



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF SEATTLE-KING COUNTY MEMORANDUM

DATE:	April 4, 2024
TO:	Full Board
FROM:	Shelan Aldridge, Project Manager
SUBJECT:	Self-Sufficiency Calculator

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

In 2007, the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County (WDC) has partnered with the University of Washington Center for Women's Welfare (UW) to release the Self-Sufficiency Standard, which measures the minimum income a family must earn to meet basic needs without public or private assistance. Shortly after, the WDC developed a [self-sufficiency calculator](#) (calculator) tool so job seekers could quickly identify their self-sufficiency wage.

LOCAL USE

Since its development, the calculator has been used in King County's WIOA programs to measure our customers' progress towards self-sufficiency. Functionally, the tool enables customers to budget, test different wage and career scenarios, explore resources, and develop a plan with their case managers to reach self-sufficiency wages.

NEW INVESTMENTS

In 2022, the Employment Security Department (ESD) was interested in measuring self-sufficiency in their ECSA program. The WDC offered the self-sufficiency calculator as a solution, and as a result ESD invested in the self-sufficiency calculator, contracting with the WDC to expand use to the entire state, provide training, technical assistance, and fund future improvements.

Also in 2022, the WDC invested in further research from the University of Washington to identify which populations are impacted the most, including labor market information pinpointing occupations that pay below the standard and the impact on those that are Black, Indigenous, or People of Color.

INCREASED VISIBILITY AND FUTURE USE

Statewide expansion of the self-sufficiency calculator in ECSA programs has led to higher visibility of the Workforce Development Council, and its work to reduce poverty for BIPOC populations throughout Washington.

In November, the WDC sponsored a community presentation where UW presented the findings of the research report to over 50 stakeholders, which included elected officials and members of the Governor's poverty reduction workgroup.

The WDC will continue to utilize these findings to collaboratively devise solutions with employers, workers, and communities to address wage inequities and advance work around job quality.