



SEATTLE-KING COUNTY LOCAL PLAN



WORKFORCE
INNOVATION &
OPPORTUNITY ACT

2024-2028

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Introduction:

The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County (WDC) aspires to lead transformational change that will evolve our region's workforce development efforts into an innovative, industry, community and outcome driven ecosystem that empowers individuals, fosters economic growth, and ensures a resilient and thriving community for all.

The data indicate Seattle-King County's economy has recovered – total employment exceeds pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels in terms of the number of jobs and the unemployment rate has dropped to 3.5 percent. However, those numbers don't tell the full story – even through this growth, some sectors experienced significant job loss. For example, many jobs in retail, accommodation and food services, and manufacturing were lost due to the severe downturn in business during the pandemic and are recovering but have not returned to pre-pandemic levels. The data reveal positive trends at the aggregate level in terms of employment, labor force participation, and job additions. Yet gaps and disparities in employment, wages, and income by race and ethnicity underscore that the economic recovery is still being impeded by systemic bias against Black workers and other workers of color.

The COVID-19 pandemic reinforced and exacerbated many of the structural economic challenges in our society. The social upheaval and racial reckoning of the pandemic highlighted racial inequities, exposing underlying structural and systemic policies and practices. This has led to widespread acknowledgement and commitments towards ending structural racism and fostering an inclusive economic recovery. Still, over the past year, we have observed a decline in these commitments and a resistance to progress in diversity and equity.

The WDC maintains our commitment to improving job quality and advancing an equitable, racially inclusive workforce. Acknowledging the deep challenges and opportunities in the post-pandemic economy, and not simply returning to the pre-pandemic economy demands the creation of new strategic frameworks, tools, and approaches to workforce development. This plan establishes the groundwork and priorities to guide our work over the next four years.

Strategic Principles

The work of the WDC is grounded in six guiding principles aimed at shaping a just and equitable future where all people in this region, regardless of race or ethnicity, share in its economic prosperity.

- **Racial Equity:** Dismantling of structural and systemic racism across our institutions, such that all workers regardless of race or ethnicity have equitable access to quality jobs and share in the region's economic prosperity.
- **Job Quality:** A quality job includes economic stability, economic mobility, equity, respect, and worker voice.
- **System Change:** Systems are complex, interrelated, and were historically designed for the disproportionate outcomes they produce. Authentic and equitable system change requires exceptional attention to the detailed outcomes occurring for particular populations and implementation of targeted solutions that will force the system to behave in a qualitatively different way.
- **Community Partnerships:** Forge and sustain strong partnerships with community-based organizations, employers, educational institutions, and local government agencies to create

targeted workforce development solutions that are equity driven and align with the evolving needs of the regional labor market.

- **Advocacy:** Through active engagement with policymakers and stakeholders across all tiers of government, advocate for policy changes that promote workforce development and equitable economic growth. Our collective efforts aim to shape and impact legislation at city, county, state, and federal levels that advances workforce initiatives and benefits the entire community.
- **Innovation:** Prioritize data-driven decision-making and smart risks grounded in an evidence-based approach that ensures our investments yield meaningful results.

Section 1: Regional Designation

Regional/Local Planning Area:	Workforce Development Area V
County Comprising Service Delivery Area:	King County, Washington
Fiscal Agent/Entity:	Workforce Development Council of Seattle King County
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Section 2: Regional Component of Plan

