11/21
20. Trade Adjustment Assistance Policy 3085 (2021 Reasonable Training Costs) – 8/11/21
21. Trade Adjustment Assistance Policy 3090 (2021 Agent-Liable State) – 8/11/21
22. WIOA Title I Policy 5617, Revision 1 (Co-enrollment of TAA certified workers into the WIOA Title I-B Dislocated Worker program) – 9/15/21
23. WorkSource System Policy 1013, Revision 3 (WorkSource Memorandum of Understanding) – 10/4/21
24. WorkSource System Policy 1024, Revision 1 (Infrastructure Funding Agreements and State Funding Mechanism) – 10/8/21
25. WorkSource Information Notice 0114, Change 3 (COVID-19 Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant Guidance and Instructions) – 10/25/21
26. WorkSource Information Notice 0115, Change 3 (COVID-19 Employment Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant Guidance and Instructions) – 10/25/21
27. WIOA Title I Policy 5621, Revision 3 (Incentive Payments to WIOA Title I Participants) – 11/30/21

28. WIOA Title I Policy 5260, Revision 3 (Allowable Cost and Prior Approval Requirements) – 11/30/21
29. WorkSource Information Notice 0111, Change 3 (Temporary suspension of the prohibition on food as a supportive service for youth participants in WIOA Title I Policy 5602 during the COVID-19 emergency) – 11/30/21
30. WorkSource Information Notice 0107, Change 5 (Temporary suspension of WorkSource System Policy 1101, Revision 6 (CASAS for Basic Skills Assessment) – 12/1/21
31. WorkSource Information Notice 0108, Change 5 (Temporary suspension of the 30 percent transfer limit under WIOA Title I Policy 5401, Revision 2 (30 percent fund transfers between the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs) – 12/1/21
32. WorkSource Information Notice 0109, Change 5 (WIOA Title I-B verbally self-attested and remote eligibility documentation and registration requirements during the COVID-19 emergency) – 12/1/21
33. WorkSource System Policy 1021, Revision 1 (MIS Access and Data Sharing, Data Disclosure, and Security Administration) – 12/3/21
34. WIOA Title I Policy 5401, Revision 3 (Adult and Dislocated Worker Fund Transfers) – 12/8/21
35. WorkSource System Policy 1019, Revision 6 (Eligibility Policy and Handbook) – 12/17/21
36. WIOA Title I Policy 5200, Revision 3 (Fiscal Definitions) – 12/17/21
37. Trade Readjustment Allowance Policy Manual for 2021 Trade Adjustment Assistance Reversion – 1/7/22
38. ATAA/RTAA UI Resource Manual for 2021 Trade Adjustment Assistance Reversion – 1/7/22
39. WorkSource Information Notice 0112, Change 2 (PY20/FY21 WIOA Title I-B and III Allotments to the State and WDAs) – 1/7/22
40. Trade Adjustment Assistance Policy 3065 (TAA Approval of Training) – 1/18/22
41. WorkSource Information Notice 0057, Change 1 (Guidance on the Use of Federal Funding to Support the Cannabis Sector) – 1/21/22
42. WorkSource Information Notice 0062, Change 1 (Tribal Outreach and Resources Under WIOA) – 1/24/22
43. WorkSource Information Notice 0041, Change 1 (Address Confidentiality Program) – 1/25/22
44. WIOA Title I Policy 5415, Revision 1 (WIOA Title I Performance Sanctions) – 2/2/22
45. WorkSource Information Notice 0023, Change 1 (Management of Medical and Disability-Related Information) – 2/3/22
46. WorkSource Information Notice 0028, Change 1 (Washington State's Unemployment Insurance Training Benefits Program) – 1/28/22
47. WorkSource Information Notice 0073, Change 28 (WIOA operating guidance issued to date by DOL through TEGs, UIPLs, and TENS) – 2/11/22
48. Trade Adjustment Assistance Policy 3015, Revision 1 (2021 Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance) – 2/11/22
49. Trade Adjustment Assistance Policy 3035, Revision 1 (2021 On-the-Job Training and Other Work-Based Training) – 2/11/22
50. Trade Adjustment Assistance Policy 3090, Revision 1 (2021 Agent-Liable State) – 2/11/22
51. WorkSource Information Notice 0025, Change 1 (American Job Center Branding Requirements) – 2/14/22
52. WorkSource Information Notice 0044, Change 1 (Veteran Status Validation and Documentation Requirements) – 2/25/22



53. WorkSource Information Notice 0119, Change 3 (PY21/FY22 WIOA Title I-B and III Allotments to the State and WDAs) – 3/4/22
54. WorkSource Information Notice 0124 (Transition from Data Unique Identifier Number to Unique Employer Identifier) – 3/7/22
55. WorkSource Information Notice 0125 (Suspension of 80 percent formula grant obligation requirement in WIOA Title I Policy 5275 for Program Year 2021) – 3/14/22
56. WorkSource Information Notice 0126 (Temporary revocation of WorkSource System Policy 1021, Revision 2) – 3/22/22
57. WorkSource Information Notice 0107, Change 6 (Temporary suspension of WorkSource System Policy 1101 (CASAS for Basic Skills Assessment) to allow alternative documentation of basic skills deficiency in WIOA Title I-B programs – 3/25/22
58. WorkSource Information Notice 0108, Change 6 (Temporary suspension of the 30 percent limit on transfers of formula grant funds between the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I-B adult and dislocated worker programs to allow up to 100 percent transferability) – 3/25/22
59. WorkSource Information Notice 0109, Change 6 (WIOA Title I-B verbal self-attestation and remote eligibility documentation and registration requirements during the COVID-19 emergency) – 3/25/22
60. WorkSource Information Notice 0111, Change 4 (Temporary suspension of prohibition on food as a supportive service for WIOA Title I-B youth program participants) – 3/25/22
61. WorkSource Information Notice 0114, Change 4 (State Guidance on Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant) – 3/28/22
62. WorkSource Information Notice 0115, Change 4 (State Guidance on Employment Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant) – 3/28/22
63. WorkSource Information Notice 0077, Change 12 (WorkSource Services Catalog) – 4/14/22
64. WorkSource Information Notice 0056, Change 9 (Lower Living Standard Income Level) – 4/19/22
65. WIOA Title I Policy 5617, Revision 2 (Co-enrollment of TAA certified workers into the WIOA Title I-B DW Program) – 4/27/22
66. WorkSource Information Notice 0073, Change 29 (WIOA operating guidance issued to date by DOL through TEGs, UIPLs, and TENSs) – 5/10/22
67. WorkSource Information Notice 0090, Change 2 (Assisting UI customers in WorkSource offices) – 5/31/22
68. WorkSource Information Notice 0127 (PY22 and FY23 WIOA Title I-B and III Allotments to the State and WDAs) – 6/3/22
69. WorkSource Information Notice 0128 (Gubernatorial designation of additional populations with barriers to employment under WIOA) – 6/6/22
70. WorkSource Information Notice 0073, Change 30 (WIOA operating guidance issued to date by DOL through TEGs, UIPLs, and TENSs) – 6/10/22
71. WIOA Title I Policy 5403, Revision 1 (Records Retention and Public Access) – 6/16/22
72. WorkSource Information Notice 0073, Change 31 (WIOA operating guidance issued to date by DOL through TEGs, UIPLs, and TENSs) – 6/16/22
73. WorkSource Information Notice 0130 (Termination provisions of Trade Adjustment Assistance, Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance, and Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance) – 6/21/22
74. Wagner-Peyser Employment Service Policy 4060, Revision 2 (Discontinuation of Wagner-Peyser Employment Services to Employers) – 6/28/22

75. WorkSource System Policy 1013, Revision 4 (One-Stop System Memorandum of Understanding) – 6/28/22
76. WorkSource System Policy 1024, Revision 2 (Infrastructure Funding Agreement and State Funding Mechanism) – 6/29/22
77. WIOA Title I Policy 5621, Revision 4 (Incentive Payments to WIOA Title I-B Participants) – 6/30/22

## Appendix 7

### Economic Security for All (EcSA) evaluation summary

Economic Security for All (EcSA) is a poverty reduction and equity program that directly addresses the need for economic recovery, especially for people of color and rural communities. It was launched in four pilot areas in 2019 with the support of the Governor's Poverty Reduction Work Group (PRWG), multiple state agencies, including the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and LWDBs. In 2021, Governor Inslee expanded EcSA to seven additional regions, covering most of the state. EcSA is overseen by ESD, the State Workforce Agency (SWA).

Social Policy Research Associates is contracted for an ongoing evaluation of early implementation of EcSA initiative, addressing the evaluation components below for the programs being implemented in the twelve LWDBs across the state. The goal of the evaluation is to:

1. Determine each model's effectiveness at helping people move out of poverty and establishing financial stability;
2. Identify which practices emerged from the models that demonstrated promise for expansion or replication;
3. Provide insight and assessment of the experiences and perceptions of partner staff and participants served to determine how well the project components have been implemented; and
4. Analyze the extent to which the initiative's objectives and outcomes have been achieved.

This evaluation was initiated in early 2020 to evaluate implementation of 4 initial local pilot programs. The evaluation was expanded in May 2021 to include 12 local programs, as EcSA was expanded statewide. An initial evaluation report was submitted in August 2020, a midpoint evaluation was produced in May of 2022 (please see the following EcSA reports), and a final evaluation report is planned for January of 2024. In total, ESD has allocated \$392,973 in WIOA Statewide Activities funding to support this evaluation. This evaluation approach was planned with involvement from DSHS, WTECB, WA Department of Commerce, and representatives from local workforce boards.

The evaluation focuses on an implementation study, utilizing structured interviews with local board staff, service delivery staff, customers, focus groups, on-site observations, and surveys that includes three components for each of the pilot models.

The first evaluation component aims to describe and assess implementation of the proposed model and the efficacy of the interventions utilized by each model. This component examines the following key questions:

- How is this model described in terms of program elements, sequence and frequency of services, and partner roles/functions?
- What activities has the site conducted in: Partnership, coordinated outreach and intake, career plans and workforce development opportunities, mentorship, and personal and financial stability?
- To what extent are the model's key components being implemented?
- If the model is not being implemented fully, which elements are impacted and what key factors or root causes have been identified?
- If local implementers revised the model during the pilot, what specific changes were made and what was the necessity and rationale for these changes?
- What adjustments, if any, would the evaluators recommend and what is the rationale for these recommendations?

The second evaluation component describes the coordination between partners and staff and evaluates the differences among agencies and staffing. This component addresses the following key questions:

- Describe the structure and methods of system coordination between partners in this model.

- How are the structure and methods of coordination different than before implementation of this model?
- How do staff at partnering agencies feel about the model? What is working well? What are suggested changes?
- How are individuals experiencing poverty involved in program design and implementation?
- Identify and describe any program elements or any local, state, or federal policies that make partnership and program coordination challenging. What are the recommendations of the evaluators to address these challenges, based on input from program participants, staff, and leaders?

The third evaluation component describes the participants and community being served, including the particular challenges facing participants and the target community, and persistent unmet needs. This evaluation component also describes the experiences and perceptions of participants served by the program. This component examines the following key questions:

- What are the challenges facing participants and the community as a whole?
- Does model design appear to address the primary needs of the community members experiencing poverty?
- How are model activities/interventions experienced by participants? How do they feel about the program?
- How do participants describe the public benefits they receive and the resulting incentives and disincentives to obtaining employment above 200 percent of the federal poverty level. What support does the model provide to participants who are navigating these incentives and disincentives?

The evaluation is still ongoing and has produced several key results to date including:

- After a slow start during the first year and a half of the program, primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic, enrollment in the initial four pilot sites increased substantially, allowing the pilots to achieve 71 percent of their overall enrollment target of 1,258 participants as of March 31, 2022.
- The initial four pilots continued to find EcSA program goals challenging for many of their participants to achieve. As of March 31, 2022, 188 participants (52 percent of their target) had been placed in training that would lead to the wage goal of \$34,480, while 163 (36 percent of their target) had entered employment that met the wage goal of \$34,480.

The information gathered through this evaluation is providing evidence to support decisions about pilot model components and to help facilitate expansion and replication in other settings. The initial and mid-point evaluation reports, completed to date, were presented to the EcSA Technical Advisory Committee for their consideration. This information was used to guide programmatic decisions to allow flexibility for initial pilot areas to adapt their local programs to COVID-19 conditions and expand eligibility criteria. It was also used to adjust program requirements as EcSA was expanded statewide in early 2021 with additional WIOA Statewide Activities funds and again with the recent implementation of Washington State General Funds for EcSA in July 2022.



# INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

## Economic Security for All Initiative Evaluation

September 2020

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## Acknowledgments

The Economic Security for All Evaluation is being conducted under the direction of the Washington State Employment Security Department. The authors thank John Traugott for his guidance and support. This report would not have been possible without the participation of staff from multiple agencies at the local and state level. The authors especially thank the staff from the four grantee workforce development councils and their local partner organizations who so graciously gave of their time and shared their perspectives.

We also wish to thank at SPR Marian Negoita for his guidance of the evaluation design and this report, and Kate Dunham for her expert review. We also thank Erika Latimer at Koné Consulting, who made significant contributions to the research and this report.

## Abbreviations

AJC	American Job Center
ALICE	Asset limited, income constrained, and employed
BFET	Basic Food Employment and Training
CDL	Commercial driver's license
CO	Community Organizer
CPS	Career Path Services
CRS	Common Referral System
CSO	Community Services Office
DSHS	Department of Social and Health Services
EBT	Electronic Benefit Transfer
EcSA	Economic Security for All
ESD	Employment Security Department
FPL	Federal Poverty Level
HUD	Housing and Urban Development
LCCAP	Lower Columbia Community Action Program
NRCC	Neighborhood Resource Coordination Council
OIC	Opportunities Industrialization Center
P-EBT	Pandemic EBT
SNAP	Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program
SPR	Social Policy Research
SRC	Spokane Resource Center
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TDS	Talent Development Specialist
THA	Tacoma Housing Authority
UI	Unemployment Insurance
WDC	Workforce Development Council
WIOA	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
WFC	WorkForce Central
WSW	Workforce Southwest Washington

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## Executive Summary

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The Economic Security for All (EcSA) initiative is a competitive grant program that awarded a total of \$5.8 million of federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Statewide Activities funds to four local Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) to test new poverty reduction models. These four pilots are intended to be comprehensive approaches to reducing poverty more effectively, measurably, and durably than older legacy models. The four WDCs awarded grants were: Benton-Franklin WDC, Southwest Washington WDC, Spokane Workforce Council and Tacoma-Pierce WDC.

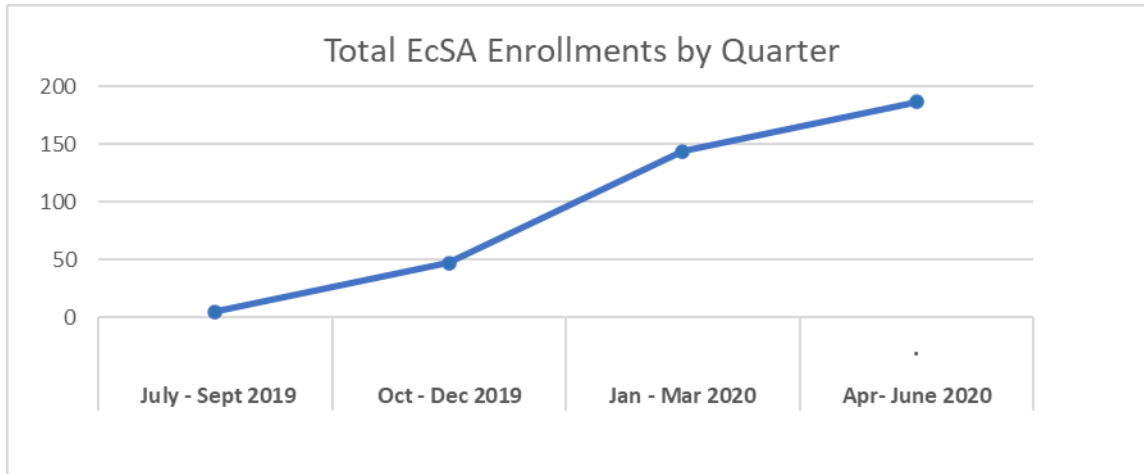
The Employment Security Department (ESD) awarded a contract in January 2020 to Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) to conduct an evaluation of the implementation of the EcSA initiative. Data collection for this initial evaluation report – which was conducted by SPR, in partnership with Koné Consulting -- included: review of site documents (e.g. approved grant proposals, logic models, meeting minutes, and internal reports); remote interviews conducted from late June to early August 2020 with approximately 8 – 12 informants in each of the four EcSA communities (including key program implementation staff); and review of quarterly report and aggregate program data.

The four EcSA pilots have individual and shared characteristics in their early implementation experience. Along with some notable successes, they all experienced challenges launching a new program, such as creating written partnership agreements with new partners, hiring and retaining staff, and developing effective data management systems. All four pilots experienced challenges recruiting and enrolling participants both before and after the COVID-19 pandemic changed the human services and economic landscape. Further, all four pilots experienced service disruptions and challenges moving services to virtual platforms and engaging participants in remote services necessitated by stay-at-home orders and social distancing requirements.

Exhibit ES:1 displays quarterly enrollment (as reported by the pilots to ESD), which shows that enrollment rose dramatically in the third quarter of program operation, before the pandemic, and then flattened out during the fourth quarter. As of June 30, 2020, the four pilots had enrolled a combined total of 187 participants, or 40 percent of the revised goal of 465.



## Exhibit ES-1: EcSA Enrollments



### Early Implementation Successes

Despite many challenges, the four EcSA pilots achieved some notable successes launching their programs. Researchers identified successful implementation practices, with potential for future replication, at all four pilots. They included:

- **EcSA pilots successfully built on existing partnerships and tools.** For example, Tacoma-Pierce County has utilized the Common Referral System already used by the United Way 211 referral system and WIOA providers, which allows all EcSA partners to see basic enrollment information about a participant and share case management notes.
- **Human-centered design, implemented at some but not all pilots, was linked with successful program implementation and adaptation during a time of extreme change.** Examples of the results of human-centered design include co-located services for easy access (most notably in Spokane), and tailoring the package of services to individual participant interests rather than requiring clients to follow a prescribed set of services.
- **Local staff hired to implement the EcSA initiative and local Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) staff have established strong working relationships on the ground, collaborating on co-enrolling and providing services to participants.** Examples include co-enrollment in Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) and EcSA, most notably a contract established by the Spokane WDC and DSHS for life skills training (i.e., Strategies for Success workshops) and pre-employment training, so that these services could be reimbursed through DSHS.
- **New and innovative partnerships were established to bring workforce and supportive services to underserved areas, including rural areas.** In Benton-Franklin, the community provider meeting facilitated by EcSA staff was the first of its kind. It was recognized by the Benton-Franklin WDC and partner organizations as a productive and enduring program enhancement.

- **EcSA pilots innovated program design and staff positions as they sought new ways to recruit participants.** For example, Southwest Washington created the position of Retention Specialist. By co-locating at partner businesses (before COVID-19 shutdowns), the Retention Specialist was able to simultaneously recruit interested workers into the EcSA program and develop strategies with the owners and human resources managers to increase worker retention.
- **EcSA pilots transformed and adapted program service delivery in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.** All four pilots quickly moved to virtual services after stay-at-home orders were issued in March 2020. For example, the Lower Columbia Community Action Program (a partner of the Southwest Washington WDC) distributed laptops to EcSA clients, and Tacoma Goodwill successfully used Google forms and a phone app to create streamlined, remote processes and engage participants in enrolling in virtual classes.

## Early Implementation Challenges

Along with expected challenges of initiating a new service model and targeting a new population, all four pilots experienced early challenges with recruiting participants, and enrolling them into the program. Further, the focus on recruitment and enrollment challenges in this early implementation report is related to the fact that EcSA pilots overall had enrolled relatively few participants as of early 2020 and some did not yet have significant experience with service provision to EcSA customers at the time they were interviewed. Interviewees identified the following key elements as underlying recruitment and enrollment challenges:

- **Difficulty engaging the target population.** To varying degrees, pilots found it challenging to enroll their individually defined target populations into their programs due to multiple factors including:
  - A significant segment of the targeted population was working parents who struggled to commit to a training or coaching program due to heavy work and childcare schedules.
  - Customers' buy-in was limited due to discouragement from previous attempts to improve work outcomes, distrust of government programs, or a lack of confidence that it is possible to improve economic circumstances.
- **Initial recruitment strategies were not effective.** After experiencing early challenges with recruitment, sites turned to DSHS for assistance. Both local DSHS and WDC staff reported that these requests for DSHS to conduct outreach and recruitment were problematic due to a lack of staff and funding earmarked for this effort. Despite these limitations, DSHS did conduct considerable outreach efforts to SNAP participants. Pilot staff reported continuing efforts to develop more successful recruitment approaches tailored to the target population.

- **Barriers to data sharing across partners led to obstacles to recruitment and enrollment.** All four pilots identified the inability to share data (e.g. names and other identifying information of referred individuals) between DSHS and other EcSA partners as a challenge. Additionally, pilot staff shared frustrations about limitations for data sharing between partners of enrollment information and other key customer documents, especially after remote work required more virtual services. For example, one pilot reported that a partner that had the required enrollment documentation could not share it with another partner because of data sharing restrictions.
- **Limited involvement of people experiencing poverty in the design of the local pilots led to a disconnect in some cases between customer needs and program design, contributing to challenges with recruitment and enrollment.** While pilots reported low levels of involvement during the development of the local pilot design, some made progress in including the perspective of people experiencing poverty as their program developed, either by hiring staff who were from the target population or by bringing clients onto advisory committees.

Pilot staff members also identified challenges with establishing their EcSA programs that they related to structural foundations of the program. These challenges included:

- **The limitations on service area was an impediment to enrollment.** Site leadership noted that the restriction to the initial defined geographic service area boundaries was too restrictive given the challenges with recruitment into the program.
- **Staff from both DSHS and the WDCs that worked on EcSA pilot implementation cited structural challenges to working together,** including a lack of alignment between agencies at the state level, and not funding DSHS to support their staff time in recruitment efforts.
- **There was confusion around local procurement requirements** that delayed local subcontracting and program implementations.

### *Post Pandemic Challenges*

Programs were in different stages of development when, because of the public health crisis induced by the COVID-19 pandemic, stay-at-home orders were issued and services had to become virtual. The four pilots experienced similar challenges to enrolling EcSA clients and delivering services during this period, including:

- Availability of training and other workforce services was limited due to challenges of moving services to a virtual format.
- Technology (lack of internet access and/or computers) was limited for both participants and community partners.
- Intake and service delivery required more intense staff support and assistance due to the challenges of the remote application process.

- It was more difficult to engage participants in virtual coaching services and online courses than in in-person services.
- Partner capacity was reduced, as some community partners experienced staff furloughs or downsizing, or had to withdraw completely from the EcSA partnership.

## Recommendations for Program Adaptation

Based on their early challenges with launching and establishing EcSA pilot programs, especially under the economic changes brought about by the pandemic, WDC staff have requested changes to the EcSA program requirements and targeted outcomes. Based on these requested changes, along with observations made through the data collection process, the research team makes the following recommendations.