Introduction

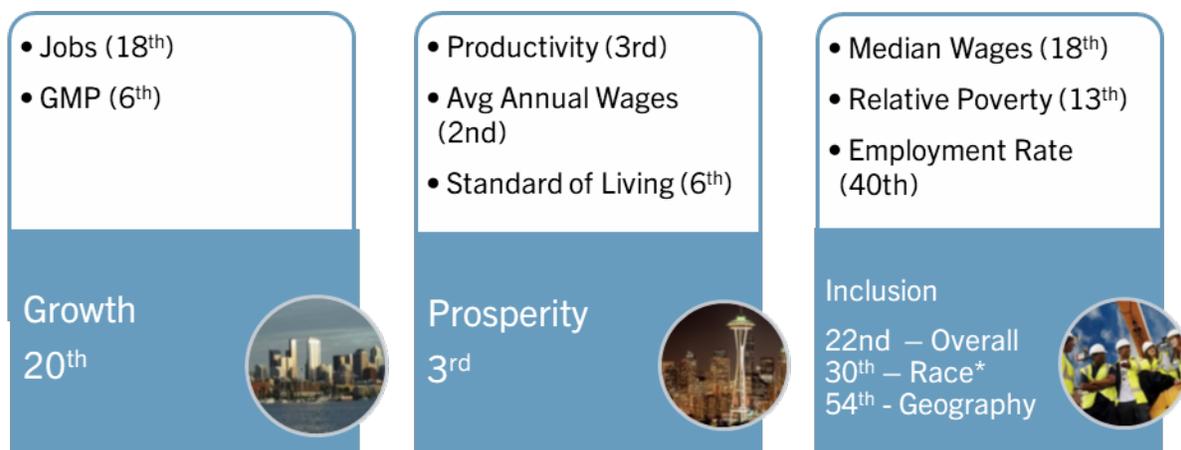
King County's demographic landscape and economic indicators reveal a complex picture. While the region has shown resilience in bouncing back from the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, underlying disparities remain. Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities face higher unemployment rates and lower labor force participation compared to their white counterparts. These disparities are not just numbers; they are the result of systemic barriers constructed over time, including discriminatory hiring practices, educational attainment gaps, and inequities in housing and transportation.

The structural makeup of our regional economy and labor market, both pre- and post-pandemic, exacerbates these racial gaps. Occupational segregation and the uneven geography of opportunity significantly disadvantage BIPOC communities. For instance, while the median annual income in Seattle-King County is higher than the national average, this figure masks significant racial income disparities. BIPOC individuals often earn significantly less than their white counterparts, even within the same educational categories.

Item 1: Regional Analysis of Economic Conditions

The Seattle metro area ranks high in terms of growth and prosperity, but not inclusion and equity, according to Brookings' Metro Monitor 2024 report.¹ On growth, the Seattle metro area ranked 20th out of 54 very large metro areas with at least 1 million residents, based on changes in jobs, Gross Metropolitan Product (GMP), and jobs at young firms (data are for 2012-2022). On prosperity, Seattle ranked 3rd, based on change in productivity, average annual wage, and standard of living. On inclusion, Seattle ranked 22nd overall, based on change in employment rate, median earnings, and relative poverty.

¹ Brookings, Metro Monitor 2024, available at <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/metro-monitor-2024/>
Data are for the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue Metropolitan Statistical Area.



Economic Indicators of Success – Brookings Metro Monitor 2024

When looking at racial inclusion, Seattle ranked 30th, based on change in the gaps between whites and people of color on employment rate, median earnings, and relative poverty rate. For example, the white/people of color median earnings gap grew \$1,389 from 2012-2022, ranking Seattle 36th. Seattle ranked 49th on geographic inclusion, based on change in top/bottom neighborhoods on employment rate, median household income, and relative poverty rate gaps. Here, the top/bottom neighborhoods median household income gap grew by \$17,210 from 2008-2012 to 2018-2022.

*** Racial Inclusion – 30th Overall**

- White/people of color employment rate gap (26th)
- White/people of color median earning gap (36th)
- White/people of color poverty rate gap (20th)

The WDC’s Workforce Dynamics dashboard highlights some of these same trends. For example, it shows “income disparities in King County are vast and fall along racial lines. King County enjoys higher incomes than the state or national averages, but this relative prosperity is concentrated among the white population. The greatest income disparities in King County are concentrated in zip codes in South King County, home to the majority of the region’s BIPOC communities.” In addition, per capita incomes for BIPOC populations are lower than the self-sufficiency standard for King County.²

Zip codes in South King County also have elevated levels of poverty, with poverty rates as high as 16 percent, compared to 6.7 percent for King County.

In-Demand Sectors and Occupations

In 2023, Seattle-King County had an estimated 1,530,750 jobs. Industries with the largest number of jobs included government (including public education); professional, scientific, and technical services;

² Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County, Workforce Dynamics at <https://www.seakingwdc.org/workforce-dynamics>.

health care and social assistance; information; accommodation and food services; retail trade; manufacturing; and construction. Over two thirds of all jobs in the region were in these industries. Their average earnings per job ranged from a high of \$315,874 a year in information to a low of \$44,246 a year in accommodation and food services.

Seattle-King County Employment and Earnings by Industry, 2023-2027

NAICS	Description	2023 Jobs	2027 Jobs	Job Change	Percent Change	Average Earnings Per Job
90	Government	187,253	190,616	3,363	2%	\$117,514
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	161,704	180,433	18,729	12%	\$180,005
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	161,551	171,789	10,238	6%	\$86,640
51	Information	139,572	151,609	12,038	9%	\$315,874
72	Accommodation and Food Services	107,004	113,046	6,042	6%	\$44,246
44	Retail Trade	105,323	75,626	(29,696)	(28%)	\$67,107
31	Manufacturing	93,344	90,533	(2,811)	(3%)	\$132,579
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	87,863	129,722	41,859	48%	\$246,315
23	Construction	83,002	85,732	2,730	3%	\$111,587
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	76,812	79,630	2,819	4%	\$93,220
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	64,309	64,446	137	0%	\$59,924
48	Transportation and Warehousing	64,221	71,973	7,752	12%	\$110,944
42	Wholesale Trade	63,414	63,566	152	0%	\$143,857
52	Finance and Insurance	45,694	45,255	(439)	(1%)	\$181,132
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	32,110	33,941	1,831	6%	\$102,974

61	Educational Services	26,552	27,238	687	3%	\$63,096
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	25,895	27,696	1,801	7%	\$76,280
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	2,683	2,655	(28)	(1%)	\$101,964
22	Utilities	2,115	2,342	227	11%	\$188,909
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	328	274	(54)	(17%)	\$118,022
	Total	1,530,750	1,608,124	77,374	5%	\$135,545

Source: Lightcast Economy Overview – King County, WA

In looking at earnings by industry as well as by occupational group (below), it's important to keep in mind the self-sufficiency standard as a benchmark: \$52.20 an hour (the self-sufficiency wage for King County (City of Seattle) for one adult and one preschooler and one school-age child), which translates to annual earnings of \$111,150.

From 2023 to 2027, 5 percent job growth is projected across all industries. Industries with faster than average growth include management of companies and enterprises; professional, scientific, and technical services; transportation and warehousing; and information. Industries projected to lose jobs include retail trade and manufacturing.

Another way to look at growth is not percent change but change in number of jobs. When using this measure, health care and social assistance is also among the top industries.

Occupational groups with the largest number of jobs in 2023 included office and administrative support, computer and mathematical, business, and financial operations, sales and related, food preparation and serving related, transportation and material moving, management, healthcare practitioners and technical, healthcare support, educational instruction and library, and construction and extraction. Over three quarters of all jobs in the region were in these occupational groups.

The largest occupational groups include both high wage groups—computer and mathematical with a \$65.39 an hour median wage and management with a \$73.25 an hour median wage—and low wage groups—food preparation and serving related with a \$19.15 an hour median wage and healthcare support with a \$19.48 an hour median wage.

The computer and mathematical occupational group is projected to grow the fastest and add the most jobs from 2023 to 2027. Other top occupational groups in terms of job growth include management, business and financial operations, office and administrative support, healthcare support, food preparation and serving related, and transportation and material moving.

Occupational groups projected to lose jobs include sales and related, and production.