- **Revise expected program outcomes related to poverty reduction.** While it is important to stay focused on families below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, concrete targets for poverty reduction seem unrealistic and should be replaced with alternative measures such as increased income, enrollment in benefits or enrollment in training.
- **Permit EcSA pilots to make adaptations to services and program models to respond to the post-pandemic economic realities.** ESD should allow pilots greater flexibility to adapt program models post-pandemic, to help ensure that the target population of people below 200 percent of FPL is not overlooked as the workforce development system focuses on recovery efforts. This will allow pilots to ensure that their service offerings are compelling, geared to virtual service delivery, and specifically targeted to people with young children at home, who have limited childcare availability.
- **Allow for flexibility and expansion of the pilots' service areas.** Expanding the pilots' service areas would enable them to recruit and enroll additional eligible participants and could incentivize collaboration with adjacent WDCs.
- **Encourage local goal development and outcomes tracking based on innovative practices.** For example, Workforce Southwest Washington could track job retention in addition to increased earnings, reflecting their focus on this area through their Retention Specialist position.
- **Consider a longer program period and secure additional funding to expand the program.** The timeframe of the grants may have been unrealistic to begin with, especially given that there was not enough time built in for most of the sites to handle the start-up phase of the program. EcSA leadership and staff from all pilots are clearly committed to this endeavor for longer than the initial period of the grants and would benefit from additional support to build on the progress they have been able to make during the initial grant period. ESD could provide leadership to leverage additional private or public funds to support the current EcSA pilots and to expand to additional communities, possibly statewide.

# 1. Introduction

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The Economic Security for All (EcSA) initiative is a competitive grant program that awarded a total of \$5.8 million of federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Statewide Activities funds to four local Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) to test new poverty reduction models. These four pilot programs are intended to be comprehensive approaches to reducing poverty more effectively, measurably, and durably than older legacy models. The four WDCs awarded grants were Benton-Franklin WDC, Southwest Washington WDC, Spokane Workforce Council, and Tacoma-Pierce WDC.

## EcSA Overview

The four EcSA pilots are testing comprehensive and innovative poverty reduction models. Compared to other models that approach complex issues such as poverty by deconstructing them into multiple problems and tackling those problems individually, the EcSA model is rooted in a modern approach that attempts to treat poverty holistically and systematically. According to this model, poverty is a persistent social problem that does not have simply one cause, but many interconnected causes. In this perspective, people may experience poverty not just because they are unemployed, but because they are under-employed, have limited skills, are experiencing housing instability, or have a substance abuse problem, perhaps all at the same time. Therefore, enduring solutions to poverty must be devised on multiple fronts. That is precisely why the model involves a lead agency (a local workforce development agency), but also requires involvement from several other partners that can provide an array of additional services.

More specifically, each pilot includes the following required elements:

- Move families enrolled in Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits into employment that increases their earnings above 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL).
- Focus on a single low-income geographic community and commit to reducing the total number of people in poverty in that community, so that families' success also means tangible success for the whole community.
- Develop a local model that increases the collective impact of already-existing programs and funding, by engendering teamwork across multiple agencies, local service providers, communities of color, businesses, and labor.
- Develop a partnership of at least six organizations, led by the local WDC, that includes an organization representing individuals experiencing poverty, and the local Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Community Service Office (CSO), which administers Basic Food/SNAP locally.

- Meaningfully include people experiencing poverty in the design and implementation of the local model.
- Ensure the local model is replicable and commit to helping other communities in Washington replicate it.
- Help stabilize families by addressing personal and historical trauma.
- Use whole-family strategies and a common and simple participant eligibility standard (SNAP enrolled and WIOA Adult program eligible).

## The EcSA Evaluation

In January 2020, Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) was awarded a contract to conduct an evaluation of the implementation of each of the four EcSA initiative pilots led by the Benton-Franklin, Southwest Washington, Spokane and Tacoma-Pierce WDCs. The evaluation aims to:

- Assess if the pilots are highly effective at helping people move out of poverty.
- Identify if the pilots, or components of their service models, are promising for poverty reduction at a large scale.
- Provide insight and assessment of the experiences and perceptions of partner staff and customers to determine how well the project components have been implemented.
- Analyze the extent to which the pilots' objectives and outcomes have been achieved.

The evaluation aims to examine how the pilots have navigated implementation challenges and how promising practices could be replicated by other communities to reach similarly positive systems-building results.

The research team gathered data from multiple sources including: grantee documents (such as approved grant proposals, logic models, meeting minutes, and internal reports); remote interviews conducted from late June to early August 2020 with approximately 8 – 12 informants from each of the four EcSA pilots (including key program implementation staff); and grantee reports on participant data and implementation progress. Due to limitations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of interviewees was limited in some cases by organization shut-downs or furloughs. We interviewed EcSA pilot staff members with varying degrees of authority, from members of leadership teams to frontline staff.

## Roadmap to the Report

This report focuses on the initial implementation of EcSA between September 2019 and July 2020, a time period that includes about six and a half months of early implementation followed by a period of change and adaptation due to the COVID-19 pandemic (the pandemic). The

following sections provide an overview of program implementation in each of the four pilots, with special attention to the key program areas of the EcSA model and similarities and differences across pilots in those areas, as well as challenges and promising practices. Those chapters are followed by a concluding chapter that summarizes the strengths and challenges of the pilots, and provides suggestions for improvement, including how EcSA might be successfully adapted to the new economic realities resulting from the pandemic.

## 2. Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council

The Benton-Franklin WDC serves Benton and Franklin Counties which collectively make up four percent of Washington’s population.<sup>1</sup> The Benton-Franklin WDC manages over \$3 million in workforce funds annually, coordinates and oversees local employment and training services provided via WorkSource Centers. Their EcSA pilot, known locally as ¡Sí Se Puede!, is based in North Franklin County, and currently covers four service areas: Connell, Kahlotus, Mesa/Basin City, and Eltopia (Exhibit 2.1).

**Exhibit 2.1: ¡Si se Puede! Service Areas**



### Program Design

The Benton-Franklin WDC decided to focus its EcSA pilot (its first geographically focused initiative) on North Franklin County after examining demographic and household income data provided by the United Way. It initially chose to focus on Connell, a small rural city in North Franklin County, because the United Way data showed that it is an area with very high numbers of people who are asset limited, income constrained, employed (ALICE), including a high number of single Latina mothers (see exhibit 2.2 for 2018 figures)<sup>2</sup>. Further, this area was determined to have limited access to services, including transportation, childcare, and employment and training.

<sup>1</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

<sup>2</sup> Source: United for Alice. <https://www.unitedforalice.org/demographics/washington>



## Exhibit 2.2 2018 ALICE Data

### FRANKLIN COUNTY

ALICE HOUSEHOLDS 31%

HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY 14%

### CITY OF CONNELL

ALICE HOUSEHOLDS 36%

HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY 17%

The Benton-Franklin WDC based the design of its EcSA pilot on the United Way model of the four pillars of support: transportation, healthcare, childcare and employment (see the logic model in Exhibit 2.3). The EcSA team envisioned that increasing the availability of services, such as childcare, training, and transportation, would help move more individuals in this rural community to 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

## Planned Services and Customer Flow

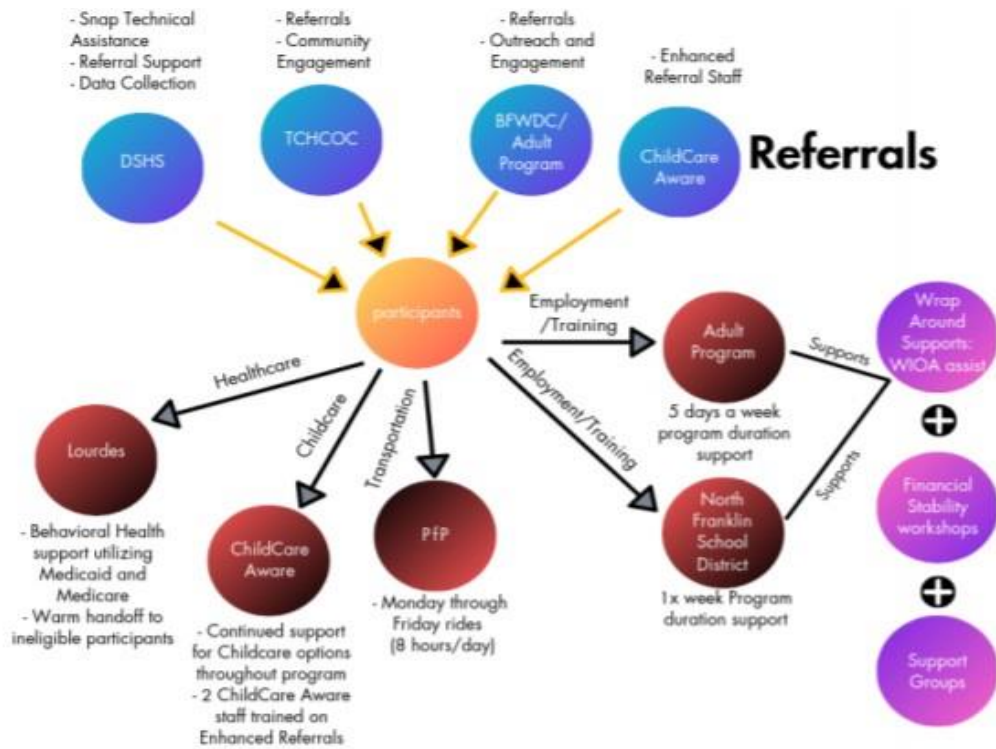
The first phase in the pilot's planned customer flow was eligibility determination. To be eligible for the program, prospective participants needed to meet the following requirements: 1) be 18 years of age or older; 2) be a resident of the 99326 ZIP code (which includes all of Connell); 3) be enrolled in SNAP; 4) be registered in the Selective Service (if male); and 5) be a U.S. Citizen or otherwise legally entitled to work in the United States.

Once determined eligible, pilot participants would then be assessed using a modified version of the United Way's self-sufficiency matrix to assess and track areas of growth, taking into account which supportive services a participant would require or what referrals pilot staff would need to make to other services. Pilot staff would then work collaboratively with participants to create career goals and a plan of action for achieving those goals.

At the outset of the pilot, the Benton-Franklin WDC and Career Path Services expected the following services to be available to participants via the pilot:

1. **Transportation.** The EcSA pilot planned to offer gas cards through supportive services funding. In addition, through funding from the Washington State Department of Transportation, a pilot partner, People for People, expanded drop off zones and route times of its shuttle to provide additional transportation to Connell.
2. **Healthcare.** The WDC partnered with Lourdes Health, which operates the Lourdes Medical Center and the Lourdes Counseling Center in the nearby Tri-Cities to establish referral processes for participants in need of physical and mental healthcare.

Exhibit 2.3: Benton-Franklin EcSA Logic Model



3. **Childcare.** Through a partnership developed with Child Care Aware and the Imagine Institute of Washington, the pilot planned to provide participants with referrals to childcare providers as well as mentorship and training on how to become an in-home childcare provider.
4. **Employment.** The pilot planned to offer participants a variety of employment-related services, including funding for vocational training or work-based learning. To select a training program or work-based learning opportunity in an in-demand occupation, the pilot planned to have staff help participants access career exploration websites, sift through labor market information (LMI), and listen to presentations on available career pathways. Additionally, pilot staff planned to provide other employment-related services, such as resume development and mock-interviews. Program enrollment was also supposed to include 10 hours of mentoring from employer and community partners to support participants in their work journeys. The pilot also planned to cover the costs

of work gear, hygiene items, and any other services to help participants be “as employable as possible.”

5. **Other services.** The pilot planned to provide participants with financial literacy workshops that were to be facilitated by local credit unions. Finally, Employment Specialists provided individualized case management throughout.

## Early Implementation Experience

Prior to the pandemic, pilot activities were focused on hiring staff, recruiting participants, setting up partnerships and community connections, and providing limited services. One of the WDC's first pilot-related activities was to contract with its existing WorkSource Center operator and WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth program provider, Career Path Services, to provide staffing and deliver services for the pilot.

Once Career Path Services was on board, staff from the two agencies began reaching out to the other agencies named in the grant proposal. While the WDC had connected with these organizations when applying for the grant, some of the partnerships were not yet well-developed. Consequently, WDC and Career Path Services staff started meeting with the agencies that had been included in the grant as well as others suggested by those initial grant partners, to strengthen or develop those relationships. For example, they met with representatives from the local healthcare clinic, run by the Columbia Basin Community Health Association. They also connected with a local organization, Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC), which works with many of the local area residents through the National Farmworker Jobs Program, to discuss opportunities for referrals, workshops, and mentoring.

In late September 2019, Career Path Services hired two Employment Specialists to serve as staff for the pilot. After a month of training, these staff members began spending four days a week in the Connell area, getting to know the area and community partners. As the pilot did not have a dedicated office in Connell, staff instead made use of partner space to conduct recruitment activities, such as tabling. For example, they spent time at Connell's high school and junior high school twice a week. Pilot staff also met with interested Connell-area residents when they came to the Tri-Cities (the closest metro area to Connell), for example when they needed to visit the local Community Services Office (CSO) regarding their Basic Food/SNAP benefits. In January 2020, two months prior to the pandemic, the local DSHS CSO detailed one of its eligibility staff members to work with pilot staff in Connell twice a month, providing onsite eligibility assistance for SNAP benefits.

On October 25, 2019, the pilot had an official kick-off event in Connell. This event was held on a Friday during lunch time and included representatives from numerous Connell organizations,

including the city's library, police department, and the local school district. It also featured the commissioner of Washington's Employment Security Department.

To support these outreach activities, the WDC also sought the aid of the local DSHS CSO. The pilot first sought contact information for all current SNAP participants in the Connell area. However, when the sharing of contact information was prohibited due to confidentiality restrictions, the CSO Administrator sought authorization to conduct phone outreach regarding the pilot to SNAP recipients in the pilot's ZIP code. In early 2020, he received approval to have staff conduct this phone outreach; contact information for any interested SNAP participants—with those participants' explicit consent—was then provided to the pilot staff. Despite these efforts, as of the end of the March 2020—just prior to the pandemic—the program had enrolled only three participants, and those participants had made use of only a few of the pilot's planned services.

## Post Pandemic Changes

Following the shelter-in-place (SIP) orders that occurred because of the pandemic on March 18, 2020, pilot staff were no longer able to recruit in-person in Connell. Instead, they shifted to conducting all recruitment virtually, via email, text, and phone. For instance, the pilot's Employment Specialists began posting flyers and other informational documents to the City of Connell's Facebook group. Pilot staff also reported that they were planning to conduct direct and targeted outreach to UI recipients in the service area by phone or mail.

In addition to shifting their recruitment processes, pilot staff also changed their enrollment processes to be able to work remotely. For example, they conducted eligibility determination over the phone and via the Internet, with participants uploading their eligibility documents via secure links and signing paperwork using e-signatures. Pilot staff highlighted this new approach to enrollment as a success; they reported that participants who felt comfortable with the technology found it easy to take a photo of required documentation and upload it to secure links.

In June 2020—at least partly due to the challenges to recruitment caused by the pandemic—the Benton-Franklin WDC received approval from ESD to expand the pilot's service area to three additional ZIP codes (these ZIP codes include the localities of Kahlotus, Mesa/Basin City, and Eltopia, and are shown in Exhibit 2.1 above). The WDC was also allowed to shift pilot eligibility to allow enrollment of individuals who were not receiving SNAP benefits, but were, instead, eligible for one of the three WIOA Title I programs, and had household incomes below 200 percent of FPL. Following this change, although they were still not allowed to conduct outreach to these new areas in person due to the pandemic, the Employment Specialists began to reach out to community stakeholders in the new ZIP codes via phone and email. In addition,

the local DSHS CSO assigned two staff members to conduct phone outreach about the pilot to SNAP recipients in these areas. Pilot staff also reported that BFET staff worked on strategies to share SNAP recipient information with EcSA employment specialists.

Pilot staff attempted to continue to serve the small number of pilot participants remotely, providing them with career exploration and resume development assistance by phone and email. They also provided referrals to supportive services and assistance with finding vocational training, though many training programs were unavailable due to the pandemic.

### ***Partner Service Shifts***

Pilot partners shifted their service delivery following the pandemic. For example, DSHS CSO staff also shifted to virtual service delivery following the pandemic (and expected to do so through the end of the year). Also, DSHS CSO staff were furloughed on four consecutive Mondays in July and will continue to be furloughed one Monday each month through November as a cost-saving measure due to state budget cuts, resulting in less availability for service delivery. Still, despite these furloughs, DSHS CSO staff continued to make outreach calls to SNAP participants in both the Connell area, as well as to those in the pilot's three new ZIP codes.

Finally, Childcare Aware was planning to host a virtual event focused on how to open a childcare facility, although no pilot participants had received its services by the end of July 2020. They expected that there would be increased demand for childcare following the expiration of the pandemic-related UI supplement at the end of July as many individuals would be looking for childcare to allow them to return to work.

## **Early Implementation Successes and Challenges**

During its first 11 months of implementation, the Benton-Franklin pilot experienced the following successes and challenges.

### ***Successes***

**Strengthened collaboration among the EcSA partners was one of the early successes of the Benton-Franklin pilot.** Respondents attributed much of this improvement to the establishment of a monthly community provider meeting beginning in March 2020. According to pilot staff, these monthly meetings have led to a better and more comprehensive understanding among partners of all of the services available to participants in the Connell. For example, the City of Connell's City Administrator regularly sits on the meeting. In addition, pilot staff were also helped by the increased partnership with People for People. In addition to expanding shuttle service in the Connell area, as the 211 provider in the area, People for People also deepened connections between the WDC and Career Path Services and other service providers, including

OIC and the Community Health Plan of Washington. OIC, in turn, has worked with pilot staff to identify even more referral partners.

Pilot staff and the WDC have also developed strong relationships with other local organizations. For example, the Connell City Administrator has offered both physical space and recruitment support to the pilot, for example, taking flyers about the pilot to the local food bank to distribute. Similarly, the pilot also developed a strong partnership with the North Franklin School District, as demonstrated by the district's willingness to provide space for pilot staff at district schools. Pilot staff also developed a relationship with representatives from the local healthcare clinic, run by Columbia Basin Community Health Association.

Finally, the WDC and pilot staff have developed a strong relationship with the local DSHS CSO in Kennewick. The relationship is facilitated by the fact that the local CSO Administrator is a WDC board member. Because the CSO Administrator sits on the WDC, he reviewed and had input into the planning for the pilot and worked to identify how the local DSHS CSO could assist the project. The strength of partnership is evidenced by the CSO Administrator's assignment of one of his eligibility staff members to work with pilot staff and his willingness to have his staff conduct phone outreach for the pilot.

## **Challenges**

The biggest challenge faced by the Benton-Franklin EcSA pilot has been recruitment and enrollment of participants. While the pilot aimed to enroll 35 participants as of June 30, 2020, it had enrolled seven participants, including four that enrolled since the pandemic. As a result of this low enrollment, many of the pilot's planned services had not been used. For example, no participant had engaged in the childcare training assistance, had made use of referrals to Lourdes Health, or made use of the People for People shuttle.<sup>3</sup> Pilot respondents gave the following reasons for the low enrollment numbers.

- **Early outreach events brought partners together but did not draw potential participants.** Although the WDC, Career Path Services, and the City of Connell held a kick-off event in October 2019, it attracted few community members or prospective participants. Partners attributed the kick-off's lack of success to its formality and the fact that it was held during lunch rather than in the evening or on a weekend, though pilot staff had envisioned that free lunch and a mid-day event would be attractive for working parents and optimal for community leaders to attend.

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<sup>3</sup> Respondents also asserted that the People for People had not been used because its drop off sites and times have proved hard for participants to schedule around.

- **Recruitment was challenged by the community’s lack of trust in the government and due to the expansion of the federal Public Charge rule.** Due to recent immigration raids, respondents reported that Connell community members have become mistrustful of public institutions, and thus less likely to participate in social services. In one instance, police officers were even called on the pilot's Employment Specialists as they conducted street outreach. Further, the federal government's expansion of the Public Charge rule<sup>4</sup> in 2019 to include SNAP receipt, also made many residents unwilling to utilize SNAP, and thus ineligible for pilot services. Pilot staff also noted that Latinx families in the area did not want to enroll in SNAP for fear of being asked to repay the benefits and other legal concerns.
- **ALICE data provided only part of the story about Connell and its residents.** While ALICE data illuminated the social and economic needs of residents in Connell, it did not identify how many residents would be ineligible due to their immigration status. Pilot staff members estimate that anywhere from 30 to 40 percent of individuals interested in the program did not meet eligibility requirements because they could not access or did not want to access SNAP benefits. Moreover, when the DSHS CSO began making outreach phone calls to SNAP recipients, they found that many households had one or both parents identified as undocumented, which made them ineligible for the program.
- **Restricting eligibility to just the 99326 ZIP code hampered enrollment.** Many interested individuals who met all the other eligibility requirements were unable to enroll in the pilot because they did not reside in the 99326 ZIP code but lived in a neighboring ZIP code.
- **The pandemic made it even more challenging to recruit pilot participants.** After the implementation of the state's SIP order in March 2020, all recruitment had to be conducted remotely. This made it even harder for pilot staff to connect with potential participants, because many lack computers, Internet access, and digital literacy, and so cannot participate in remote recruitment activities.

Another major challenge faced by the pilot is providing services to participants in a fully remote environment. As discussed above, many lack the tools (e.g., home computers, the Internet) and skills to engage fully in remote services. Consequently, pilot staff have had to support participants primarily via texts and phone calls and have not been able to provide mentoring or financial literacy services. In addition, pilot staff reported that participants are less interested in remote than in in-person services.

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<sup>4</sup> Under the expanded 2019 public charge rule, immigrants to the United States who received any of a set list of public benefits (including SNAP) for more than 12 months within a 36-month period could be denied visas or legal permanent residency.

### 3. Southwest Washington WDC: Kelso/Longview Thrive

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Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW) is the southwest Washington region’s local WDC and the primary recipient of the EcSA grant, known locally as Thrive. Headquartered in Vancouver, Washington, WSW oversees an economically, demographically, and commercially diverse region that includes Wahkiakum County and the Vancouver metro area, in addition to Cowlitz County and the Kelso/Longview area (where Thrive is situated). WSW’s Director of Programs expressed that the goal of WSW is to use their power and position as the local workforce board to bring resources to the region to effect locally “owned” and managed solutions, such as Thrive. The EcSA grant supports work that WSW and its local partners at DSHS have been working on for several decades in Cowlitz County, a historically economically depressed region. Thrive’s goals for the EcSA grant are to serve 330 SNAP-eligible individuals and to raise the family income of 280 of those individuals above 200 percent of FPL as a result of improved employment.

#### Program Design

The Thrive program model works to move people out of poverty by addressing both the needs of the individual and the broader economic issues that lead to a lack of “good jobs” and economic security. At the individual level, Thrive targets the working poor— specifically those on the “benefits cliff” – who live in the South Kelso and Highlands neighborhoods.<sup>5,6</sup> Initial eligibility criteria specifically included the requirement that participants have an income level between 130 percent and 200 percent of FPL and live in one of four identified census tracts. Services to participants focus on providing both stability elements (food and housing security, financial coaching, reliable transportation) and job betterment services (coaching, training/upskilling, mentorship, employer advocacy). Individual services are designed to put people making low wages and using government benefits on a path to longer term employment and economic security, allowing them to earn a wage-benefits package that offsets the loss of government benefits.

At the same time, partners realized that Thrive must simultaneously help employers, and the broader regional economy, develop and offer the kind of “good jobs” that provide individuals economic security. The primary economic sectors in Cowlitz County center around logistics, (there are two ports in the County), manufacturing, wood products/logging/milling, healthcare

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<sup>5</sup> The original Thrive grant specifically targeted individuals with incomes between 130 and 200 percent FPL. Since the pandemic, participants requirements have been modified and now the grant services anyone from 0 to 220 percent of FPL.

<sup>6</sup> The “benefits cliff” refers to the decrease in public benefits that can occur with a small increase in earnings. Often the increase in wages does not offset the loss in benefits which disincentives many of the working poor from working full-time or pursuing incremental career advancement.

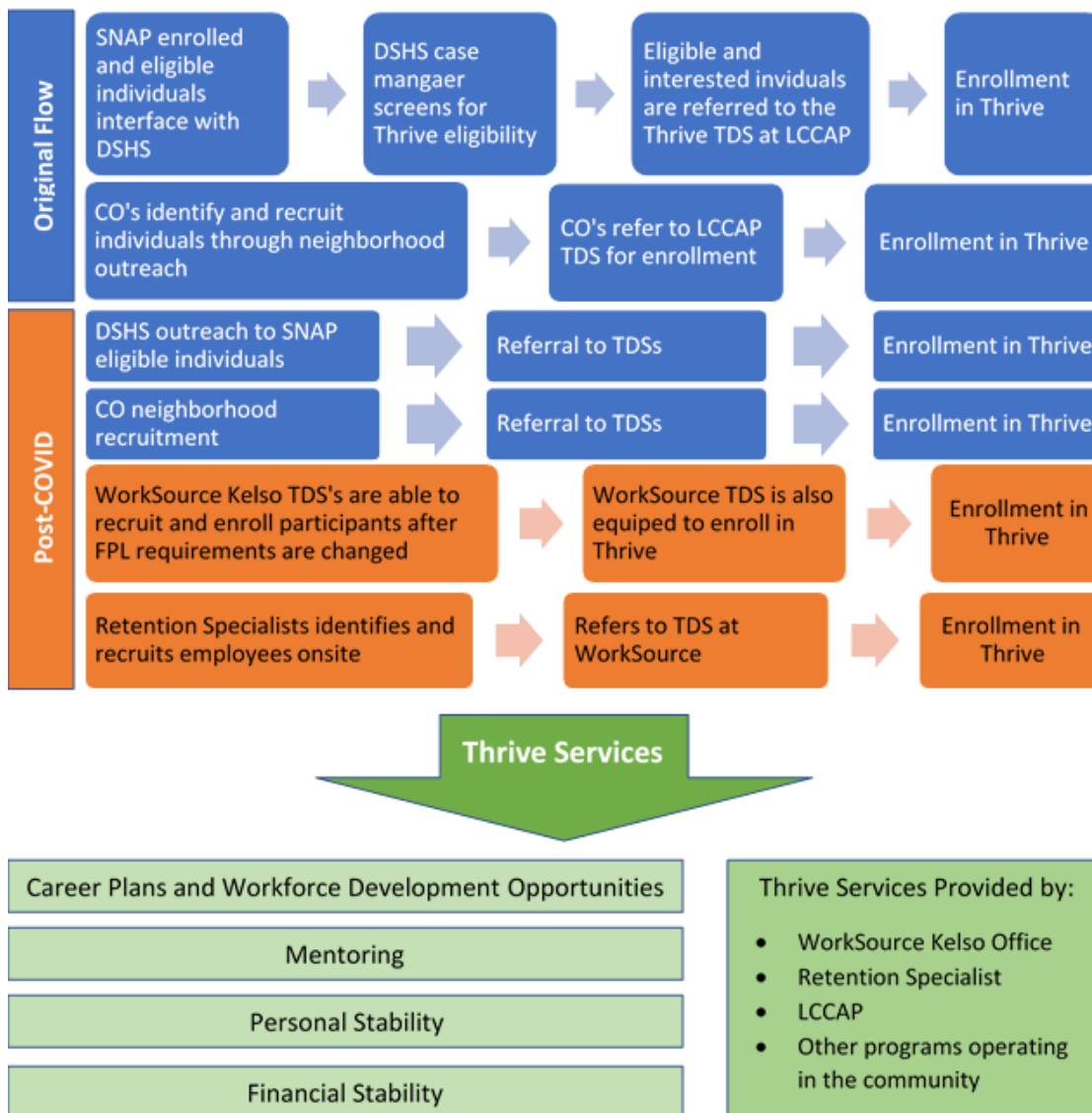


and retail. The Thrive interim-Program Manager reported that these regional industries and businesses have historically employed occupations that were lower skill and paid lower wages and that businesses hadn't seen a lot of economic incentive to raise wages or invest in their workforce. At the same time regional businesses were reporting to the workforce board that they were having trouble finding reliable, skilled workers that would help them grow their businesses. To address this disconnect, Thrive works with individual employers to increase worker retention and productivity by 1) creating internal career pathways within firms and 2) by offering support and stability services to the current workforce so that they can maintain and succeed in their employment.

### ***Planned Services and Customer Flow***

In the original Thrive design (Figure 1), partners identified several recruitment and enrollment pathways for potential participants to ensure they were reaching both individuals who were already enrolled in SNAP, as well as those who were eligible but not enrolled. The primary pathway identified was through the DSHS CSO. In the original program model, DSHS eligibility staff, who were already screening and assessing people coming into the CSO, would do an additional screen for Thrive eligibility. If an individual was eligible, the DSHS Case Manager would refer that person to a Thrive Talent Development Specialist (TDS) who was employed by Thrive's primary services partner, the Lower Columbia Community Action Program (LCCAP). LCCAP staff would do a full assessment and enroll the individual in Thrive. In order to recruit those not currently coming into the CSO, DSHS also planned to cold call people on its rolls who seemed to fit the eligibility criteria.

Figure 1: Thrive Program Customer Flow



To recruit individuals who were Thrive-eligible but not engaged with DSHS, Thrive partner Habitat for Humanity hired two full-time Community Organizers (COs)—one for each neighborhood served by the pilot—and a part-time CO Manager. As described by the CO Manager, Thrive COs’ recruiting efforts cast a wide net: attending community meetings, putting up flyers, spending time in community centers, visiting other service providers, and going to door to door to distribute Thrive flyers. When COs identify a good candidate for Thrive, they refer them to the LCCAP TDS for enrollment, but the CO often stays in touch as a primary point of contact if they have developed a relationship with the individual.

With the advent of the pandemic, two other pathways to enrollment have also been forged. Two partners who had been intending to provide services to individuals following Thrive enrollment have become more active on the recruiting and enrollment side as well. WIOA Title I staff at the WorkSource office in Kelso were originally tagged to provide job search and readiness services to Thrive participants. The assumption at the beginning of the pilot was that most individuals coming into the WorkSource office were unemployed – and thus not eligible for Thrive. However, after Thrive enrollment criteria was broadened to include individuals who were at 0 to 220 percent of FPL, customers coming to WorkSource for employment services are now eligible. At the time of this report, WIOA Title I staff at WorkSource were recruiting and enrolling Thrive participants in addition to providing career services.

In addition, the Retention Specialist (RS) who was initially engaged to work with Thrive business partners, has also been a source of participant recruitment. The RS was originally intended to serve Thrive participants after enrollment, when they came to work at Thrive-partner businesses. After she was hired in January 2020, she engaged with local businesses to identify how support from Thrive could help them with internal talent acquisition, training and retention. In her work at these companies she regularly encountered the kind of worker Thrive was hoping to serve: employed but lacking economic and job security. Further facilitating her referral of low-wage workers to Thrive, she is employed by Equus, the WIOA Title I contractor at the WorkSource in Kelso, so referrals are a matter of connecting interested individuals to her TDS colleagues at WorkSource.

Upon enrollment in Thrive, the participant works with the TDSs, COs and the Retention Specialist to address the aspects of their work and home life that have made it challenging to achieve economic stability. Depending on an individual's needs, the Thrive staff they have connected with, and their availability to enroll in classes and workshops, each Thrive participant has a customized plan that includes a career plan and mentoring as well as a bevy of services and classes offered in the local community (through Thrive partners and others) that address personal and financial stability.

## Early Implementation Experience

The first year of the pilot has been primarily focused on setting up processes and recruiting participants. The initial grant period (July-December 2019) was especially focused on bringing partners on board, identifying strategies for outreach and recruitment, and then setting up for referral and enrollment. While the broad principles of program design were established in the grant proposal, upon award and subcontract engagement, there were numerous processes that required more structure. All partners described the first year of the pilot as very meeting-intensive with the Thrive Program Manager taking a very strong role in organizing those meetings and providing guidance in decision-making. In addition to these all-partner meetings,

many of the staff from across Thrive partners have met more frequently, often in smaller groups, to discuss specific program development details.

As described in the previous section, initially the partners assumed the primary pathway into Thrive would be from DSHS (the primary recruiter) to the LCCAP (the primary services provider). Early activities and troubleshooting for these partners included: DSHS figuring out, without clear guidance from the state, how to add a significant new work flow (recruiting and screening for Thrive) without reducing their productivity on other measures; DSHS and LCCAP staff identifying an effective referral process that didn't violate any client privacy policies; and LCCAP learning how to use ETO, the enrollment MIS, to enroll and track participants. As will be described in more detail in Challenges section, LCCAP and DSHS faced numerous obstacles in the first year related to recruitment and referral which was then compounded by the pandemic.

Also assisting in efforts to recruit Thrive participants and address economic stability at the community-level, has been Habitat for Humanity. Habitat for Humanity employs the CO team and also coordinates the Highlands Neighborhood Resource Coordination Council (NRCC) which has been tagged from the design stage as the way in which Thrive would engage the voices of the communities it serves. NRCC/Habitat was critical in identifying the grassroots or community-based approach to recruiting and enrolling Thrive participants who were not engaged with DSHS. Early activities for COs have included attending community meetings to let people know about Thrive, going door-to-door in the neighborhoods, and engaging the NRCC partners in the Thrive program development process. In the early months of the pilot the CO team, which was operating at the neighborhood level, had the most success in recruiting Thrive participants.

The first year of the pilot has also seen the augmentation of another partner's role. The WIOA Title I staff at the Kelso WorkSource (employed by Equus) have taken on an expanded role in Thrive. Initially engaged to provide Career Services upon Thrive enrollment, the Title I staff have increased their role and now also provide recruiting and enrollment services for Thrive participants.

Two important leadership roles experienced staff turnover in the first year of the pilot. In March 2020, the Thrive Program Manager, who was involved in setting up Thrive, left WSW (and the project). WSW is currently looking to rehire this position and the interim-Program Manager, WSW's Director of Programs said they are looking for a PM who will encourage and facilitate decision-making at the local-partner level so that Thrive is "owned" by its community. In addition to the first Thrive PM, the local Kelso CSO Administrator has also turned over as of June 2020, retiring after 35 years at the agency and over two decades of working with WSW and other local partners on the poverty alleviation initiatives in Cowlitz County.

Despite significant challenges (see Challenges section), the program has made progress in outreach and enrollment. As of the June 30, 2020 (the most recent data at the time of this report), Thrive reported 29 enrolled participants out of a goal of 170. Over half (16 out of 29) had developed Individual Employment Plans that included training as a pathway to a better job. Other Thrive services that have been utilized included WorkSource’s Essential Skills workshops and mentorships. The pilot staff also reported in their most recent quarterly report three success stories of Thrive participants who had been able to leverage Thrive services to get a better job and move themselves and their families about 200% of FPL.

## Post-pandemic Changes

In March 2020, the CSO, LCCAP, and WorkSource (and all non-essential businesses and partners) closed their physical offices and moved to work from home which affected the primary Thrive recruitment process. Pre-pandemic, if a SNAP client visiting DSHS expressed interest in Thrive, the DSHS Case Manager would call the LCCAP TDS from the office, with the client in the room, to set up an introduction and exchange of information. Because the client was in the room to give consent, issues of data sharing did not apply, and the DSHS Case Manager was able to make a warm hand off. After services became virtual, the DSHS telecommute set-up—which uses a technology so that Case Managers can call clients from a state telephone line—did not allow calls to be forwarded to the TDS so interested clients were given the phone number of the Thrive TDS and the impetus was on them to call her. All parties described this handoff as ineffective. DSHS received permission in late July 2020 to use verbal consent to pass client information on to the TDS to initiate outreach.

COs also had to rethink their outreach strategy as interacting face-to-face in community spaces and in door-to-door visits was no longer viable. The CO team pivoted to focusing on flyers and postcards to alert community members about Thrive. They also continued to work with partners who were still seeing clients virtually to share information about Thrive.

The pandemic recruitment challenges came on top of other recruitment challenges (listed in the Challenges section) and so in Spring 2020, the Thrive team expanded their eligibility criteria in order to broaden the pool of potential participants. Eligibility went from 130-200 percent of FPL to 0-200 percent of FPL. Additional census tracts were also added so that more households were included, geographically.

Broadening the pool of potential participants to include the unemployed also meant that Kelso WorkSource Title I staff (Equus) were also able to move into a recruiting and enrolling roll. Equus had initially been brought on to provide career planning services and training opportunities to Thrive participants.

## Technology Access

With Thrive enrollment and services transitioning to virtual, anyone unable to access the internet due to lack of connection, technology, or know-how was unable to participate. For example, Thrive partners shared challenges with being able to use DocuSign (to print and scan enrollment documentation) and to participate in online training. Respondents shared that many people lacked the technology or broadband access in their homes and were unable to utilize virtual services. To address these issues, WSW created a local partnership with Comcast to provide free internet to those who are eligible based on income. LCCAP reported purchasing via investments from WSW and the Community Foundation of SW WA 10 laptops to distribute to Thrive participants. Another workaround described by the Retention Specialist was texting pictures of documents to clients, as images are easier to access on their smart phones. Challenges with technology access and savvy are not limited to Thrive participants. As described above, the Thrive partner primarily charged with enrollment and service provision was also dealing with aging technology and a need to rapidly upskill staff to provide virtual services.

## Early Implementation Successes and Challenges

During its first year of implementation, the Thrive pilot experienced the following successes and challenges.

### *Successes*

Despite the challenges facing the Thrive partners' efforts to bring services and job improvement to their region in the wake of a pandemic, there have been a few bright spots.

- **A history of successful partnerships was identified by several respondents as a key strength of Thrive.** Partners described a series of grants and special initiatives over the last two decades aimed at combatting poverty of which Thrive/EcSA is the latest iteration. The fact that key leadership such as the recently retired Kelso CSO Administrator, the NRCC, Habitat for Humanity, and other grant partners had worked together before helped the team establish a working relationship and trust at the outset. Many respondents described Thrive as the next step in a unified vision of improving the regional economy and the lives of its residents. However, implicit in this strength is the challenge that many communities face in having to piece together the resources to tackle poverty, which ultimately requires long-term, sustained funding and systems change.
- **The Retention Specialist was mentioned by several respondents, including business partners, as a promising practice.** The Retention Specialist focused on improving job retention and work productivity at Thrive businesses and by extension wages and economic security of employees. Thrive's partner businesses include both small, local

manufacturing companies and local outposts of national healthcare chains. A unifying characteristic of the Thrive business partners is that they employ entry-level, low-paid, lower-skill workers and thus are impacted by the high cost of worker turnover created by the economic instability their workers face. Hoping to break the cycle and encourage investment in the training, retention and promotion of workers, the Retention Specialist works with each company individually to assess how Thrive can assist them. The Retention Specialist co-located at local Thrive businesses (before the pandemic) and works with the owners and human resources managers on strategies for increasing worker retention, with the hope that downstream retention-related savings could translate to the development of better paying, more stable jobs for Thrive (and other) workers. Thrive partner businesses reported high satisfaction with the services of the Retention Specialist.

## **Challenges**

Multiple respondents identified barriers in the grant solicitation and planning phase, including:

- **Requirement for contiguous census tracts precluded partnership between WDCs.** Before the formal grant solicitation was released, WDCs across the state had been in dialogue about how to partner with each other to address broader, regional poverty issues. With the limitation of EcSA to contiguous census tracks, WDCs were instead forced to compete. WDC and other respondents identified this competition as a barrier to the broader goal of addressing systemic poverty.
- **There was a lack of clarity about the role and level of effort expected of local DSHS staff.** Both DSHS and WSW expressed frustration that ESD and DSHS did not communicate before the solicitation about the expectations of local DSHS staff. Pre-pandemic the Kelso CSO saw approximately 90 clients a day. Adding Thrive screening and referral to the time Case Managers were already spending with clients was a burden on the staff whose performance metrics were not adjusted with the addition of Thrive work. During the grant writing phase, WSW approached the CSO about providing compensation for DSHS staff time, but the CSO was not clear if they could (or should) accept the grant funding.
- **Data on Thrive-eligible populations may have been inaccurate.** Multiple interviewees spoke to the issue of the grant outcomes being built on unrealistic expectations. As part of the proposal development, data from the ESD's Regional Economist were supplemented by DSHS estimates on the number of Thrive-eligible adults living in the grant ZIP codes. The grant writers then estimated that they would be able to serve approximately 10 percent of the households DSHS projected. However, as the grant

went into implementation, several partners were concerned that the grant's initial goal of enrolling 330 was too high.

- **Startup timelines were not synchronized across partners.** DSHS reported that they began piloting a short assessment for Thrive eligibility from July to September 2019. However, the partner that they were supposed to refer participants to, LCCAP, was not yet able to accept referrals.

Thrive staff also shared challenges with recruitment and data tracking in early pilot service implementation.

- **Recruiting participants was challenging.** As mentioned above, partners were concerned from the outset about the number of participants the pilot aimed to serve. The income window for participation was narrow: Initially participants had to be in the acceptable income level (130 to 200 percent of FPL) and live in one of the four census tracts identified in the grant. Several partners felt that this placed too many constraints on serving those in need. DSHS also reported that they struggled to convince eligible individuals to enroll in Thrive, because the program targets those who are already working and does not provide additional cash assistance. Outreach staff said that potential participants told them things like “I already have a job,” “I don’t have time,” or “I am also on disability and don’t want to disrupt those benefits.” Also, the ability of DSHS staff to address these concerns was complicated by the inability to share information with other partners. Further, DSHS staff described efforts to cold call potentially eligible individuals as ineffective. Due to time constraints, if the call was not picked up, DSHS staff did not attempt a second call. Indeed, most calls were not picked up, and all parties reported that this was not an effective way to recruit participants.
- **Limits on data sharing created obstacles to recruitment.** In the early stages of the pilot period, which have focused primarily on recruiting and enrolling Thrive participants, a primary challenge has been finding a systematic way to identify possible Thrive participants and recruit them into the program. By tapping into its database of private enrollment data, DSHS was able to generate a list of approximately 3,600 adults who were potentially eligible for Thrive. However, because DSHS could not share those data with other partners, the burden of initiating outreach to those potential clients fell solely on DSHS staff.

Other data sharing challenges have also occurred within the workforce system. After the FPL measures were adjusted and the program was opened to those who were unemployed, Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment and UI clients who were required to contract WorkSource as part of their benefit collection were also routed to Thrive/WIOA Title I staff located at the WorkSource Kelso office. However, after the



pandemic policy adjustments, these recently unemployed individuals were no longer required to go through their local WorkSource office and there was no other data sharing in place that allowed for Thrive to contact them.

- **The data tracking process has created some obstacles.** Thrive participants are tracked in Washington State’s Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) management information system. For partners unfamiliar with ETO, the learning curve for enrolling participants in the system has been steep. To address this, WorkSource Title I staff (who already use ETO to track participants) took a more active role in enrollment and were able to take on much of this work.

## 4. Spokane Workforce Council

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Spokane Workforce Council (SWC) is recognized nationally as a creative, high performing local workforce development board.<sup>7</sup> In particular, it is known for being a “campus” model, with services located in adjacent buildings; having functional alignment of services organized around client needs; significantly using a human-centered design in its physical space and service models; and having a high tolerance for risk in trying new service models and approaches. These characteristics inform the pilot’s EcSA work, which has been implemented within this framework.

### Program Design

Funding through EcSA, along with other leveraged resources, allowed the SWC to increase staff and further develop services in an area of its campus called the Spokane Resource Center (SRC). In partnership with the City of Spokane and Spokane Housing Authority, the SRC had been under development for nearly a year before the EcSA project. Part of a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) project, it focused on helping clients who needed multiple services to become job-ready or improve their work opportunities and income level—so EcSA built on this service delivery model. As SWC administrators explained, this is not a “stand-alone program” separate from all their other programs; it is an integrated social services site developed as the “pre-employment” readiness arm of their campus.

SWC administrative staff related that the EcSA target population was based on data analysis of where the need was most concentrated, focusing on the ALICE population – underemployed people who are ready for workforce services. The SWC selected three ZIP codes in central Spokane – those with the highest poverty rates and largest number of SNAP recipients in the City – as the targeted geographic area for their pilot, where they could have a measurable impact and “move the needle” on poverty. When the program model was developed, there was low unemployment with a lack of qualified workers in the area, so the focus was on supporting skill development. The target population was both those who were underemployed (“working poor SNAP participants”) and those chronically unemployed. Through co-enrollment in services, the program model aimed to help the SWC more closely align SNAP Employment and Training program services (known as BFET) with WIOA resources, which have existed independently and whose “mechanics are hard to align,” according to SWC administrators.