Seattle-King County Employment and Earnings by Occupational Group, 2023-2027

SOC	Occupations	2023 Jobs	2027 Jobs	Jobs Change	Percent Change	Median Hourly Earnings
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support	173,692	179,303	5,611	3%	\$25.53
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical	150,624	171,971	21,347	14%	\$65.39
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations	150,357	166,107	15,750	10%	\$43.56
41-0000	Sales and Related	139,024	128,494	(10,530)	(8%)	\$26.14
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related	115,211	120,309	5,099	4%	\$19.15
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving	107,735	110,839	3,104	3%	\$23.79
11-0000	Management	97,531	110,569	13,038	13%	\$73.25
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	72,136	74,837	2,700	4%	\$48.03
31-0000	Healthcare Support	68,205	73,691	5,486	8%	\$19.48
25-0000	Educational Instruction and Library	67,380	69,825	2,445	4%	\$32.68
47-0000	Construction and Extraction	61,416	63,500	2,084	3%	\$36.10
51-0000	Production	55,326	53,838	(1,489)	(3%)	\$24.38
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	48,710	49,839	1,130	2%	\$30.99
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	36,536	37,624	1,088	3%	\$19.48
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering	35,323	37,760	2,437	7%	\$48.87
39-0000	Personal Care and Service	33,291	34,136	845	3%	\$19.87
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	29,837	31,636	1,799	6%	\$36.77
33-0000	Protective Service	27,052	28,595	1,544	6%	\$26.00
21-0000	Community and Social Services	23,640	25,120	1,480	6%	\$29.82

19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science	18,787	20,332	1,545	8%	\$41.59
23-0000	Legal	13,100	14,064	964	7%	\$52.19
55-0000	Military-Only	3,207	3,156	(51)	(2%)	\$16.61
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	2,632	2,580	(52)	(2%)	\$18.01
	Total	1,530,750	1,608,124	77,374	5%	

Source: Lightcast Economy Overview – King County, WA

In addition to job openings from growth, there will also be job openings due to separations (exits and transitions). For example, based on Washington State Employment Security Department long term occupational employment projections, construction and extraction occupations will have 1,007 average annual openings due to growth during 2021 to 2026, but 32,393 annual average total openings.

Seattle-King County Average Annual Job Openings, 2021-2026

SOC	Occupations	Average Annual Openings Due to Growth, 2021-26	Average Annual Total Openings, 2021-26
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical	8,464	60,511
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support	805	59,714
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations	5,155	57,399
41-0000	Sales and Related	1,045	55,015
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related	4,212	50,095
11-0000	Management	3,988	39,726
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving	1,418	39,341
47-0000	Construction and Extraction	1,007	32,393
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	1,666	22,683
31-0000	Healthcare Support	1,444	21,798
25-0000	Education, Training and Library	1,856	17,862
39-0000	Personal Care and Service	1,417	17,444
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	631	16,310

51-0000	Production	(580)	15,934
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	1,046	15,776
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	768	15,256
21-0000	Community and Social Service	1,005	10,108
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering	824	9,603
33-0000	Protective Service	687	9,458
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science	823	7,441
23-0000	Legal	234	4,778
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	(8)	1,964
	Total	37,907	580,609

Source: Washington state Employment Security Department LMEA
 “December 2023 Washington state civilian Labor force and employment” 1/23/2024

Looking at specific occupations, the 25 occupations with the largest number of average annual total openings due to both growth and separations during 2021-2026 are a mix of high wage occupations requiring considerable preparation, and low wage occupations requiring little or some preparation, with some occupations in the middle.

Topping the list are software developers, with 29,028 projected job openings a year and a median wage of \$73.04 an hour. Next on the list: fast food and counter workers, with over 17,536 projected job openings a year and a median wage of \$17.10 an hour. Also on the list are some occupations that fall between these extremes in terms of wages and preparation – for example, carpenters, with 7,680 job openings a year and a median wage of \$31.50 an hour; registered nurses, with 6,316 job openings a year and a median wage of \$49.36 an hour; and computer user support specialists, with 5,479 job openings a year and a median wage of \$32.65 an hour.