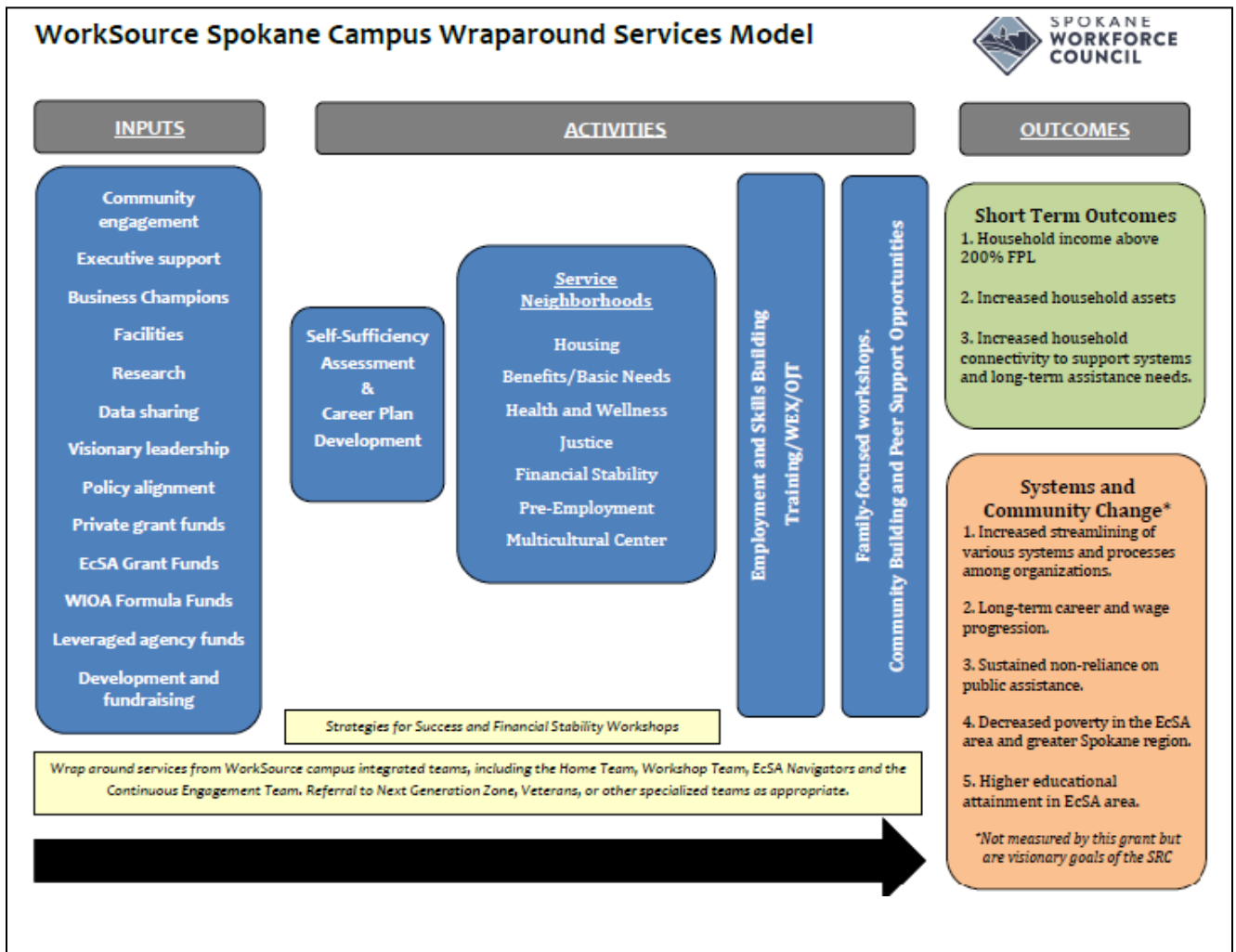
The Spokane pilot, as represented in the logic model (Exhibit 4.1), focuses on providing coordinated intensive services, guided by an individual assessment and career plan for each

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<sup>7</sup> The Spokane WDC has won many awards, most recently the WIOA Trailblazer award at the NAWB National Forum: [https://forum.nawb.org/forum/awards\\_wioa\\_trailblazer\\_results.asp](https://forum.nawb.org/forum/awards_wioa_trailblazer_results.asp)

participant. It was envisioned that participants would be recruited through the general SRC population and through community engagement, such as outreach and resource fairs with community centers and schools located in the targeted ZIP code areas. According to this model, all EcSA clients are expected to participate in Strategies for Success and financial stability workshops, which provide a baseline level of training for all participants.

**Exhibit 4.1 Spokane EcSA Logic Model**

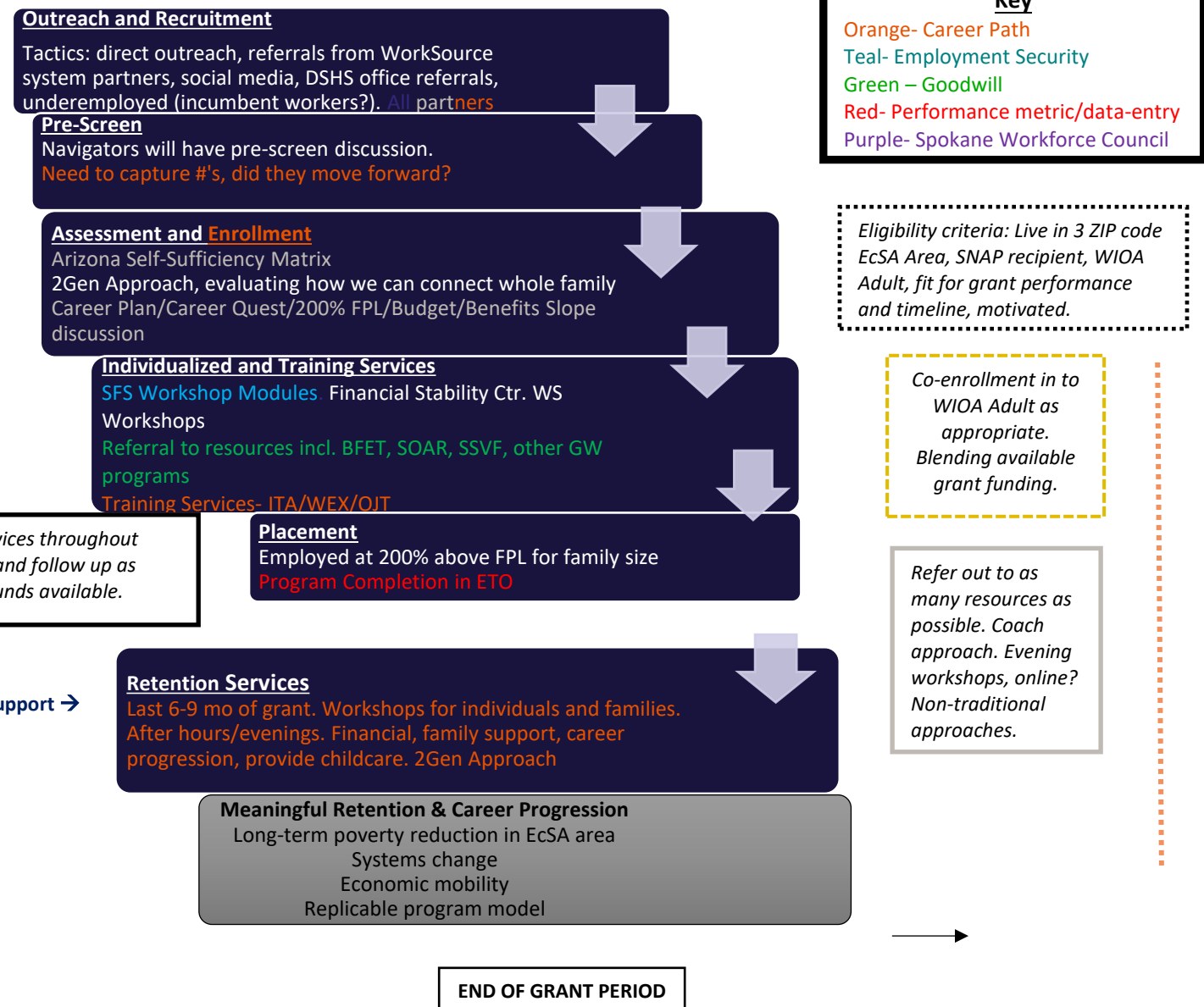


While a Spokane SWC Program Manager oversees the EcSA grant implementation, all direct services to EcSA customers are provided by Career Path Services (CPS), a subcontractor that also provides WIOA services. All pilot services and funded direct service staff are based out of the SRC. The EcSA grant supports half the salary of the SRC Manager, two Navigators (1.5 FTE), and half the salary of the Program Tech who supports them. EcSA funds also support 75 percent of a Resource Specialist who is located at the SRC and employed by Goodwill Industries. Also, the SWC has a contract with ESD to provide workshop instruction, with additional leveraged support from ESD for the same instructors.

## Planned Customer Flow

Following the human-centered design model, direct service staff described the services as an integrated model, as depicted in Exhibit 4.2. Each customer who comes into the SRC is greeted by a Program Tech who gives them an intake form to complete and then, based on that information, refers those eligible for EcSA to a Navigator to begin the intake process. Navigators enroll all customers in EcSA who live in the designated ZIP codes, receive Basic Food/SNAP, are not on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and have a WorkSource account. The Navigator works with the customer to identify their barriers to economic self-sufficiency such as family care needs, debt, or previous incarceration. As a Navigator related, “You have to ask the hard questions, and ask what’s really going on before you launch into assessments and services.”

### Exhibit 4.2 Spokane EcSA Program Flow



## Early Implementation Experience

SWC administrative staff described staffing – open positions and staff capacity - as the biggest challenge to getting the program started. There was turnover in one of the Navigator positions and they were not able to hire for the position of SRC Program Manager until the program was underway, due to funding issues. Until the Program Manager was hired in March 2020, pilot staff described being stretched thin trying to meet the demands of this new program. They also reported struggling to make the Resource Specialist position, currently staffed through Goodwill, effective at supporting the work of the Navigators. They were still determining how this should be addressed.

Staff described adjusting their community outreach efforts based on staff availability. Early on, with only one Navigator, most of his time was needed to enroll and serve the customers coming into the program, who often had multiple barriers, needing services related to housing, health care and addiction treatment. Workshops were another area needing adjustment from the original model, so they made a few tweaks to those that were offered and required. For example, it quickly became evident that they needed more flexibility with the Strategies for Success and financial stability workshops and could use a wider range of workshops to fulfill this foundational aspect of the program.

SRC staff described the service model as fully in place and operational by March 2020. SRC staff described their goal as making customers feel that they are all working together as one organization. Navigators described helping customers connect with other program case managers and staff that they needed help from. They described co-enrolling customers in multiple programs, which required working with other case managers from those programs. As one Navigator said, “communication is key to our success.”

SRC staff spoke about their commitment to the community they serve and the goal of reducing poverty. They described this as very personal, having all lived in the situation of poverty themselves. As one navigator stated, “We understand where we come from and we want to give back.” They were eager to help change misconceptions about low-income people – that they prefer to stay on public benefits or that they lack motivation to work. As one SRC staff member stated, “In reality, we are selling a chance at stability – we want to get people the career or job that they want. With mentorship and guidance, people are going to make that jump.” They described themselves as “a tenacious team, hungry to make change in the community.”

SWC administrative staff felt that “they were just hitting their stride when the pandemic hit. Services were working well in the SRC and there was a good client flow”. The quarterly program data reported that the Spokane pilot enrolled 67 percent of its target enrollment in the first quarter of 2020, compared to only 60 percent in the previous quarter. The SRC Manager started

just three days before the pandemic forced the SRC to close its doors to customers and move to remote service provision.

### ***Post Pandemic Changes***

The SRC closed to staff and customers in March 2020, in response to the governor’s statewide stay at home order. A small number of staff continued to work at the center as an emergency crew, ensuring ongoing IT operations and providing food boxes and crisis intervention assistance to up to 30 people a day who came to the center looking for help. The administrative staff described these early days of the closure as a time of desperation for families who were trying unsuccessfully to access the UI benefits system. The staff spent time assisting people to access benefits while they waited for UI payments. SRC staff confirmed that there has been a long wait for unemployment services for many clients, and still as of the time of this report’s writing, there were clients waiting to get their first unemployment check.

While the basic structure of the program remained constant, the pandemic and its effects impacted clients’ level of need and their service flow. The unemployed population increased dramatically, causing a doubling of applications for Basic Food/SNAP, while need for food assistance through food banks and pantries also rose. SRC staff described focusing on basic needs, rather than training and skill development, during this period as they provided supportive services aimed at keeping people housed, able to follow physical hygiene protocols, and having adequate food resources.

Further, the place-based strategy of centralized services to facilitate enrollment, referrals and joint service provision was essentially stopped by the requirements for staff to work from home. While the customer base was expanding greatly due to the economic impacts of the pandemic, enrollment in EcSA slowed down due to the loss of foot traffic in the SRC and slower phone traffic. SRC staff reported that onboarding into the program was more difficult over the phone rather than in person. Not only was it hard to reach people by phone, SRC staff shared that conducting assessments with the Arizona matrix is very personal, and phone services made it harder to build relationships with new clients. Further, a lack of access to computers and online services in the target community created additional barriers to reaching and serving the target population.

All staff were authorized to work remotely, and WorkSource Spokane System Operators provided guidance and infrastructure for the entire center. Career Path Services’ IT department provided guidance as well as software and hardware support to ensure that Navigators and other staff had adequate computer equipment and secure VPN connections to work from home. SRC staff described a short time lag while they figured out how to reach customers and enroll them remotely. For example, it took some time to get the system set up for digital signatures. As the SRC Manager stated, “Everyone just kept working through it, using the

technology available at home -- using email, text, and Zoom.” The main phone number for the SRC was linked to staff members’ personal cell phones, giving customers and employers immediate access to a person instead of voicemail. This strategy allowed for better customer service, while also limiting exposure of staff members’ personal contact information.

SRC staff described the support they received from Career Path Services during this period as “excellent.” It included reimbursement for the purchase of a cell phone for business use or a VoIP application to allow them to have a second business phone number connected to their personal cell phone for the purposes of interacting with customers. Also, staff received training on providing services using Zoom, completing forms for customers, and collecting electronic signatures to enroll customers in EcSA. The SRC Manager described being very focused on staff training during this period, so that staff were using their time well, even when communications with clients slowed due to the move to remote services.

Along with the impacts brought about by the pandemic, the EcSA direct service staff, all people of color, reported that the recent focus on racial injustice “has been really emotional and difficult.” SRC staff related that this work experience had been the first time that they had a work environment where people of color were a majority. They felt that their agency leadership “stood with us as an ally.” Staff described it as hard being African American in Spokane, where this racial group makes up only 2.2 percent of the population.<sup>8</sup> As one staff member shared, “Going out into a world as if you aren’t there is very difficult to navigate. Work is where I feel supported. The company is showing their commitment to race relations and improving the situation for all people of color – African American, Latinx, Native American – there is so much support and care there.” They related that it meant a lot to them that the CPS CEO reached out directly to support the African American staff, and has been open to changing service delivery to address structural racial injustice. For example, they have changed the amount of the voucher for hair care services in recognition that African American hair care services cost more, which meant a lot to them and their customers.

The SWC leadership also addressed working to advance racial equity in the workforce system – citing recent anti-bias training in early 2020 and structural racism education for staff to facilitate communication about race. As the SWC CEO stated, “While there isn’t a high level of diversity here, it does exist, and we are working to create a way for people to keep talking about uncomfortable subjects.” He related that they are also looking at investment strategies to reach those who are not being served and how to make more inroads into diverse minority populations. “It’s up to us to make the gateway into the workforce system as wide as possible.”

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<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census accessed July 24, 2020  
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/spokanecitywashington/RHI225219>

Some SRC staff started working on-site the last week of June, but customers had not yet returned as of the writing of this report. SRC staff described their engagement with customers as consisting of at least monthly contact, but usually twice or more per month. Navigators received a weekly report from the SRC Manager listing their case management interactions to help guide them on customers due for a contact. Navigators used the phone, text or zoom meeting to check in with customers and discuss next steps, basic needs or job searching activities.

SWC and SRC staff expected a big influx of need after the extended UI benefits of the CARES Act expired at the end of July, with ongoing focus on basic needs such as food distribution. SRC staff described still working out how to adapt customer flow due to the challenges created by social distancing. They were anticipating a smaller flow of customers and limits to on-site services, despite expected increased demand. For example, they were starting to set up computers for customer use and were expecting to be able to serve no more than two clients at a time.

The SRC staff shared, “There’s despair and loss of hope without a clear end in sight. Listening and addressing immediate needs are incredibly valuable to our customers.” SRC staff shared an example of a recent customer who was an enrolled EcSA participant with one week left of commercial driving license training (for truck driving) when the community college closed due to the pandemic. While he was waiting to be able to finish his training, the navigator kept in touch and made sure that the client was getting needed services. Another example of a recent customer was a man whose wallet was stolen, just before he was laid off due to the pandemic. He only had an old expired ID. To get him enrolled in EcSA and other services, SRC staff had to think creatively about how to get a current ID, given that there were long delays in replacing State IDs. They were able to help him reach a previous employer who searched in their records and provided him with a copy of his driver’s license to use for enrollment.

### ***Partner Service Shifts***

SRC staff described this period as difficult, but a time that brought the team closer; SRC meetings continued by Zoom every Tuesday and Thursday. According to SRC staff, these meetings were highly valued and well-attended by around 30 people from every agency located at the SRC. SRC staff described the importance of communication and trust among the partners to effectively use resources and refer clients to needed services. These meetings were used to update each other as services moved online and to discuss client needs and solutions. SRC staff reported continuing to leverage relationships with other provider staff they had built during the three to six months they had worked together at the center before the closure. They reported that virtual communications were effective at supporting continued coordination of services and “warm handoffs” between service-providers.



SRC partner staff worked to move client services online to the greatest extent possible. While some training courses have not yet been made available online, Strategies for Success and financial workshops were moved online so customers could continue to participate in pre-employment activities that aligned with their Individual Employment Plan. Community partners continued to provide many services remotely including housing and utility assistance, DSHS application and claims assistance, mental health and chemical dependency counseling, and healthcare.

Respondents described working hard to get customer workshops online during the closures, with some financial workshops still not yet offered online as of the time of this report. Further, the staff perceived that the financial stability program had not translated well to virtual training, resulting in low participation. They believed that customers needed more direct assistance to take advantage of these online trainings. They reported just getting back to a focus on pre-employment training, beyond on-going referrals for basic needs. The SRC Manager described being hopeful that over the next quarter case managers would be able to get back to providing more customer training. But several partners were yet to resume provision of more pre-employment services and workshops online or in person.

## Early Implementation Successes and Challenges

During its first year of implementation, the Spokane pilot experienced the following successes and challenges.

### *Successes*

- **Spokane has been the most successful of the four pilots in reaching its enrollment goal, with 99 participants enrolled as of June 30, 2020 -- 66 percent of its goal of 150.**
- **The Spokane SWC succeeded in entering into a contract with DSHS for life skills training (i.e., Strategies for Success workshops) and pre-employment training, so that these services are reimbursed through BFET.** This contract was the first one between DSHS and a local workforce development board for BFET services.
- **DSHS placed both a Basic Food benefits specialist and a BFET employment specialist at the SRC.** The SRC Navigators described these DSHS staff as a key resource to effectively serving joint customers and an important feature of the program. Navigators reported that they built strong working relationships while being co-located and continued to access assistance from DSHS staff through text or email after the SRC closed due to the pandemic. Further, DSHS staff attended the weekly SRC meetings – answering questions about how DSHS operations were changing due to the pandemic. For example, they

have explained the pandemic related program changes and how to help customers access Pandemic-EBT.

- **Close coordination among the co-located programs at the SRC enables partner organizations to leverage resources.** The EcSA leadership partnerships were built on the partnerships already developed through the SRC model of co-located services. SWC staff described Spokane as a unique community “in that there is a committed core of leadership to engage with.”
- **SRC staff praised the leadership of the program, especially crediting the SRC Manager with playing a big part in their success.** They praised the SRC Manager for always asking the staff for their opinions, and then actually factoring them into decisions and program changes. As one navigator stated, “for the first time in my work life, I feel that I can be myself in my job; people allow us to be ourselves and have our feelings.” Further, her staff described the SRC Manager as very knowledgeable of workforce systems and processes, able to explain policy and make changes when needed to facilitate their work. As one Navigator stated, “When you have someone to go to war with you and for you, you are going to succeed.”
- **To address recruitment challenges, SRC Navigators have focused on direct outreach and co-enrollments with other programs.** One Navigator described recruiting clients wherever he goes around town – in line at Walmart, for example. Another Navigator was focused on building relationships with staff in referring agencies such as Catholic Charities. She described working to “build a referral pipeline, so that customers are routinely referred to the SRC.” SRC staff described increased enrollments since returning to the office in late June, for instance by meeting people outdoors to collect paperwork.

## Challenges

- **Both the SWC and DSHS staff acknowledged challenges integrating DSHS staff into the pilot’s leadership team.** For example, the DSHS CSO staff noted that there was a lack of a shared understanding of the roles and responsibilities for DSHS in the partnership. SWC and DSHS staff also related challenges to partnering related to restrictions on data sharing, limited budgets, and a lack of communication around program development and implementation.
- **Outreach efforts have been challenging to conduct on a broader scale.** For instance, an effort to mail letters to all Basic Food/SNAP recipients in the target ZIP codes was unsuccessful due to DSHS budgetary, staff and data-sharing limitations. As an alternative, SWC staff were considering doing a general mailing to all residents in the

target area. For their part, DSHS staff reported sharing information about the program with customers, but not having resources to do a full referral process. DSHS staff stressed that the agencies should continue to work together to create a joint, articulated referral and service strategy to engage joint customers.

- **Customer recruitment has continued to be a challenge.** While they had experienced some challenges before the pandemic, staff felt that technology access issues hampered their recruitment efforts while the SRC remained closed to customers.

## 5. Tacoma-Pierce County Workforce Development Council

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The Tacoma-Pierce County WDC, referred to as WorkForce Central (WFC), launched the Economic Security for All: Pierce Power Up 98404 (Power Up 98404) pilot on September 4, 2019. It focuses on the needs of residents in the 98404 ZIP code because large numbers of its residents live in poverty and receive SNAP/Basic Food, and also because the ZIP code area<sup>9</sup> has among the highest numbers of people potentially eligible for benefits but not receiving them. Of the 33,543 residents, 28 percent receive SNAP benefits, and another 20 percent may be eligible, but not receiving them. Seventy-five percent of the area’s public-school students are students of color, and 87 percent are eligible for free or reduced lunch. In the Greater Pierce County area, African Americans make up 10 percent of the population, but disproportionately represent 30 percent of the homeless population. Many residents of this area live three to four bus rides away from the WorkSource One-Stop Center and a DSHS CSO.

### Program Design

Power Up 98404 intended to incorporate wrap-around services, training, mentorship, job shadowing, personal stability workshops and financial coaching and tools to assist participants to reach program goals. They also planned to provide concurrent, on-site childcare services to enable working parents to participate in classes such as GED prep, Career Readiness (CRED) workshops and 99 prep classes towards college level courses. Childcare services were considered vital, especially as the local WIOA program does not offer them. Together, the team and partners stressed intentionality; ensuring all activities addressed the needs of the adults and children in the 98404 community.

The team’s ambitious project design required gaining consensus to leverage the talent and resources of the project’s original 11 community partners. Each of the Power Up 98404 pilot partners planned to provide a unique set of services based on their geographic footprint and specialization.

- **DSHS Pierce South CSO** provides SNAP benefit screening, enrollment and verification, and screening, and possible enrollment into other benefits if the participant is eligible. The plan was for DSHS eligibility staff to provide referrals to the pilot on-site at the Tacoma Housing Authority Family Investment Center in the 98404 area of Tacoma. According to the WDC leadership, DSHS proved to be an invaluable partner due to their availability and willingness to serve families, assist them with connections to other

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.zipdatamaps.com/98404>

resources and benefits, as well as welcoming Power Up 98404 staff at the local CSO to conduct EcSA orientations.

- **Tacoma Housing Authority (THA)** Salishan Family Investment Center (FIC) is one of five family housing properties operated by THA whose mission is to “provide high quality, stable and sustainable housing and supportive services to people in need,” ensuring residents prosper, and their communities are safe and vibrant. THA’s EcSA partnership role was as the primary One-Stop enrollment site. Also, THA conducted outreach; co-enrolled participants in THA’s Family Self-Sufficiency financial coaching program; and provided workshop, event and office space at the FIC for both DSHS and Career TEAM staff. The FIC has been conducting virtual outreach since closure of on-site services due to the pandemic.
- **Metro Parks Tacoma Eastside Community Center (ECC)**, located just one mile from the FIC, was the secondary site planned for EcSA’s One-Stop enrollment services, hosting group training and workshops, and providing child care services for parents taking classes before and after school, and on weekends. At the time of this report, the ECC was closed and unable to provide remote services.
- **Tacoma Ministerial Alliance** is a network of local faith-based organizations convening to provide supports and services to Tacoma’s African American families at risk of becoming homeless. Slated to provide outreach and referral services through nine congregations, of which seven are located in the 98404 ZIP code area, the pandemic necessitated their withdrawal from the EcSA partnership.
- **Career TEAM** provides EcSA and WIOA screening and enrollment, as well as career coaching throughout the participant’s experience with the project. They planned to be on-site at the ECC and Salishan FIC, however this shifted to virtual services for orientations, weekly workshops and Career Boosts that highlight safe, available training.
- **Goodwill Industries** provides pilot customers a full complement of trainings and classes, including their proprietary Career Readiness, Education & Development (CRED) course, financial coaching and classes, and outreach. They originally planned to provide all services on-site in the 98404 area, however, have now shifted to virtual learning for CRED and Financial Literacy training.
- **United Way of Pierce County** refers participants to the program and provides access to and training for the SmartSheets-enabled Common Referral System powered by 211 (EcSA CRS) in order to support confirmation of partner referrals, follow up and case management and data reporting. This has continued despite challenges caused by the pandemic.

- **The Metropolitan Development Council (MDC)**, brought into the partnership by United Way, planned to provide mentorship opportunities including job shadowing and one-on-one mentoring provided on-site in the 98404 area.
- **Tacoma Community College** (a sub-contractor under Clover Park Technical College) planned to offer GED prep classes and 99-level college prep courses to support education benefits (financial aid) and enrollment. They also planned to offer workshops and one-on-one activities with enrolled participants to create career maps— a road map for education and training pathways— and enrollment into training.
- **Washington Hospitality Association** planned to promote opportunities for established pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship placement within the hospitality industry. Since the pandemic, they found it necessary to withdraw from the EcSA partnership.

In the first year, the partners worked to establish their EcSA outreach, referral, intake, and enrollment processes; conducted team tours of the Salishan FIC and ECC where services would take place; and provided technical assistance and computer system training for MDC and Goodwill, two of the pilot’s enrollment and job coaching providers. Additionally, the partnership developed a Mentorship Activities Plan which continues to be in development. Exhibit 5.1 displays the Power Up 98404 logic model.

Owning and being responsive to customer feedback were priorities as the team sought to ensure cultural competence among partners so that all people felt welcomed when walking through the door. Once working agreements were established, the Power Up 98404 team’s work centered around community outreach; they conducted focus groups and program planning – to ensure customers’ voices were also included in program development. Staff considered questions such as, “Why can’t customers find resources?”; “What are the barriers to participating in classes and workshops”; and “What resources should be included in the FIC and Eastside Community Center spaces?” WorkForce Central reported that they continue to be intentional about leading with equity and inclusion, ensuring it is imbedded in every conversation, activity and practice.

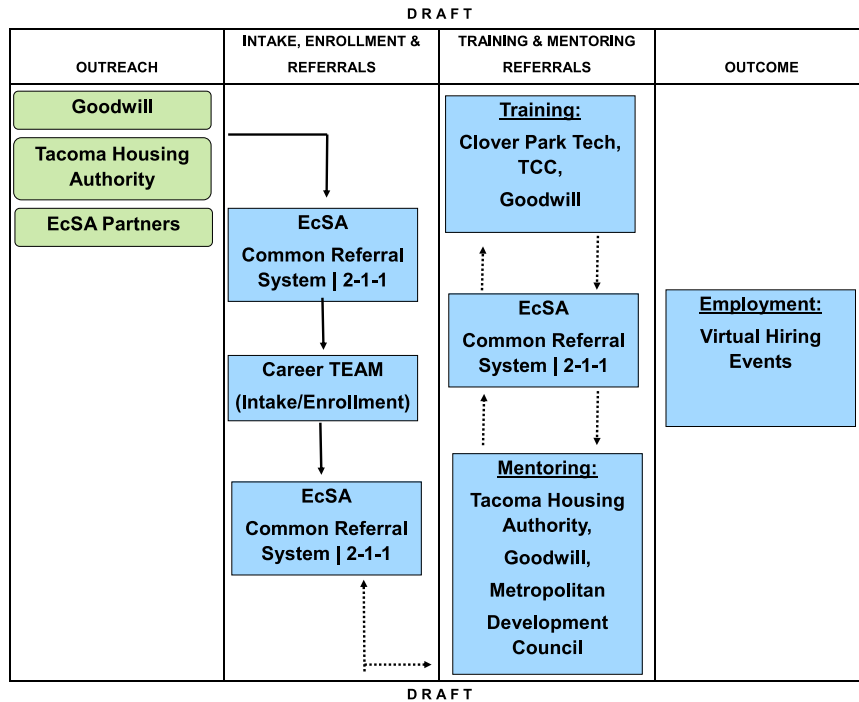
## Exhibit 5.1: Power Up 98404 Logic Model



### Planned Customer Flow

Power Up 98404 customer flow (Exhibit 5.2) begins with outreach and referral. Each pilot partner can refer individuals residing in the 98404 ZIP code area who are SNAP- and WIOA-eligible. The DSHS Pierce South CSO provides Basic Food/SNAP benefit screening, enrollment and verification, and screening and possible enrollment into other benefits if the participant is eligible. The project also leverages the WIOA adult program to co-enroll all EcSA clients.

## Exhibit 5.2: Power Up Customer Flow



All referrals are sent to Career TEAM for screening and co-enrollment in WIOA and EcSA services. All pilot partners are responsible for initial input into a Common Referral System (CRS). The initial referral is made through this platform to Career TEAM. Career TEAM continues the referral process through the EcSA CRS for other pilot services (e.g., financial coaching, mentoring, and CRED).

The CRS was already being used by the WorkSource One-Stop Center and its system partners. The EcSA CRS is built in the SmartSheet application, so it took minimal IT support to set up a new spreadsheet in the tool dedicated to EcSA referrals. The EcSA CRS allows all pilot partners to see incoming and outgoing participant referrals.

Once a participant enrolls in Power Up 98404, one of three Career TEAM staff members works with them to develop an individualized employment plan, or career plan. A career plan includes goals, action steps, and resource referrals necessary to complete overall employment objectives, and when applicable, elevate household incomes above 200 percent of FPL. Depending on the participants' goals and plan, they will be referred to other Power Up 98404 providers for services and will receive overall case management support from those agencies. Career TEAM reports that one of the early challenges has been getting participants to trust the other pilot providers. Often, they are just starting to feel comfortable with their Career TEAM Career Advisor and would rather not be "passed on" to someone else. When a participant obtains unsubsidized employment that has moved them above 200 percent of FPL, they are



exited from the program (whereas “inactive” designation applies to enrolled participants who have not engaged in the program).

Depending on the participant’s goals, their career plan activities might include:

- **Training from their Career TEAM Career Advisor** on how to access resources, including: ESD and O\*NET websites to conduct labor market research related to on-demand industries; and Work Experience Workshops offering job readiness skills and Career Boosts to obtain industry information and job training.
- **Connections to partner colleges** to receive information about financial aid opportunities and career mapping services, which create individualized education and training pathways to achieve customer career plans focused on in-demand industries.
- **Opportunities to enroll in CRED and financial education classes** provided by Goodwill Industries.

## Early Implementation Experience

There was significant time spent in the Fall of 2019 finalizing the scope of work for the 11 partners. WFC leadership reported that the time organizations have spent coordinating their services to better meet the needs of participants has been key to building their local system. In order to do so, the WFC EcSA program coordinator holds monthly planning meetings with all the partners, and partners continue to train together where applicable, including partners who are experienced with digital training platforms mentoring organizations that are new to the technology.

The decision to use WorkSource One-Stop Center’s CRS Powered by 211 for the pilot allowed all partners access to the system, even those that did not have access to ETO, or chose not to train their staff on yet another case tracking system. Although eight of the providers were already using the 2.0 CRS powered by 211, it was essential to train the partners in using the separate EcSA CRS. The CRS does not replace ETO or any of the other proprietary software applications the providers are using for their own programs, as the CRS is not a case management system; rather, its sole purpose is to send, receive and track referrals.

While finalizing contracts and agreements were initially a hurdle, there was a core group of dedicated partners, determined to meet the significant needs of the 98404 community, “striving to serve deeper.” Career TEAM, THA, DSHS and Goodwill have conducted outreach activities such as attending community events, distributing fliers to a wide range of organizations including schools, public libraries, Puyallup tribes and the Eastside Family Support center.

THA undertook a part of the referral responsibility, planning to provide 80 percent of an Engagement Specialist’s time to be housed at the Salishan FIC alongside a DSHS worker and

Career TEAM member, on-site 4-days per week. Eligible residents participating in THA’s Family Self Sufficiency program – a 5-year incentive-based program providing financial rewards for going to school, securing employment, maintaining regular health visits and other personal goals – also have the opportunity to co-enroll in the Power Up 98404 program to receive training for neighborhood employment opportunities and support services. Kick-off and outreach and engagement events were well attended by partners, and ongoing, weekly EcSA orientations facilitated by Career TEAM were offered at a variety of partner locations pre-pandemic.

As of June 30, 2020, 52 participants had been enrolled in the Power Up 98404 program, representing 26 percent of the first-year benchmark target of 200 (total project target is 440 participants by June 2021). A significant increase in enrollees occurred in the first quarter of 2020, largely attributed to the partners resolving contract and MOU challenges, and ramping up outreach efforts. Power Up 98404 customers were enrolled in education and training at 40 percent of planned as of June 30. Perhaps one of the greatest performance highlights was the number of 211 connections for individuals to services such behavioral, mental health, addiction, legal assistance, etc., totaling 508 connected, or 88 percent of the planned outcome of 1,500 through June 30.

Power Up 98404 customers benefited from co-enrollment in WIOA services as well, particularly during early 2020, before service closures caused by the pandemic. Activities primarily centered around comprehensive and specialized assessments leading to individual employment plans for all 52 participants, with eight enrolled in financial literacy, WEX, and/or individual training account services. Two participants were placed into employment.

### ***Post-pandemic Changes***

As one partner representative expressed, the Power Up 98404 project “came to a screeching halt” because of the pandemic, which hit just as the pilot was gaining momentum after a delayed start. Beginning in mid-February 2020, EcSA community partners experienced a reduction in people seeking services, as well as partial office closures, and event cancellations or postponements. Many of the cancelled events were for outreach, job readiness activities, resource fairs and hiring events, as well as to provide opportunities for partners to share best practices. By early March, Power Up 98404 partners began preparations for social distancing measures and concentrated on creating staffing plans and identifying tools staff would need to serve customers remotely, including redesigning financial literacy and career readiness classes so they could be offered online.

Pilot team coordination and communication became more limited as partners shored up organizational practices in the face of the pandemic. As virtual work environments were established, team members renewed their focus on the enrollment pipeline, re-instating

monthly meetings to review and further refine outreach and referral processes, and to share new practices for remote settings. The team remained determined to stay connected with customers and continued services for those enrolled in the pilot, recognizing service provision would be dependent upon customers' ability to access phone, internet, and other technological resources.

Enrollment diminished during April to June 2020 because of upheaval caused by the pandemic, and service disruptions as partners and potential customers alike scrambled to triage urgent needs and determine a way forward. Ultimately, this has resulted in the need for alternative outreach, intake and referral methods, as well as reconfiguring class and workshop delivery from in-person to virtual or socially distanced models. To address these challenges, the FIC leveraged internal staff to conduct outreach by cold-calling likely eligible clients. The Salishan homeowner's association, Eastside Collaborative, has promoted the Power Up 98404 program through its newsletter, social media, and email chains, as well as weekly outreach at the food bank.

Similarly, Career TEAM experienced challenges in its processes because of not having in-person enrollment referrals from the FIC and DSHS, originally intended to "catch clients while they're there." Recruitment by phone, made it more difficult to connect with the potential participants, regardless of their excitement for the program, as staff relied on call-backs and email communication. At the time of this report, plans were underway to adapt outreach call tools developed by the Connell DSHS including a call tracker, Power Up 98404 demographic requirements, referral process (from DSHS to Career TEAM for screening/enrollment) and a list of program services. Also, Career TEAM had plans for additional virtual classes and trainings (WIOA/EcSA orientation and information sessions, Career Boosts, mentorship opportunities, and more). Some virtual classes may be presented live, while others will be pre-recorded as applicable.

### ***Partner Service Shifts***

Although enrolling participants into education and training during the pandemic has been difficult due to the lack of short-term virtual training options that align with in-demand fields, Goodwill shifted within two months to provide virtual financial education classes and its Career Readiness, Education & Development (CRED) training program. Additionally, Goodwill developed Google forms to remotely gather financial baseline information needed when enrolling customers into financial literacy and coaching services. This created a streamlined process from Career TEAM (at the time of enrollment) directly to Goodwill for financial coaching.

In order to address the reluctance of some referred individuals to participate during the pandemic, Goodwill has had success engaging and re-engaging clients in other programs

besides EcSA by offering incentives for those who signed up for or completed different aspects of their career plans, like gift cards and coupons for utility assistance. The Goodwill team also discovered a new tool -- “Utilizing Engage by Cell” – for text capability. Participants can text “DWOC Connect” to enroll in virtual classes in CRED, personal finance, IT fundamentals and PC technician courses.

The pandemic has severely impacted multiple partner organizations’ operations. Most notably:

- Two partners were forced to drop from participation in the project: the Tacoma Ministerial Alliance that conducted outreach services to those at-risk for or experiencing homelessness, and Washington Hospitality Association, that had offered an apprenticeship program.
- Tacoma Community College and Clover Park Technical College closed and, at the time of this report, had withdrawn from the Power Up 98404 partnership. WFC staff were hopeful Clover Park Technical college would be able to re-engage with the pilot after January 2021 when in-person classes are expected to resume.
- Training through Goodwill Industries was negatively impacted, as its retail stores were closed in Pierce County.
- The FIC originally offered a full complement of space to EcSA partners for classes and workshops and provided childcare services. The FIC had been unable to provide space for two engagement workers (one each from DSHS and Career TEAM) because of social distancing demands, hampering outreach and referral efforts.
- Metro Parks’ ECC closed on March 13. This has significantly reduced the ability to conduct centralized outreach, intake and referral meetings, childcare, and workshops as originally planned. The center staff hoped to reopen in some manner in fall 2020, but due to pandemic restrictions, they expected program capacity would be limited upon re-opening.

The pandemic also effected referral capacity, especially as it became necessary for individual partners to address their own pandemic-related operational concerns and resulting client crises. For example, United Way experienced a state-wide organizational emergency order that called for all hands-on-deck to process the dramatic increase in UI and SNAP benefit referrals. Staff predicted that once those referrals have been processed, there will be an increase in Power Up 98404 referrals.

At the time of this report, a central focus for all partners was costs and logistics for personal protective equipment and public space sanitization as they sought to re-open and resume offering services, albeit on a restricted basis. The WFC leadership team expressed that it has been impressive how quickly EcSA providers have pivoted to virtual services and how much patience they have displayed while assisting customers to learn how to use the technology platforms that support virtual services.

## Early Implementation Successes and Challenges

During its first year of implementation, the pilot experienced the following successes and challenges.

### Successes

- **The large number of partners is one of the pilot’s key innovations because it brings together organizations that previously have not collaborated.** In the beginning, it took time for each partner to learn the other’s service delivery continuum, strengths, and needs. That understanding was seen as pivotal to the project’s successful launch, as it took time to develop and adapt the overall service delivery model.
- **The groundwork for developing the cohesive EcSA partnership resulted in natural collaboration to meet client needs.** As observed by the WFC leadership, “We are doing a lot of learning alongside our partners during this process,” including sharing of best practices between partners “which has been powerful and amplified during the pandemic.”
- **The partners reported they have gained a greater understanding of each other’s respective services and roles in the community and were able to contribute resources more effectively.** It was notable that this was achieved despite the challenges of the pandemic and having to quickly pivot their program model and services.
- **The focus on including the participant voice when planning the program seemed to have early success.** Outreach messages were designed to speak to the intended audience and encourage people to enroll in the program. A goal yet to be achieved is for partners to create an informative video wherein a panel of partners answer questions about their respective roles and services – thus helping clients gain a greater understanding of and connection to providers.

### Challenges

Recruitment has remained the biggest challenge, with the Power Up 98404 program serving only 26 percent of the first-year benchmark target of 200 participants as of June 30, 2020. Partner organizations continued to strategize to improve outreach and recruitment strategies. For instance, one provider suggested borrowing from the marketing strategies of for-profit entities to reach more people by using social media such as Facebook ads. In the words of one interviewee, “We (non-profit providers) are a decade behind in how we recruit people. We’re still putting up fliers, whereas for-profit businesses are recruiting online and using social media.” Ultimately, multiple Power Up 98404 partners indicated that they might have to

broaden the project enrollment area to all of Pierce County to adequately increase their enrollment numbers.

Other challenges have included:

- **Project implementation was delayed.** When the project was first designed, WFC leadership and potential partner organizations’ directors, CEOs and the colleges designed and applied to the grant; however, not all partners were at the table creating the design. As a result, WFC had to develop statements of work and budgets for some partners not included in the original project design. Additional challenges, such as the retirement of WFC’s Director of Contracts and Compliance, also delayed completion of contracts. Some service providers did not finalize their contracts until January or February of 2020, around the same time the novel coronavirus was discovered in Washington State.
- **Staff turnover among WFC, and partner staff has continued to pose a challenge to the pilot.** The following positions experienced turnover during early 2020: Goodwill Financial Coach/Education Instructor, DSHS SNAP Client Services Manager, United Way/Center for Strong Families EcSA lead, and MDC mentor.
- **The pilot has experienced data sharing challenges, wherein each partner had their own limitations around what data could be shared, with whom, and how.** This was further complicated because DSHS is not a “funded” partner and did not sign formal agreements.
- **There were enrollment paperwork barriers.** THA shared that documents and paperwork required for EcSA enrollment initially created a barrier for some potential participants they referred, and case managers expressed concerns clients may fall through cracks once handed to another agency. This was particularly frustrating for partners who had the required information (e.g., THA) but could not share it because of data sharing restrictions. Career TEAM has shifted their process of collecting documents to make it easier by offering a secure platform for the participants to upload their information.
- **Virtual services have been challenging to implement.** The lack of home computers and reliable Internet with enough bandwidth to support video calls has been a major challenge to virtual services among Power Up 98404 participants. Several respondents wondered if EcSA funding could be used to provide participants home access to computers and the Internet. Another suggestion to reach participants who do not have home computers and internet is to offer courses over public access television channels.

## Summary and Recommendations

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The early implementation experiences of the four EcSA pilots have individual and shared characteristics. They all had challenges launching a new program, specifically in creating written partnership agreements with new partners, hiring and retaining staff, and developing effective data management systems. All four pilots experienced challenges recruiting and enrolling participants, both before and after the COVID-19 pandemic changed the human services and economic landscape. After the pandemic, new enrollments in all WIOA programs slowed down significantly, especially in the WIOA Adult program, which serve customers least able to adapt to virtual services or virtual employment. In fact, all four pilots experienced disruptions and challenges moving services to virtual platforms and engaging participants in remote services necessitated by stay-at-home orders and social distancing requirements.

According to quarterly reports to ESD, as of June 30, 2020, the four pilots had enrolled a combined total of 187 participants, or 40 percent of the revised goal of 465.

Actual versus targeted enrollment varied between pilots:

- Benton-Franklin enrolled 20 percent of its goal (7 participants)
- Southwest Washington enrolled 17 percent of its goal (29 participants)
- Spokane enrolled 66 percent of its goal (99 participants)
- Tacoma-Pierce enrolled 26 percent of its first-year goal (52 participants)

Eighty percent of enrolled participants had completed Individual Employment Plans and 75 percent had completed individualized assessments. Across all four pilots, service uptake was minimal by EcSA participants, notably in the basic financial training and other foundational training programs. Most utilized were supportive services, which were received by 21 percent, or 40 total participants.

The Spokane pilot, which was the most successful in meeting targeted participant goals, had several advantages when compared to the other pilots. Notably it had already created a version of the EcSA model within its campus with established partnerships to build on. Other pilots were new(er) to working with their targeted populations, had to establish new partnerships, or did not develop their service design with input from their target populations or use human-centered design principles.

Further complicating program start-up efforts, there was a lack of coordination at the state level between DSHS and ESD in the launch of the request for proposals, confusion about contracting requirements, and challenges aligning the multiple workforce development program funding streams and eligibility requirements. Some EcSA pilot leaders expressed that elements of the model and request for proposals, notably the geographic requirements,

created barriers to forming effective partnerships across workforce development councils serving adjacent communities. All four pilots' leadership found the limitations on service area to be an impediment to outreach, due to the resulting inability to cover broader community areas that extended beyond the initial service area boundaries.

Based on their early challenges with launching and establishing pilots, especially under the changes brought about by the pandemic, WDC staff have requested modifications to the EcSA program requirements and expectations. Based on these requested changes, along with observations made through the data collection process, the research team makes the following recommendations, which are intended to improve the ability of EcSA pilots to achieve the important objectives set out by the program and ultimately reduce the total number of people in poverty in their communities:

- **Continue the EcSA program, allowing it to adapt its services and program model to respond to the post-pandemic economic realities.** ESD should allow pilots the flexibility they need to create program models to help ensure that the target population of people below 200 percent of FPL is not overlooked as the workforce development system focuses on recovery efforts.
- **Allow for flexibility and expansion of the geographic service areas.** Expanding the pilots' service areas would enable them to recruit and enroll additional eligible participants and could incentivize collaboration with adjacent WDCs.
- **Revise expected program outcomes related to poverty reduction.** While it is important to stay focused on families below 200 percent of FPL, concrete targets for poverty reduction seem unrealistic and should be replaced with alternative measures such as increased income, enrollment in benefits, or enrollment in training.
- **Encourage local goal development and outcomes tracking based on innovative practices.** For example, Workforce Southwest Washington could track job retention in addition to increased earnings, reflecting their focus on this area through their Retention Specialist position. Many low-wage workers cycle in and out of jobs, leading to lower wages. With additional supports, the program could demonstrate a positive outcome that is sometimes a necessary first step to overcoming poverty.
- **Address challenges for co-enrollment in multiple workforce programs.** The different eligibility requirements and service structures of the WIOA program, BFET, and other partner workforce development programs cause challenges for EcSA staff and participants as they work to maximize available workforce services and career development opportunities. ESD can work with other state partners to issue guidance and disseminate promising practices to help guide local pilots in innovative program implementation.



- **Consider a longer program period and secure additional funding to expand the program.** EcSA leadership and staff from all pilots are clearly committed to this endeavor for longer than the initial period of the grants and would benefit from additional support to build on the progress they have been able to make during the initial grant period. ESD could provide leadership to leverage additional private or public funds to support the current EcSA pilots and to expand to additional communities, possibly statewide.

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# **Economic Security for All Midpoint Evaluation Report**

**5.31.2022**

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## Executive Summary

Economic Security for All (EcSA), an initiative of the Washington Employment Security Department (ESD), is designed to develop replicable models that measurably reduce poverty. Using federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Statewide Activities funds, the program funds Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) to develop comprehensive services for individuals who earn 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) or less to help them move into economic self-sufficiency. The program focuses on engaging individuals who are receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, are insecurely housed, or are from underserved populations.

In late 2020, ESD successfully sought additional funding to extend and expand the pilot program statewide from just four initial pilots. As a result of this expansion, seven additional EcSA pilots began implementation in April 2021. ESD also provided additional funding and extended the grant period for the first four pilots for an additional two years through March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

### The EcSA Evaluation

In January 2020, ESD awarded a contract to Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) to conduct an implementation evaluation of the EcSA initiative. The evaluation aims to examine how EcSA projects navigate implementation challenges and to explore how promising practices could be replicated by other communities to reach similarly positive systems-building results. This Midpoint Evaluation Report, the evaluation's second report, provides an overview of the implementation and expansion of the EcSA program from July 2020 through March 2022. It builds on a report completed in late 2020 that described the first year of EcSA implementation in four pilots, documenting early challenges and successes and making recommendations for how the initiative could be improved.

### Early Results

- After a slow start during the first year and a half of the program, primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic, enrollment in the initial four pilot sites increased substantially, allowing the pilots to achieve 71 percent of their overall enrollment target of 1,258 participants as of March 31, 2022.
- The initial four pilots continued to find EcSA program goals challenging for many of their participants to achieve. As of March 31, 2022, 188 participants (52 percent of their target) had been placed in training that would lead to the wage goal of \$34,480, while

163 (36 percent of their target) had entered employment that met the wage goal of \$34,480.

## Successes and Emerging Promising Practices

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, both the new and initial EcSA pilots experienced some success reaching their target outcomes. Promising practices are emerging that have the potential to improve project implementation and ultimately yield increased economic mobility for the families and individuals EcSA serves. Examples of these practices include the following:

- **Blended and braided funding from multiple grant sources allowing individual program participants to access more services.** For example, Spokane leverages multiple funding sources to provide EcSA participants with opportunities for rental assistance, wraparound services designed to stabilize housing-insecure participants, paid work experience, and personal stability training and mentorship for justice-involved participants.
- **Improved data sharing, most notably new agreements between ESD and DSHS, allowing some programs to improve outreach.** For example, DSHS in Franklin County now requests consent from SNAP participants to share their contact information with Benton-Franklin EcSA. Also, a data sharing agreement between ESD and DSHS has allowed Workforce Southwest Washington’s EcSA staff to conduct direct outreach to SNAP participants, facilitating a recent increase in enrollment.
- **Using incentives to support consistent participation in EcSA services.** Across its programs, Seattle- King County awards incentives to participants to recognize reaching milestones and accomplishments.

## Challenges

As the EcSA program grew, pilots continued to experience challenges with participant recruitment, enrollment, and engagement in services. While some of the challenges were related to the pandemic, underlying challenges of engaging the target population in the workforce development system may have included the following:

- **Avoidance of workforce participation** for fear that increased earnings from resultant employment would make participants ineligible for public benefit programs, resulting in an overall net monetary loss (otherwise known as the “benefits cliff”).

- **Low engagement in services** resulting in fewer in-depth services compared to what was intended in the original EcSA vision.
- **Continued COVID-related challenges**, even as services returned to being offered in-person, such as ongoing health problems, need to care for family at home, fear of returning to work, resistance to vaccine requirements, fear of contracting COVID-19, and lack of adequate childcare.

## Recommendations

ESD staff and their partners (e.g., the Technical Advisory Committee) should continue their collaboration with LWDB partners to build on the promising practices that have emerged thus far and address emerging challenges. The following recommendations would strengthen EcSA implementation and aid efforts to determine what works for meaningful poverty reduction.

- **Focus on the low engagement/low retention problem to move participants into training and employment outcomes more successfully.** As EcSA programs have struggled to engage participants, LWDBs should continue to engage with service providers, community members, and participants to understand the underlying causes and build program components that address these concerns. ESD should incentivize pilots to adopt successful retention strategies in future rounds of EcSA expansion.
- **Expand data sharing agreements between ESD and DSHS to all EcSA programs.** While there has been progress in some areas (e.g., Benton-Franklin and Tacoma-Pierce), other EcSA pilots still struggle with exchanging data to facilitate outreach and recruitment of SNAP participants to EcSA.
- **Track the amount of services and length of time in EcSA programming** (e.g., dates and duration of services received) for each participant, to help paint a more precise picture of program implementation and estimate more clearly the actual cost for full participation in this kind of programming.
- **Develop clearer entry and exit measurements.** Defining different service components (e.g., engagement/enrollment, pre-employment/training, employment support, and follow-up) and tracking the progression through these stages would paint a clearer picture of the amount of time it takes to engage participants in services and the amount of follow-up and support provided after a participant enters into employment or longer-term training.

## Future Evaluation Activities

Over the next 18 months, the EcSA evaluation team will conduct significant data collection that will allow for deeper insights into program implementation and outcomes. Six pilots (Benton-Franklin, Seattle-King County, South Central, Southwest, Spokane, and Tacoma-Pierce) will receive an in-person evaluation site visit approximately six months before their EcSA grant funding ends, which will include interviews with participants, community members, LWDB staff, and EcSA staff. The additional five pilots will have a final interview near the end of grant funding, and SPR staff will conduct virtual interviews with several program participants from each pilot.

In addition, the evaluation team will work with pilot and ESD staff to obtain and analyze program implementation data. This program data will hopefully shed more light on the average and median length of time of EcSA program enrollment, the receipt of services, and the intensity of services received. This analysis will be included along with the qualitative data analysis in a final evaluation report in March 2024.

## Introduction

Economic Security for All (EcSA), an initiative of the Washington Employment Security Department (ESD), is designed to develop replicable models that measurably reduce poverty. Using federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Statewide Activities funds, the program funds Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) to develop comprehensive services for individuals who earn 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) or less to help them move into economic self-sufficiency. The program focuses on engaging individuals who are receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, are insecurely housed, and other underserved populations.

The EcSA initiative has evolved and grown significantly since the initial implementation report that documented its first year of operation.<sup>1</sup> ESD has made several changes to the program, including revisions to eligibility criteria, implementation timelines, geographic service areas, and outcome goals. At the time of this report, EcSA has become a statewide program implemented by all but one LWDB, with expanded funding extended to at least March 2024.

## The EcSA Evaluation

In January 2020, ESD awarded a contract to Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) to evaluate implementation of the EcSA initiative. The evaluation aims to examine how EcSA projects navigate implementation challenges and to explore how promising practices could be replicated by other communities to reach similarly positive systems-building results. This Midpoint Evaluation Report, the evaluation's second, provides an overview of the implementation and expansion of the EcSA program from July 2020 through March 2022. It builds on a report completed in late 2020 that described the first year of EcSA implementation in four pilots, documenting early challenges and successes and making recommendations for how the initiative could be improved.

SPR based this report on data gathered from multiple sources, including grantee documents (such as approved grant proposals, logic models, meeting minutes, and internal reports), virtual interviews with EcSA grantee staff and partners, and grantee reports on participant data and implementation progress. SPR has collected more data from the first four and two newer pilots—Seattle-King County and South Central—than other pilot programs. Data

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<sup>1</sup> Levin et al, 2020. *Initial Implementation Report: Economic Security for All Initiative Evaluation*



sources included an initial series of virtual interviews with multiple levels of program staff followed by quarterly interviews with the EcSA program coordinator.

### **Roadmap to the Remainder of the Report**

The next section of this report reviews the expansion of the program to new areas of the state and describes the new pilots' program models. The report then provides a summary of program data and updates implementation progress of the initial four pilot sites. This is followed by a snapshot of early implementation in two of the new pilot sites. The report concludes with a summary and recommendations for strengthening program implementation in the next two years.

## Evolving program models

As documented in the initial evaluation report, early EcSA implementation was characterized by recruitment and enrollment challenges, both before and after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the pandemic stretched on, requiring prolonged virtual service provision, it became apparent that early pilots would require a longer program implementation period than originally envisioned. Further, as economic recovery efforts intensified in the wake of the pandemic, policymakers focused on ensuring that the initiative expanded to include more low-income people who were at risk of being left out of economic recovery efforts.

### Revised Program Requirements

Based on these challenges and input from the EcSA Technical Advisory Committee (made up of partner staff from Department of Commerce, Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Board for Community and Technical Colleges, several non-governmental organizations, and others) and ESD leadership staff, ESD adjusted the EcSA program model and expanded it statewide. Key changes to the program included the following:

- Expanding the primary target population to anyone under 200 percent of FPL (\$34,480 for a family of two), regardless of SNAP participation, with a continued focus on ensuring all participants are receiving the maximum benefits to which they are entitled.
- Expanding the geographic target areas in existing pilots, while maintaining focus on prioritized communities.
- Revising the program exit goal for participants to include both being enrolled in training for a career path to employment above 200 percent of FPL (\$34,480 for a family of two) or being employed in a job earning that amount or higher.
- Removing other targeted outcomes related to mentorship and personal and financial stability.

ESD instituted these changes in the EcSA program model in the four initial pilots as well as the other subsequently funded pilots.

### Program Expansion

ESD successfully sought additional funding to extend and expand the pilot program statewide through 2024, announcing the expansion in January 2021. As a result of this expansion, seven new EcSA pilots (operated by LWDBs) began implementation in April 2021:

Eastern WA Partnership Workforce Development Council, SkillSource (North Central Washington), Northwest Workforce Council, Kitsap County (Olympic), Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County, Workforce Snohomish, and South Central Workforce Development Council. ESD also provided additional funding and extended the grant period for the first four pilots for an additional two years. For the seven new pilot programs, each LWDB developed an EcSA pilot model tailored to its community needs that would meet the EcSA goals.

ESD awarded a total of \$10.7 million for the first four years of the program (Exhibit 1). The funding was earmarked from the governor's WIOA Statewide Activities Funds over 2021-2024. While the funding for the second two years maintained a similar level as the first two years, instead of being spread across four pilot programs, it was spread across all 11 pilots. As a result, the average funding for the expansion pilots was significantly lower than the average funding for the initial pilots.

**Exhibit 1: ESD Funding Allocation for EcSA**

<b>Local Workforce Development Board</b>	<b>PY 18-19</b>	<b>PY 20-21</b>	<b>Total</b>
Kitsap County (Olympic)	0	413,333	413,333
Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council*	0	13,390	13,390
Northwest Workforce Council	0	466,252	466,252
Workforce Snohomish	0	442,436	442,436
Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County	0	687,422	687,422
Workforce Central (Tacoma-Pierce)	1,700,000	488,544	2,188,544
Workforce Southwest Washington	1,600,000	361,739	1,961,739
SkillSource (North Central Washington)	0	441,557	441,557
South Central Workforce Development Council	0	536,484	536,484
Eastern Washington Partnership Workforce Development Council	0	381,356	381,356
Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council	856,775	280,489	1,137,264
Spokane Area Workforce Development Council	1,700,000	369,630	2,069,630
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,856,775</b>	<b>\$4,882,634</b>	<b>\$10,739,409</b>

\* Pacific Mountain had a planning grant only and decided not to implement a program.

Source: ESD, 2022

## Early Results

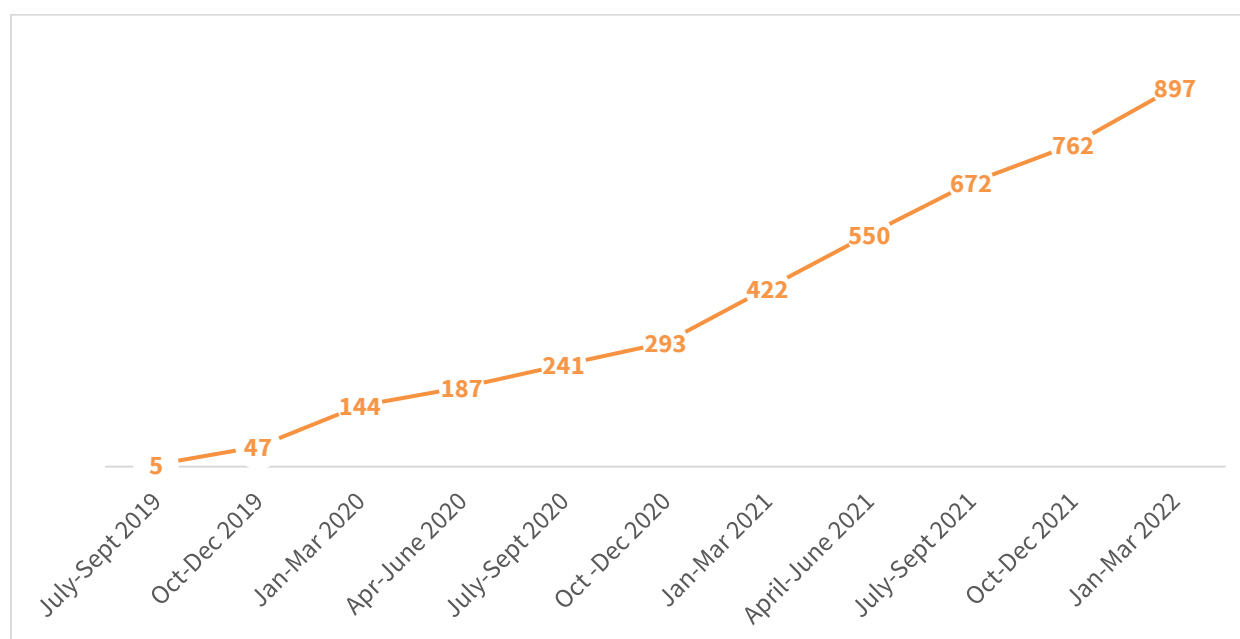
While the seven new EcSA pilots overall were at approximately 80 percent of their target, they had enrolled relatively few participants in their first months of operation, with a total of 85 enrollments as of March 31, 2022. This section provides a snapshot of enrollment and outcomes for the first four pilot sites as of March 31, 2022, the date of the most recent data

summary provided to ESD at the time of this report.<sup>2</sup> Because they had yet to enroll large numbers of participants, results for the seven new pilots are not included in this summary.

## Enrollment

After a slow start during the first year and a half of the program, primarily due to the pandemic, enrollment in the initial four pilot sites increased substantially, allowing them to achieve 71 percent of their overall enrollment target of 1,258 participants as of March 31, 2022. As shown in Exhibit 2, although it took a full year to reach 200 participants, enrollment had doubled by March 2021 and reached almost 900 enrollments by March 2022.

**Exhibit 2: Enrollment in First Four Pilot Sites Over Time**



Source: ESD, 2022

## Outcomes

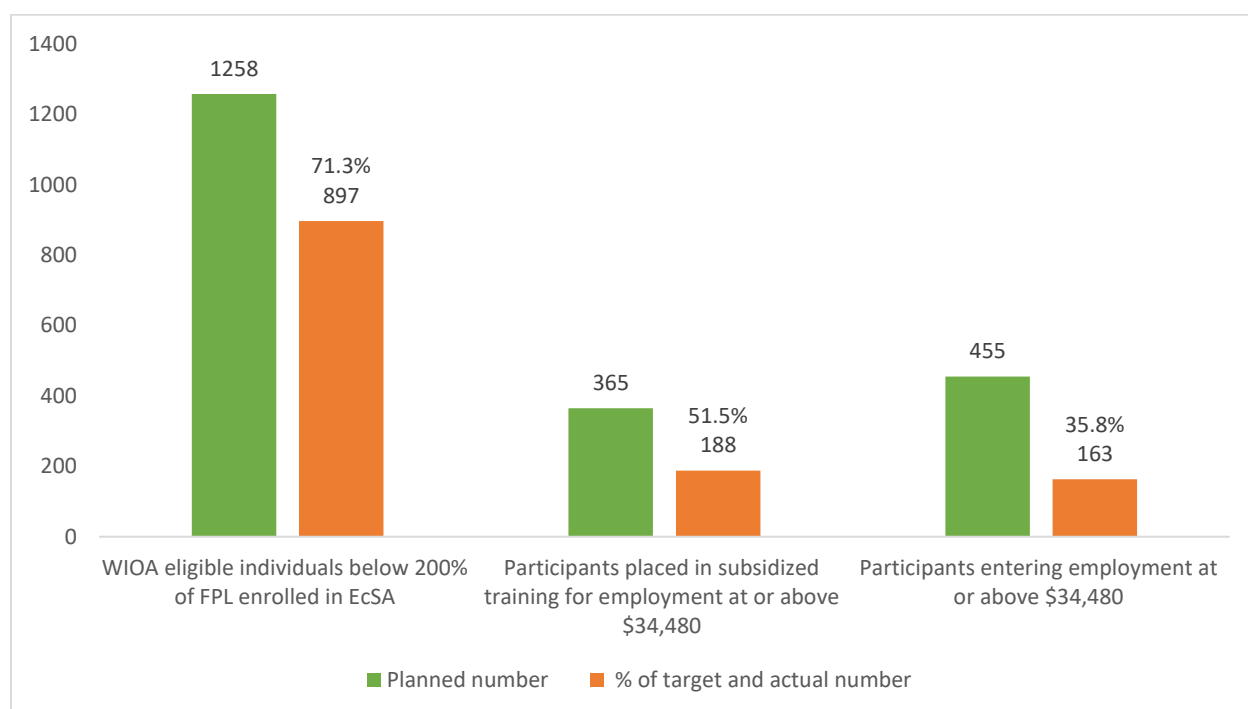
EcSA pilots aim to help their participants make progress toward economic self-sufficiency. ESD measures their success in doing so by the number of participants exiting their programs who are either enrolled in training for a career path leading to employment at a wage above 200 percent of FPL (\$34,480 for a family of two) or employed in a job earning that amount or higher.

<sup>2</sup> This data is based on the quarterly data summaries submitted by each pilot, which track enrollment and service provision to EcSA participants.

Pilots continued to find these goals difficult for many of their participants to achieve. Pilot staff reported challenges engaging participants in the program due to concerns about entering the workforce because of health issues, lack of childcare, or the possibility of losing important benefits (i.e., housing, Medicaid, and Basic Food/SNAP). Also, pilot staff report that engagement in career-path training was challenging for participants with immediate pressures to work or family responsibilities. More information about program challenges and successes is included in case studies of each of the four initial pilots in the following section of this report.

As shown in Exhibit 3, 188 participants had met the training goal (52 percent of the overall target), while 163 had met the employment goal (36 percent of the overall target) as of March 31, 2022. Pilots ranged in their success in meeting targets, with training targets between 27 and 100 percent, and employment targets between 13 and 52 percent.

**Exhibit 3: Enrollment Targets and Outcomes**



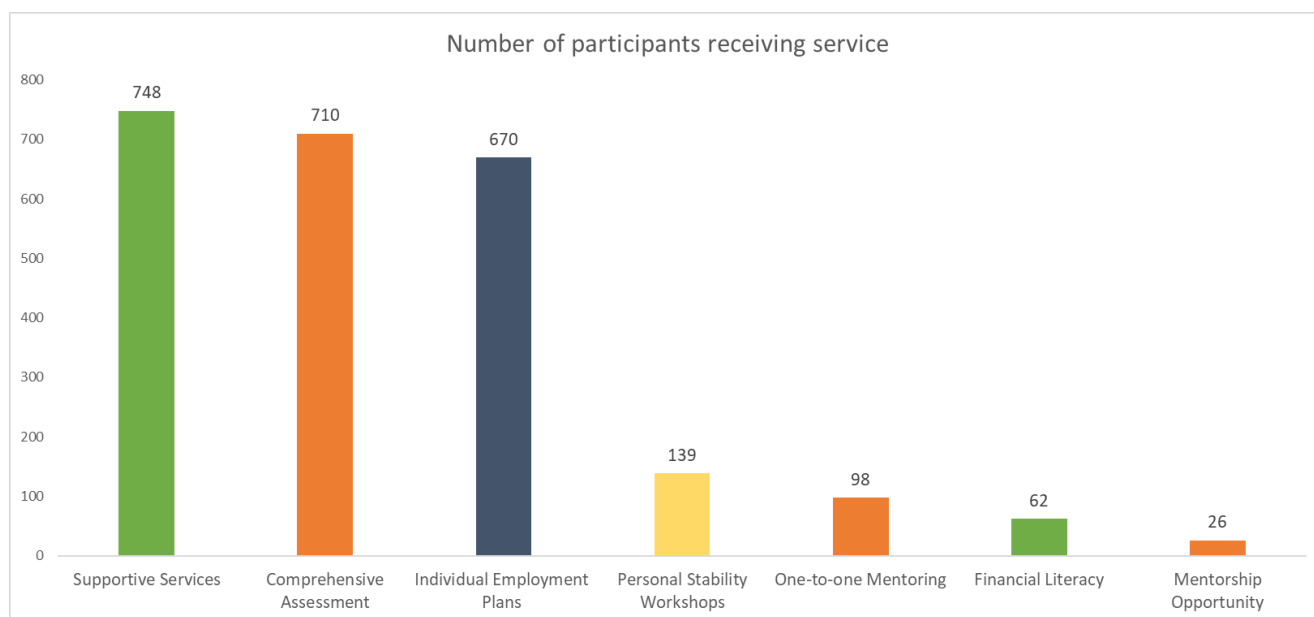
Source: ESD, 2022

## Service Receipt

The level of services received for those enrolled, as reported by the first four pilots, varied significantly by type of service (Exhibit 4). While most of those enrolled received comprehensive assessments and supportive services, and a large majority created an individual employment plan, the receipt of other services, such as mentoring and

participation in workshops, was much lower. Without data on average time in the program before exit, it is unclear whether the lack of receipt of other services is related to participants staying in the program for a short time or reflects a lack of interest in or need for these services. Based on quarterly check-in calls with the four pilots, it seems likely that a significant number of those enrolled in the program discontinued participation before these other services could begin, rather than that these services weren't needed. More information about program services is included in case studies of each of the four initial pilots in the following section of this report.

#### Exhibit 4: Service Outputs Reported



Source: ESD, 2022

## Initial EcSA Pilot Case Studies

The first four EcSA pilots have been in operation since 2019. ESD initially funded them through spring 2022 and provided additional funding in spring 2021 to extend the programs another year, with a possible extension of funding through March 31, 2024. While the additional funding was at a lower level than their initial grants, the programs agreed to continue to work toward their original enrollment and service targets over an extended period. The following case studies complement the initial evaluation report, which provided a summary of their first year of program implementation.

### Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council

In October 2019, the Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council (BFWDC) launched its EcSA initiative in the city of Connell. The initiative focused on building the organization's capacity to reach new participants and establishing new partnerships in a rural area of North Franklin County. BFWDC's initiative also included strengthening its collaborations with the local DSHS office focused on SNAP participant outreach. By the beginning of 2022, BFWDC EcSA had made inroads to connect with community members and partners, including DSHS, in Franklin County, but struggled to meet its program enrollment targets.

BFWDC initially provided four key services to participants:

- Employment-related services, such as in-demand vocational training and job search assistance.
- Transportation assistance, such as gas cards and increased route service through a partnership with a local transportation agency.
- Referrals to healthcare services.
- Childcare, inclusive of connection to childcare providers, and connections to childcare entrepreneurship opportunities.

Participants primarily received employment-related services. The program connects participants to training and helps them apply for state and federal training funds (i.e., FAFSA WA College Grant, and WIOA). While the program provides transportation assistance on a case-by-case basis, staff reported that most participants did not utilize this expanded public transportation, though the updated Benton-Franklin route did expand access to key points in the community, including the Columbia Basin WorkSource. Few participants have accessed childcare entrepreneurship services and other EcSA services like mentorship and financial literacy services. Employment specialists made referrals to health services as needed.

Additionally, the program leveraged community resources through DSHS or 2-1-1 to meet other participant needs (such as for food) and utilized EcSA funding if a barrier or need could not be addressed through other resources.

As of March 2022, BFWDC EcSA had enrolled 87 participants—63 percent of its enrollment target of 138 participants. As was common with the other pilots, COVID-19 severely limited BFWDC EcSA's outreach efforts. In-person recruitment was halted from March 2020 to early 2022. Moreover, program staff reported that many potential participants had gaps in technology literacy necessary to participate in virtual services and so chose not to enroll.

Program staff also noted that the state's job search waiver, extended UI benefits, and other pandemic-related resources hindered their ability to meet employment targets as participants were disincentivized to look for employment. In total, 31 participants had been placed in subsidized training for employment, and 12 participants had entered employment at or above the target wages as of March 31, 2022.

### Summary of Program Changes

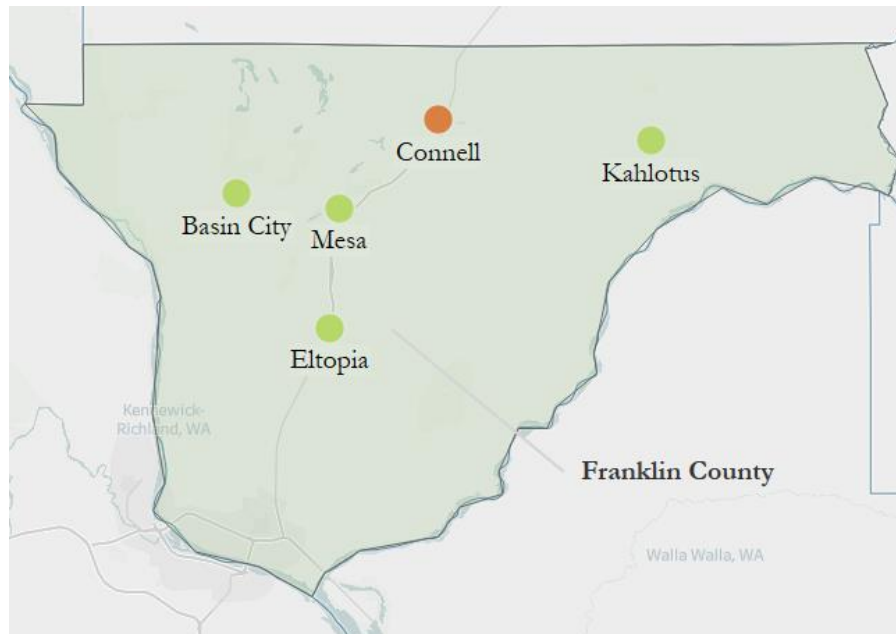
The greatest change for the program was the expansion of services to new geographic areas in Franklin County. At the start of the initiative, BFWDC EcSA prioritized services to the city of Connell. In June 2020, it expanded its geographic reach to additional service areas in North Franklin County—Mesa, Basin City, Eltopia, and Kahlotus—to further serve the county's rural communities. In late 2020, the program further expanded to serve all of Franklin County, based on the need throughout the county and the number of SNAP recipients that could benefit from services (in 2019 there were 13,563 SNAP recipients in Franklin County).<sup>3</sup> Moreover, expanding the service area created an additional opportunity to achieve enrollment targets, while creating accessibility to communities with high poverty levels located in Pasco, specifically in East Pasco. Exhibit 5 displays a map of the county and key towns that the program expanded into.

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<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, SNAP Benefits Recipients in Franklin County, WA, retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/CBR53021WAA647NCEN>



### Exhibit 5: BFWDC EcSA Target Geographic Areas



Note: The city of Connell, in orange, was the original service area. BFWDC EcSA later expanded to Basin City, Mesa, Kahlotus, and Eltopia. In 2020, it further expanded to serve all of Franklin County (in green).

Throughout its geographic expansion, BFWDC EcSA has continued its outreach to new community partners and tested new recruitment methods. It has held monthly community partnership meetings with a roundtable of community agencies and attended numerous informational meetings with potential partners, all of which have resulted in increased community connection and referrals to the WorkSource Columbia Basin Center. Importantly, BFWDC EcSA created a process whereby DSHS provided mailing addresses of eligible SNAP participants for targeted outreach mailers. DSHS also made cold calls on behalf of BFWDC EcSA to potential participants already receiving SNAP benefits.

### Successes

- **The partnership between BFWDC EcSA and DSHS has been a continued success.** In addition to collaborating on outreach, BFWDC EcSA and DSHS established a local process in which EcSA staff can obtain SNAP documentation from DSHS, which they use for eligibility and recordkeeping. The expanded coordination was borne out of the local planning area partnership meeting, where community partners meet to coordinate and plan activities for WorkFirst participants. This meeting helped to identify challenges around eligibility documentation; with this information, the local CSO was able to work with BFWDC program managers to streamline the SNAP eligibility process. Moreover, the close partnership between the agencies has helped

to inform DSHS staff about the services offered by BFWDC EcSA that could benefit participants in the future. EcSA program staff noted that they had begun to see increased enrollments as the pilot's geographic service area expanded, and, consequently, the number of SNAP-eligible participants has increased as well.

- **BFWDC continued to build its local area partnerships to expand services in the North Franklin area.** In addition to expanding transportation access through its partnership with the People for People shuttle, BFWDC worked with the North Franklin School District to provide in-kind space for the program, as well as assistance in communicating with parents via their students. They also cultivated partnerships with city leadership and other community based organizations.

## Challenges

- **BFWDC EcSA staff noted misaligned participant priorities and program goals.** A key priority of EcSA is to increase participants' earnings, thus lifting them out of poverty. Higher wages, however, are not the only factor participants consider when choosing jobs. According to the staff, many participants' schedule needs (e.g., due to family caregiving responsibilities) often did not match work schedules offered by employers, and this hindered the program's ability to meet employment outcomes. Additionally, staff noted that potential participants expressed concerns over how additional income could affect their SNAP benefits (i.e., the benefits cliff).
- **BFWDC faced continued outreach and enrollment challenges.** BFWDC was hampered in its ability to conduct in-person recruitment and outreach because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff have only recently returned to in-person recruitment. Additionally, the initiative's early limited geographic reach, coupled with the pandemic's effects on outreach, further hindered its recruitment abilities. Only until recently has the initiative expanded its geographic target area to all of Franklin County. BFWDC did adapt to providing 100% virtual services, including using JOTforms for online referrals, to help address some of the pandemic's challenges.

## Emerging Promising Practices

- **BFWDC receives data from DSHS so that potential participants can better access the services they need to prosper.** BFWDC EcSA and its local DSHS office established processes that allow BFWDC EcSA to acquire SNAP documentation and to conduct targeted outreach to potential participants. DSHS staff, through their own outreach, obtain SNAP recipient permission to share their information with BFWDC EcSA. DSHS

also shares participant mailing addresses for targeted program mailers. The data sharing has allowed BFWDC EcSA to reach eligible participants at higher rates than they would have by standard outreach methods.

## **Workforce Southwest Washington**

The EcSA program piloted by Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW)—called Thrive—continued to work toward the goal of reducing poverty by supporting and building local capacity to advocate for community change. To do so, Thrive leveraged the work of existing grassroots organizations such as the Highlands Neighborhood Resource Coordination Council (NRCC) in order to engage and support local residents and to ensure that program services are comprehensive and accessible to residents in the targeted Cowlitz County neighborhoods of the Highlands and South Kelso. This strategy was aimed at building trust, rapport, and an understanding of the diversity of residents. In the words of the WSW program manager, “The strategy that works [for Thrive] is to connect with residents in a grassroots fashion—where they are—and to be a part of their lives.”

Thrive made substantial progress toward meeting its enrollment goal. It had enrolled 172 participants as of March 31st, 2022, 52 percent of its target of 330. However, it lagged behind its goals for program outcomes, with 27 participants (out of a target of 100) placed in subsidized training, and 39 participants (out of a target of 180) employed at or above the target income range.

As described in the initial implementation report, Thrive developed new partnerships and strengthened existing partnerships with a range of local organizations, including the DSHS Community Services Office, Lower Columbia College, Housing Authority, and WorkSource/Equus, in order to reach its enrollment and training goals. Thrive partnered with DSHS to carry out the initial screening and assessment of participants, who could then be referred to the Lower Columbia Community Action Program (LCCAP) for full assessment and enrollment. NRCC community organizers also contributed to initial recruitment efforts by putting up flyers, attending community events, hosting events and meetings in-person at the Highlands Community Center pre-pandemic, and going door to door to publicize the program. The community organizers also were able to make referrals to LCCAP.

Overall, Thrive initially aimed to serve people who were living in one of four identified census tracts with an income level between 130 and 200 percent of FPL. Each Thrive participant

developed a customized career plan, received mentoring, and accessed a range of supportive services and training opportunities to support their economic stability.

### Summary of program changes

The COVID-19 pandemic required Thrive to make substantial changes to recruitment and enrollment. It developed two new enrollment pathways. First, after ESD broadened the eligibility criteria to include individuals who were up to 200 percent of FPL, WorkSource/Equus staff began to recruit and enroll participants into Thrive. In addition, a WorkSource/Equus retention specialist, who initially had focused on improving job retention and work productivity for program participants, began to contribute to recruitment and enrollment efforts, as well. With Covid-19, the retention manager was no longer able to remain on-site at a selected employer. This was a significant loss of opportunity to realize a key element of the original program design that emphasized a place-based strategy: residents in their neighborhoods and resources at their work site and for their employers.

Overall, Thrive maintained the majority of the original partnerships into 2022, with two notable partnership adjustments. First, within the context of changing enrollment conditions (due to COVID-19 and expanded eligibility criteria), Thrive's partnership with the Lower Columbia Community Action Program ended due to difficulties related to the need for increased technology capacity for remote services. Thrive's enrollment services were re-aligned so that this work was taken on primarily by WorkSource/Equus with support from the NRCC community organizers. Second, in December 2021, Habitat for Humanity Cowlitz County requested to discontinue its partnership with Thrive, citing high administrative responsibilities at that time. This adjustment created a need for a new fiscal agent for the NRCC, so as to fund the 2.5 FTE staff (the NRCC director and the two community organizers) who continued to carry out community engagement and mentorship activities as volunteers.

Several staffing changes also have taken place. The most notable change was with the WSW program manager position, which had frequent turnover in the early stages of program implementation, as noted in the initial implementation report. However, the current program manager has been in her position since March 2021. In another staffing change, the retention specialist employed by WorkSource/Equus resigned, and the position remained unfilled as of the writing of this report. This presented a challenge in that the retention specialist—while initially envisioned to focus on supporting business partners in retaining staff—had pivoted to supporting recruitment for Thrive.

In February 2022, following the implementation of new data-sharing agreement between ESD and DSHS (described in more detail below), WorkSource/Equus assigned a new talent development specialist position (Case Manager), focused specifically on recruiting new participants and making referrals. This new position is expected to support Thrive's recruitment goals. The Case Manager assuming first-contact to promote Thrive via direct personal phone calls has been an effective strategy, because Case Managers know Thrive well and can also assess expertly prospective participants needs. The program also added paid radio ads across Cowlitz County, which they believe is supporting increased enrollment.

Overall, while Thrive's recruitment and enrollment processes have evolved over the past two years, its program model remained largely the same. Thrive continued to invest in the NRCC to support existing grassroots efforts connected to its priority communities. Thrive also brought on new partners, which allowed it to develop additional programming, including two new community garden programs. Program participants work with Thrive staff to develop individualized employment plans and check in with the NRCC community organizers periodically for mentoring and to access any needed services or training.

## Successes

- **Thrive received SNAP participant data as a result of a data-sharing agreement between ESD and DSHS.** Program staff reported that the implementation of this agreement, significantly contributed to Thrive's recent increase in enrollment. The agreement allowed WorkSource staff, who work directly with Thrive participants and have a deep understanding of the program, to conduct outreach directly to SNAP participants. According to Thrive staff, this agreement has strengthened the collaboration between the WorkSource and DSHS staff, and they were discussing how to regularly exchange information across other programs, not just Thrive.
- **Thrive used real-time data for program management.** Specifically, staff began to utilize Launchpad software and data from LinkedIn Learning to track geographic and demographic patterns in recruitment and to track program performance over time. While Launchpad was initially a tool used by case managers to track participant information, WSW Business Services implemented it in summer 2021 as a talent management tool, which allowed program leadership to gain insights in real time. For example, program leadership saw that, while income eligibility expanded for EcSA enrollment, Thrive continued to primarily enroll participants from targeted neighborhoods.

- **Thrive maintained initial partnerships and cultivated new partnerships** with organizations, including DSHS, Lower Columbia College, Housing Authority, and the NRCC. In addition, DSHS and WorkSource leaders serving Cowlitz County continued to meet monthly and were coordinating how to have their teams more regularly exchange information not just with Thrive but across other programs, as well. In the words of Thrive’s program manager, “Sometimes a project like this gets you to the table... and shows you that we can work together.”

## Challenges

- **Thrive navigated the complexity of integrating new partners into the workforce system**, adapting to the termination of key partnerships with the Lower Columbia Community Action Program and Habitat for Humanity Cowlitz County. Thrive needed to quickly pivot and develop new ways of handling participant recruitment and mentorship. This challenge was compounded by the pandemic, which heightened the need for new systems and procedures.
- **Thrive faced challenges regarding recruitment and meeting enrollment targets.** The original recruitment model that relied on in-person referrals via WorkSource offices, DSHS offices, and the community center in the Highlands became impossible due to COVID-19. Therefore, recruitment and enrollment became largely the responsibility of the WorkSource center, and referrals were provided almost solely by DSHS staff making hundreds of cold calls per month to potential Thrive participants. This challenge spurred the Thrive team to diversify its recruiting and enrollment strategies. In response to the challenges related to recruitment, Thrive sought out a data-sharing agreement with DSHS.

## Emerging Promising Practices

- **Thrive supports existing neighborhood efforts, such as NRCC’s and community organizers, to develop recruitment and engagement strategies that are holistic and client-focused.** Thrive found ways to work with existing neighborhood revitalization initiatives to support residents of South Kelso and the Highlands, rather than introducing outside programming. This strategy lifts up the voices and efforts of local residents. Thrive was able to support the leadership of these efforts and to expand upon the resources and programming provided, with the shared goal of systematically reducing poverty. In addition, Thrive was able to provide mentoring and access to services by locating community centers and the NRCC community

organizers in Thrive’s priority neighborhoods. The community organizers act as “success coaches” who encourage and support participants in their own neighborhoods. In addition to supporting sustainability and depth of service, community-based services help eliminate transportation challenges for participants in South Kelso and the Highlands.

- **Thrive developed more formal opportunities for information-sharing across government and community organizations.** This included Thrive’s monthly meetings with DSHS, Equus/WorkSource, and the NRCC community organizers, which are aimed at ensuring that program participants are receiving information about available services, and the data-sharing agreement established with DSHS, which allows workforce staff to conduct outreach to those receiving public assistance.

## Spokane Workforce Council

The Spokane Workforce Council (SWC) leveraged its EcSA funding to further its vision of a comprehensive social services center for low-income residents. It continues to offer its program based out of the center, now known as the Resource Center of Spokane County (RCSC), to align with its new partnership with Spokane County and commitment to serve the entire County. The RCSC features 19 social service agencies that provide services to EcSA participants (and others) including housing and utility assistance, DSHS application and claims assistance, mental health and chemical dependency counseling, transportation, justice re-entry, and healthcare.

SWC has leveraged other non-WIOA grants to provide EcSA participants with direct rental and utility assistance to mitigate COVID-19-related hardship and other emergent financial issues and long-term paid work experience opportunities of one year or more. It has also leveraged funding through the Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) program (50/50 match funds) for its strategies for success, financial literacy, and life skills training. Program staff believe that braiding multiple funding sources is needed for their focus population, who require more intensive case management and support services than other workforce clients.

Like other initial EcSA pilots, SWC experienced enrollment and program implementation challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges of outreach to their focus population. Staff reported heightened engagement by EcSA participants with the return to face-to-face services, with attendance at training programs increasing and more participants

enrolling in workshops. Staff saw this as confirmation of their belief that most participants need in-person services.

After a slow start, Spokane EcSA enrollments were close to their target. As of March 31, 2022, Spokane had enrolled 349 participants of their target of 350. Reaching employment goals proved to be more challenging. A total of 30 participants had completed subsidized training and 49 had entered employment above the target income as of March 31, 2022. This represents 28 percent of the program's employment target.

### Summary of program changes

Spokane's approach and program structure have not changed substantially since the start of the program. They are based in coordinated case-management and workforce readiness and/or sector-based training services, co-located in the RCSC. Staff plan to continue to build on their strong partnerships and leveraged funding in the next EcSA funding cycle. SWC's EcSA program now serves the whole county, rather than having a focus in four zip codes with the highest rates of poverty in the City of Spokane, and this is aligned with their funding and overall program goals. The program is already focused on the ALICE<sup>4</sup> population, so this fits well with the revised EcSA guidelines issued by ESD. Although overall outcomes are under target, the recent changes in program rules (such as allowing enrollment in training to count as an outcome) and the improvement of the COVID-19 situation are causing outcomes to improve.

### Successes

- **SWC blended and braided funding to provide enhanced services to EcSA participants.** Examples of leveraged grant resources include the following:
  - SWC distributed over \$302,000 in rental and utility assistance using Homeless Prevention Grants that provided wraparound services to stabilize housing-insecure participants.
  - Using a grant from the Washington State Department of Commerce, SWC co-enrolled EcSA participants in need of paid work experience into a program that

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<sup>4</sup> ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) is a widely used metric, developed by United Way, to represent the number of families who are unable to afford the basics of housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, and technology.



focuses on staffing support for hunger relief organizations. This fostered new relationships with local food bank partners.

## Challenges

- **COVID-19 pandemic-related challenges persisted, even as services return to being offered in person.** Staff reported the following:
  - People were still fearful of returning to work or in-person training, and parents continued to struggle with school closures and lack of childcare.
  - There was a large increase in medical exits (700% increase over the same period last year), wherein participants are unable to work or participate in work search activities for more than 90 days.
  - Some participants report long-term poor health that they believe to be COVID-19 related.
- **Lack of available and affordable childcare in Spokane County was a challenge** before the pandemic and has become an even greater challenge since then.
- **Staffing instability persisted**, particularly for support positions, at the same time as in-person visits increased in the Center. SWC addressed this by hiring temporary staff and creating a work-based learning opportunity for an EcSA participant. This was successful, so it will continue this position for an EcSA participant.

## Emerging Promising Practices

- **SWC was the first EcSA pilot to become a BFET service provider**, increasing resources for EcSA participants while streamlining services. Also, staff reported that they do reverse referrals to BFET, as 87 percent of their EcSA participants are receiving SNAP benefits at the time of enrollment.
- **Using blended and braided funding from multiple grant sources** to co-locate services benefits EcSA participants by facilitating access to rental assistance, wraparound services designed to stabilize housing-insecure participants, and additional service opportunities, such as mentorship for justice-involved participants.

## Workforce Central, Tacoma-Pierce County

The LWDB of Tacoma-Pierce County, referred to as WorkForce Central (WFC), launched the EcSA Pierce Power Up 98404 pilot on September 4, 2019, to connect residents of the zip code 98404 with the tools to gain financial security. Starting with 11 community partners, this

group had an ambitious plan to provide a range of services to residents of the Tacoma Housing Authority's (THA's) Salishan housing community. However, as of the time of this report, the number of partners had dropped to seven. Further, due to the pandemic, it pivoted to providing services and outreach virtually and expanded its service area.

Overall, WFC EcSA enrollments have been on target. While enrollments were lower in the last quarter of 2021 than in previous quarters, enrollment was increasing again in the first quarter of 2022 to a cumulative total of 289. This enrollment level is 72 percent of its target of 401. As of March 31, 2022, a total of 29 participants had completed subsidized training, while a total of 52 participants had entered employment above the income target, a little over half of the target of 100.

### Summary of program changes

In early 2021, as a part of the EcSA program adaptations made in response to the pandemic, WFC expanded its geographic area to include additional zip codes beyond 98404. This meant WFC could conduct outreach with organizations outside the original zip code, and WFC partnered with organizations such as Tacoma Rescue Mission and Valeo Vocation. Tacoma College also became a formal partner, whereas previously it was involved through an agreement with Clover Park Technical College. Finally, in 2021 the program began holding outreach subgroup meetings with Goodwill and THA to focus on increasing enrollments.

### Successes

WFC's pilot had some promising indications of success, including increased partner engagement, partner funding flexibility, expanded outreach strategies, and improved partner coordination that eases participants' access to services. Staff reported that engagement was high in monthly partner meetings and trainings, despite how short-staffed organizations were due to the pandemic. Also, the pilot used EcSA funding flexibility to shift unspent funds from contracted partners that had a surplus to those who could serve more participants. Key successes include the following:

- **The EcSA Common Referral System, a web-based, secure information-sharing tool** available to all WFC EcSA partners for barrier reduction referral coordination, helped make supportive services more accessible.
- **Expanded and improved outreach helped to boost enrollment numbers.** A "Fun Summer Run" in the summer of 2021 brought in over 200 referrals. Goodwill exceeded its performance metrics in events and referrals in 2021. Other effective outreach strategies have included intentionally creating space for the Career Team staff at

events, positioning them as welcomers at events so they can start conversations immediately as customers walk in. Also, partners did outreach in homeless encampments in Fife with Tacoma Rescue Mission. Also, to improve the quality of referrals and increase EcSA enrollments, the Career Team provided WIOA 101 MythBusters for EcSA partners less familiar with WIOA to explain the WIOA enrollment process and services that can and can't be provided to participants.

- **All four technical colleges in Pierce County provided education benefits workshops.** Participants interested in this training were enrolled in both EcSA and the Career Readiness Education and Development programs.

## Challenges

- **Providers had difficulty turning outreach contacts into enrollments.** For example, staff reported that during follow-up contacts with individuals who expressed interest in EcSA at a community outreach event, the potential participants sometimes declined to participate when they learned the amount of information each enrollee must provide.
- **The EcSA Common Referral System was merged with the WorkSource Center Common Referral system in September 2021, creating issues with the flow of referrals.** EcSA partners who did not have access to the WorkSource system encountered problems with referrals to WorkSource partners for barrier reduction services and vice versa.
- **Lack of knowledge or understanding of additional services and resources** that each partner offers continues to be a challenge in the "no wrong door" to services model.

## Emerging Promising Practices

- **WFC hosted Virtual Career Boosts,** webinars featuring sector-based training opportunities in careers that will lead to salaries above the EcSA goal of \$34,480/year. Produced in partnership with four local colleges, these events focused on healthcare/emergency medical technician training, accounting, information technology, construction, and aerospace manufacturing.

## Early Implementation of Round Two EcSA Pilots

Seven LWDBs received EcSA funding beginning in April 2021: Eastern WA Partnership, SkillSource (north central Washington), Northwest Workforce Council, Olympic (Kitsap County), Seattle-King County, Snohomish County, and South Central. ESD encouraged these pilots to incorporate promising practices that emerged out of the work carried out by the four initial EcSA pilot sites, including coordinating and/or co-locating among service providers and focusing on geographic areas with high-need populations.

The new pilots' workplans align with ESD recommendations. Program plans and interviews with staff indicate the new pilots leveraged their limited EcSA funding in two main ways:

- Strengthening and building upon existing partnerships to improve service delivery.
- Piloting small-scale initiatives in new geographic areas.

Below we discuss these two key strategies, providing examples from early program implementation in new pilot EcSA programs.

### Strengthening existing partnerships

Below are descriptions of how three of the seven newly funded pilots focused on strengthening existing partnerships.

The Pathways to Success EcSA project (Olympic), implemented in Kitsap County, strengthened an existing partnership between the Olympic and Olympic Educational Services District 114, with the aim of reducing barriers to employment for youth aged 18 to 24. Prior to EcSA, Olympic Educational Services District had been the longtime provider of WIOA Title I youth services. In the EcSA model, youth are now matched with a navigator (jointly funded by the WIOA Youth program and EcSA), who works with participants to develop a career plan and facilitates their access to a coordinated network of support and resources, such as SNAP benefits, childcare, housing assistance, healthcare, and transportation assistance. Additionally, EcSA funding allowed for the development of new referral partnerships with DSHS and Department of Children, Youth, and Families that expanded access to training opportunities for additional youth, including youth receiving BFET and foster youth.

NWC expanded an existing partnership with a community action agency through its EcSA pilot program. The program focuses on financial literacy for parents of preschool-aged children, a model called Project X-it, which the community action agency originally developed to serve Head Start families. The new EcSA Project X-it combines financial literacy

from the previous Project X-it model with career planning and employment services and access to WorkFirst and BFET services, with the expectation that workforce resources and benefits planning may help address potential issues around the benefits cliff that have prevented families from increasing their wages.

Eastern is focusing on the cities of Clarkston and Colfax, communities located in two of the nine counties it serves. Eastern's focus populations are youth aged 16 to 24, low-income families, and unemployed adults. While Eastern already had a strong partnership with DSHS through programs such as WorkFirst and BFET, the new EcSA model builds on partnerships with DSHS, ESD, dislocated worker services, and rural services with the goal of developing new training plans. These plans include working with Walla Walla Community College on developing sector-based training. Eastern continued to work toward its goal of achieving comprehensive wraparound services for its focus populations.

### **Pilot small-scale initiatives in new geographic areas**

Skillsource, located in North Central Washington, is piloting a new initiative in a targeted area. It developed plans for providing manufacturing and commercial driver's license (CDL) training courses in the communities of Mattawa, Othello, and Royal City. The EcSA program represents a new effort to bring occupational skills training to these smaller communities. Skillsource is also developing partnerships with organizations in these localities to increase access for participants in these communities to DSHS programs and housing supports.

### **New Case Studies**

ESD selected two of the new EcSA pilots—Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County (WDC SKC) and South Central Workforce Development Council (SCWDC)—for more in-depth data collection. What follows is more detail on these programs.

### **Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County**

WDC SKC is the workforce development board for the 2.3 million people living in Seattle and 38 other surrounding cities and towns, comprising the fifteenth largest metropolitan area in the United States. King County is the economic hub of the state, with 41 percent of its jobs and one-third of the state's workforce within the county.<sup>5</sup> Despite a concentration of jobs and industry, King County struggles with inequality in workforce participation and income, with a

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<sup>5</sup> WDC Program Guide 2021-2022 <https://www.seakingwdc.org/our-region>

widening gap between the highest and lowest income quintiles and stark divides between White residents and residents of color.<sup>6</sup>

### **Timeline and Progress Overview**

WDC SKC was awarded an EcSA grant of approximately \$600,000 in May 2021. The period of performance runs through March 2024. WDC SKC's EcSA outcome targets are to serve 80 WIOA-eligible individuals below 200 percent of FPL, with 30 of these participants enrolled in training on exit and 50 employed at a wage of at least \$34,480 per year. As of the end of March 2022, it had enrolled 35 participants and placed 20 in subsidized training, with eight having gained employment at or above the wage target.

The grant's initial timeline projected that the board would work with DSHS and other community partners to develop plans for implementation over the summer of 2021 and begin enrolling participants in EcSA in the last quarter of 2021. In early fall 2021, WDC SKC finalized contracts with its existing WIOA Title IB providers to be the primary providers of EcSA programming. WDC SKC also had several conversations with its DSHS Regional Administrator, who oversees the Community Services Offices (CSOs) in King County, to assess how best to create an EcSA-specific pathway between DSHS clients receiving services at the CSOs and the employment resources available at the WorkSource centers (operated by the WIOA Title IB providers).

### **Geographic Focus**

WDC SKC's EcSA initiative focuses on six zip codes in the south King County region that have high concentrations of people of color and immigrant communities. The geographic area encompasses southern Seattle as well as SeaTac, Tukwila, Burien, White Center, Des Moines, Renton, and Skyway.

### **Staffing and organization**

The WDC SKC EcSA team consists of two positions: a program manager, which is approximately .5 FTE and oversees the EcSA grant funding, and a director of programs. The program manager and director of programs oversee a portfolio of workforce grants—including the local area's WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth program funding—that are subcontracted to a consortium of workforce services providers across the county. These

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<sup>6</sup> King County Office of Economic and Financial Analysis, Household Income in King County <https://kingcounty.gov/independent/forecasting/King%20County%20Economic%20Indicators/Household%20Income.aspx>

consortium members met biweekly to discuss the full portfolio of workforce funding and how partners can make sound referrals and improve program offerings as well as participant outcomes.

### **DSHS Connection**

As of March 2022, WDC SKC was still working on developing a specific linkage between the WorkSource centers participating in EcSA and the local CSOs in South King County. The primary DSHS contact for the team is the DSHS Region 2 Employment Partner Program (EPP) Administrator (who also happens to be the administrator of the North King CSO outside the geographical limits of the EcSA grant). DSHS's EPP provides employment navigation services for DSHS clients who indicate they would like assistance finding a job. In Region 2 the program has three employment navigators (DSHS staff) that assist DSHS clients with connecting to work.

In its current configuration, EPP can provide some job-search support to DSHS clients, but not as much support as an individual could get if they were enrolled in WIOA, EcSA, or a more comprehensive job services program. The Region 2 EPP Administrator's long-term goal in working with WDC SKC on the EcSA project is to create a more robust pathway for DSHS participants in EPP to the WorkSource centers in the community. She viewed EcSA as an excellent opportunity to practice clear and successful referrals from DSHS to workforce programs, meaning that the referred individual is successfully accepted into the program and enrolled.

As of March 2022, WDC SKC and their EcSA providers were working on creating an agreement with the local CSOs to reserve a certain number of EcSA "slots" for DSHS EPP participants. To support the effective referral of EPP participants into these EcSA slots, WDC SKC and their WorkSource/WIOA Title IB service providers are establishing criteria for a strong referral process from DSHS to the EcSA program. While many of the DSHS and workforce services are co-located and even co-administered, the DSHS staff reported that their clients were not always prioritized or even served when they went into the WorkSource centers. As noted earlier, one of the primary goals for the DSHS Region 2 EPP Administrator is to create more relationships and success stories across the programs, resulting in more successful referrals over time.

### **Service Delivery Model**

Given the more limited scope of funding available through the second round of EcSA grants and the close alignment between EcSA and the WDC SKC's existing service delivery model,

this EcSA pilot was absorbed into WDC SKC’s established service-delivery model (as opposed to a creating new, independent EcSA-only program). SKC’s current workforce services providers located in the south County—TRAC Associates, YWCA of Seattle, Asian Counseling and Referral Service, and Neighborhood House—operate local WorkSource centers and make EcSA enrollment and services available to both current WorkSource clientele as well as DSHS participants seeking services at the south County CSOs. The pilot also includes plans to officially recruit, and possibly set up, satellite EcSA service provision at partner CSOs.

This model of service provision leverages the existing resources at the WorkSource centers (e.g., trained personnel and physical and online resources) and the additional funding and services that the service providers have on site. In addition to their WIOA funding, each service provider brings other funding and services to the table for EcSA participants. For instance, TRAC Associates administers BFET and WorkFirst programming and King County Job Initiative and Health Professional Opportunity Grant funding. YWCA similarly works with BFET, WorkFirst, and the Seattle Housing Authority. This baseline level of funding and services available at the WorkSource centers ensures that additional EcSA dollars can be used to provide more services for more eligible individuals and to create stronger linkages between the WorkSource centers and the CSOs.

### **Participant Recruitment**

Anticipating that most EcSA referrals will come from its four existing WIOA service providers, WDC SKC staff met on a biweekly basis with these providers to discuss their programs, including EcSA. WDC SKC staff indicated that a priority in the coming months would be building relationships and a referral structure that may lead to lasting collaborations with its system partners that are not funded by EcSA, specifically the Seattle Housing Authority and DSHS. Other unfunded referral partners in the participant-recruitment model include other WorkSource centers, King County Communities of Opportunity, Refugee Women’s Alliance, Skilled Immigrant and Refugee Network, World Relief, Equitable Economic Recovery Alliance, United Way of King County, and One America.

### **Services**

EcSA participants developed individualized employment plans and received wraparound supports necessary to address the barriers on their path to economic self-sufficiency. Additional programming elements that EcSA participants could expect to receive included benefits navigation; vocational training and education; life-skills, financial literacy, and employment workshops; referrals to community resources; and, in some cases, cash incentives for meeting progress benchmarks (see Emerging Promising Practice below). Rather



than referring participants to additional community resources to address their needs, the partnership model allowed navigators to co-enroll participants in programs that advance their individual and family-centered goals. In addition to ensuring all participants have information about and access to SNAP and WIOA, navigators also created linkages to childcare, housing, and behavioral health resources, and others.

WDC SKC generally took the approach of co-enrolling all individuals who were eligible in WIOA, including the EcSA participants. By funding a robust collection of services at the WorkSource centers, a variety of funding sources are leveraged, including WIOA Title IB funding and other contracts and grants secured by the board and their CBO Title IB service providers.

### **Emerging Promising Practice**

WDC SKC used incentives across its programs to recognize milestones and accomplishments for participants. WDC SKC's EcSA program recognizes that recruitment and enrollment are just the first steps in assisting participants on their journey to quality work. Persistence in participation is also key. WDC SKC's policy<sup>7</sup> ensures that participants receive appropriate incentives in compliance with all relevant guidelines. Staff were also working to create a clear matrix highlighting how and when staff should use incentives for participants. Since the state renews the incentives policy annually, WDC SKC will also advocate at the state level for broader allowances for incentives, recognizing the critical role they can play for participants.

### **South Central Workforce Development Council**

SCWDC is the workforce development board for an area covering approximately 10,233 square miles comprised of Kittitas, Klickitat, Skamania, and Yakima Counties located in the south central region of the state.<sup>8</sup> Agriculture primarily fuels the region's economy. A substantial Native American population lives within the borders of the Yakama Indian Reservation in Klickitat and Yakima Counties. The Hispanic population continues to grow significantly in each county, and a small but significant number of Asian and Black residents live in communities across the service area.

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<sup>7</sup> *Adult and Dislocated Worker Incentive Payments Policy*, Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King Co. [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/53c04ba6e4b0012ad48d079e/t/6185bc4a167c7323ffb96b02/1636154443266/Adult%2B%26%2BDislocated%2BWorker%2BIncentive%2BPayments%2BPolicy\\_WDC-SKC\\_110521.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/53c04ba6e4b0012ad48d079e/t/6185bc4a167c7323ffb96b02/1636154443266/Adult%2B%26%2BDislocated%2BWorker%2BIncentive%2BPayments%2BPolicy_WDC-SKC_110521.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> *Strategic Plan 2020 – 2024*, South Central Workforce Council <https://secureservercdn.net/50.62.195.83/emg.3ed.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/South-Central-WDC-Strategic-Plan-2020-2024-10-26-2020.pdf>

EcSA funding offered SCWDC an opportunity to build on lessons learned from a previous workforce development initiative called the Intergenerational Poverty Initiative, which tested a family assessment tool in a two-generation program model. The pilot initiative, called the Next Steps for Family Success program, helps SCWDC work toward their goal of sustainable investments. The program aligns with the SCWDC 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, which is based in four core beliefs: accountability and measuring success through results achieved, local flexibility and authority, business-led boards, and sustainable investments.

### **Staffing and organization**

The SCWDC EcSA team consists of two positions: a program manager overseeing the EcSA grant and SCWDC's programs director. Approximately 10 percent of the grant funds are allocated toward these positions. The rest of the funding flows to People for People (PFP), SCWDC's contracted service provider. PFP has been working in the community for over 50 years, and SCWDC has been contracting with it for over 20 years. PFP has one case manager for adults dedicated to EcSA and one youth case manager who works on EcSA part-time.

### **DSHS Connection**

The DSHS partner for the initiative is the Yakima CSO. The CSO's involvement in the pilot is primarily through its Employment Pipeline Navigator position, which is funded out of Community Services Division discretionary funds. The navigator's role is to facilitate co-enrollment of DSHS participants in WIOA programs. The participants are SNAP and TANF participants enrolled in WorkFirst. DSHS staff also have the flexibility to serve household members who may not be eligible for other services.

### **Service Delivery Model**

The Next Steps for Family Success program uses a two-generation approach targeting low-income youth and parents from the same household. The program prioritizes families who are experiencing homelessness, food insecurity, and intergenerational poverty. WIOA-eligible household members are co-enrolled into the WIOA Adult and/or Youth programs.

The Next Steps program emphasizes education, housing, economic supports, social capital, and health and well-being to create intergenerational economic security impacts. The whole-family wraparound model combines holistic case management, supplemental supports for the whole family (such as help working with schools if a child's struggles there are keeping a parent from participating in workforce development programming), and other services to meet enrollees' needs. Service enhancements include an assigned career counselor who works collaboratively with both WIOA and non-WIOA partners.

SCWDC manages the pilot and contracts with PFP to provide enrollment and case management services, support services, and referrals. PFP conducts the intake appointment in person, unless the participant isn't comfortable or able to do so and completes the Family Stability and Self Sufficiency Assessment (FSA)—a whole-family assessment tool used to identify employment goals, service needs, and natural supports. Other household members are welcome, but not required, to participate. The PFP staff then engages the participant in the self-sufficiency calculator.

### **Participant Recruitment**

SCWDC has established partnerships and developed its referral pipeline with several local non-profit organizations. As of the end of March 2022, it had enrolled 21 participants. PFP was well positioned to make referrals to the Next Steps for Family Success program because they operate the 2-1-1 programs in Yakima County. They developed a referral process to allow the 2-1-1 program to collect housing- and food-insecure callers' basic information on an internal referral form, which would be directed to the program career counselors. Catholic Charities, another partner, makes referrals from its unhoused youth shelter program. Program staff planned to continue to expand the program's reach and accept referrals from other housing services providers, including the Yakima County Homeless Coalition, Yakima Housing Authority, Yakima Neighborhood Health, Rod's House, Triumph Treatment Transitional Housing, Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic/Northwest Community Action Center, YWCA, and OIC of Washington. Finally, the DSHS navigator will refer interested SNAP and TANF participants enrolled in WorkFirst to EcSA.

### **Services**

SCWDC individualized services based on participants' career plans. The FSA helped determine emotional, physical, and family stabilization needs. Because Next Steps for Family Success career counselors were partnering with housing providers to establish a referral system for housing availability and emergency housing, households also received financial education and a financial self-sufficiency review that included a plan to obtain and/or retain housing.

Career counselors were trained to utilize a trauma-informed approach that supports change and positive growth. A trauma-informed approach includes recognizing, understanding, and responding to the effects of trauma to reduce the likelihood that accessing services causes re-traumatization. Career counselors made referrals to partner agencies on an as-needed basis for participants experiencing individual or historical trauma.

Career counselors provided access to web-based tools such as Virtual Job Shadow and Career Bridge that provide the participants with a baseline understanding of work environments and the expectations of the jobs they are considering. Placements could be made into training programs that lead to jobs with expected annual wages above \$34,480. Participants also had opportunities for peer-to-peer mentoring through workshops that offer life skills, work readiness, and the Bridges out of Poverty “Getting Ahead” model of facilitated group workshops, developed by Dr. Ruby Payne.

Next Steps for Family Success can cover tuition and other costs for apprenticeships, college degrees, or short-term training, preferably using non-WIOA Title I program resources, but WIOA funds will be used in the absence of other resources. The program plans to fund childcare through Yakima Valley College’s BFET program, co-enrollment in local BFET programs, or referrals to the Working Connections childcare subsidy program. WIOA funds will be used for childcare when no other resources are available.

Once participants have completed training, they will work with WIOA Title I-funded business services staff for placement into unsubsidized employment. Counselors will follow up with participants at least monthly both before and after placement in a job to provide ongoing support and intervention, if necessary.

### **Emerging Promising Practice**

The Next Steps for Family Success service strategy provided adult and/or youth households with a comprehensive whole-family assessment and focused case management that could lead to referrals and services for the whole household, if needed. Career counselors assessed individual and household needs by using the FSA, which identifies risk factors and barriers to employment. By addressing each participants’ risk factors and service needs, the program ensured access to supports necessary to increase family stability, interrupt the cycle of poverty, and allow families to forge a path toward self-sufficiency.

## Summary and Recommendations

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, both the new and initial EcSA pilots have experienced some success reaching target populations. Promising practices are emerging that have the potential to improve project implementation and ultimately yield increased economic mobility for the families and individuals they serve through EcSA.

### Successes and Emerging Promising Practices

- Pilots blended and braided funding from multiple grant sources.** For example, Spokane leverages multiple funding sources to provide EcSA participants with opportunities for rental assistance, wraparound services designed to stabilize housing-insecure participants, paid work experience, and personal stability training and mentorship for justice-involved participants. The ability to braid funds from multiple sources means that individual program participants can access more services. Similarly, WDC SKC leverages a variety of funding sources to provide enhanced services to EcSA participants, including WIOA Title IB funding and other contracts and grants secured by the LWDB and their community-based service providers.
- Data sharing increased across agencies and programs.** For example, DSHS in Franklin County now requests consent from SNAP participants to share their contact information with BFWDC EcSA. Also, a data sharing agreement between ESD and DSHS has allowed Workforce Southwest Washington's EcSA staff to conduct direct outreach to SNAP participants, facilitating a recent increase in enrollment. In addition, Tacoma-Pierce's electronic referral system allows partners to track the status of co-enrolled EcSA participants once they have been referred to another provider for service, facilitating high-quality case management.
- One pilot is using incentives to support consistent participation in EcSA services.** Across its programs, WDC SKC awards incentives to participants to recognize reaching milestones and accomplishments. Staff are also working to create a clear matrix highlighting how and when staff can make use of incentives for participants.

### Challenges

As the EcSA program has grown, LWDBs have continued to experience challenges with participant recruitment, enrollment, and engagement in services. While some of these challenges were related to the COVID-19 pandemic, underlying challenges of engaging the

target population in the workforce development system may have played an important role as well.

- **Some participants are discouraged from EcSA participation because increased earnings from resultant employment would make them ineligible for public benefit programs, resulting in an overall net monetary loss.** Our interviews with staff members suggested that avoiding benefits cliffs may indeed be a deterrent to participation and staying enrolled in EcSA. The evaluation team will explore this issue in future interviews with program participants.
- **Many participants have received a relatively narrow set of services compared to what was intended in the original EcSA vision.** While program data indicated that most participants received supportive services and assessments, other services were more sparsely received, such as the ones that potentially help with executive functioning (e.g., mentorship services and personal stability workshops). Based on interviews with program staff, it appears that a key reason behind this is that many participants break off their engagement in pilot services relatively soon after enrolling. However, the evaluation team has limited program participation data that would help clarify the typical participant service patterns. For example, the pilots do not currently report the dates when various services were provided, which would enable constructing a chronology of service receipt.
- **Staff turnover, often a challenge in frontline services, has grown as a result of the pandemic across the full range of positions in local workforce development programs.** This will no doubt continue, and successful programs are building in strategies—such as cross-training staff or sharing staff between programs—to successfully maintain staffing levels.
- **COVID-19-related challenges continue, even as services revert to being offered in-person.** Staff report the following:
  - Some participants are still fearful of returning to work or in-person training or resistant to vaccine requirements for some jobs, and parents have continued to struggle with school closures and lack of adequate childcare.
  - Some participants report long-term poor health that they believe to be COVID-19 related.

## Recommendations

ESD staff and their partners (e.g., the Technical Advisory Committee) should continue their collaboration with LWDB partners to build on the promising practices that have emerged thus far and address emerging challenges. The following recommendations would strengthen EcSA implementation and aid efforts to determine what works for meaningful poverty reduction.

- **Focus on the low engagement/low retention problem to move participants into training and employment outcomes more successfully.** As EcSA programs have struggled to engage participants, primarily due to pandemic conditions, LWDBs should continue to engage with service providers, community members, and participants to understand the underlying causes and build program components that address these concerns. “Light” employment services generally do not work for low-income participants.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, understanding the levers that may promote more intensive program engagement may lead to better poverty-alleviation models. ESD should incentivize pilots to adopt successful retention strategies in future rounds of EcSA expansion.
- **Expand data sharing agreements between ESD and DSHS to all EcSA programs.** While there has been progress in some areas (e.g., Benton-Franklin and Tacoma), other EcSA pilots still struggle with exchanging data to facilitate outreach and recruitment of SNAP participants to EcSA.
- **Track the amount of services and length of time in EcSA programming** (e.g., dates and duration of services received) for each participant, to help paint a more precise picture of program implementation and estimate more clearly the actual cost for full participation in this kind of programming. Also, as mentioned in the section above, this would be an important first step to understanding the causes of low program engagement for some participants.
- **Develop clearer entry and exit measurements.** EcSA's target populations have multiple barriers and often require several types of interventions (e.g., emergency housing assistance, childcare, and mental health services) before they can fully engage in workforce development activities. Defining different service components

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<sup>9</sup> Riccio, 2013. *Promoting Employment Stability and Advancement Among Low-income Adults*, MDRC; Sommer et al., 2018. A Two-Generation Human Capital Approach to Anti-poverty Policy, *The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 4(3): 118–43. DOI: 10.7758/RSF.2018.4.3.07.

(e.g., engagement and enrollment, pre-employment and training, employment support, and follow-up) and tracking the progression through these stages would paint a clearer picture of the amount of time it takes to engage participants in services and the amount of follow-up and support provided after a participant enters employment or longer-term training.

### **Future Evaluation Activities**

Over the next 18 months, the EcSA evaluation team will conduct significant data collection that will allow for deeper insights into program implementation and outcomes. Six pilots (Benton-Franklin, Seattle-King County, South Central, Southwest, Spokane, and Tacoma) will receive an in-person evaluation site visit approximately six months before their EcSA grant funding ends, which will include interviews with participants, community members, LWDB staff, and EcSA staff. The additional five pilots will have a final interview near the end of grant funding, and SPR staff will conduct virtual interviews with several program participants from each pilot.

In addition, the evaluation team will work with pilot and ESD staff to obtain and analyze program implementation data. Through this program data, SPR hopes to shed more light on the average and median length of time of EcSA program enrollment, the receipt of services, and the intensity of services received. This analysis will be included along with the qualitative data analysis in a final evaluation report in March 2024.