Seattle-King County Average Annual Total Openings, 2021-2026

	Average Annual Total Openings, 2021-2026	Estimated Employment, 2021	Median Hourly Wage, 2022*	Education & Training
<i>Software Developers</i>	29,028	80,083	\$73.04	Considerable prep (4-year bachelor's degree; considerable work exp, OJT)
<i>Fast Food and Counter Workers</i>	17,536	31,937	\$17.10	Little, no prep
<i>Retail Salespersons</i>	14,418	36,471	\$17.58	Some prep (HSD; some work exp, OJT)
<i>Office Clerks, General</i>	10,783	26,144	\$22.85	Some prep

<i>Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand</i>	9,768	24,007	\$19.61	Some prep
<i>Home Health Aides and Personal Care Aides</i>	9,582	20,014	\$18.44	Some prep
<i>Customer Service Representatives</i>	9,544	37,067	\$22.48	Some prep
<i>General and Operations Managers</i>	8,236	21,426	\$61.93	Considerable prep
<i>Management Analysts</i>	8,235	19,448	\$51.62	Considerable prep
<i>Waiters and Waitresses</i>	8,169	14,032	\$18.16	Some prep
<i>Accountants and Auditors</i>	7,894	21,020	\$39.98	Considerable prep
<i>Carpenters</i>	7,680	15,918	\$31.50	Apprenticeship
<i>Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists</i>	7,507	21,066	\$48.42	Considerable prep
<i>Cashiers</i>	7,290	19,338	\$17.30	Some prep
<i>Construction Laborers</i>	6,755	14,698	\$24.51	Some prep
<i>Registered Nurses</i>	6,316	22,335	\$49.36	Considerable prep (2 year associate's or 4 year bachelor's degree; considerable work exp, OJT)
<i>Janitors and Cleaners</i>	6,216	14,400	\$18.39	Medium prep (vocational training or 2 year associate's degree; work exp, OJT)
<i>Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks</i>	6,041	14,303	\$24.64	Medium prep
<i>Computer Systems Analysts</i>	5,721	11,448	\$60.12	Medium prep
<i>Computer and Information Systems Managers</i>	5,625	11,583	\$87.17	Considerable prep
<i>Computer User Support Specialists</i>	5,479	11,787	\$32.65	Medium prep
<i>Security Guards</i>	5,299	10,331	\$18.88	Some prep
<i>Real Estate Sales Agents</i>	5,112	12,750	\$32.17	Medium prep
<i>Human Resource Specialists</i>	5,051	10,284	\$39.89	Considerable prep
<i>Nursing Assistants</i>	5,005	11,924	\$21.34	Medium prep

Source: Washington State Employment Security Department/DATA (for openings, employment, and wages) and O*NET (education and training)

Job postings are another indicator of demand. Lightcast data on the top 25 posted occupations from September 2023-February 2024 show many of the same occupations. However, registered nurses tops the job postings list, followed by software developers. The list also includes some different occupations, including maintenance and repair workers, general; heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers; secretaries and administrative assistants; and medical assistants.

Industry and Occupational Employment by Race and Ethnicity

In looking at industry employment by demographics, BIPOC workers tend to be overrepresented in industries with low wages and underrepresented in those with high wages. For example, Black or African American workers comprise 6 percent of employment across all industries but make up 12 percent of workers in administrative and support and waste management services; 11 percent in health care and social assistance; and 9 percent in transportation and warehousing – all of which have annual earnings below the average for all industries. And they are 3 percent of workers in information and professional, scientific, and technical services – both of which have above average earnings.

Seattle-King County Industry Employment by Demographics, 2023

Largest King County Industries by Demographic Makeup (Percentage)

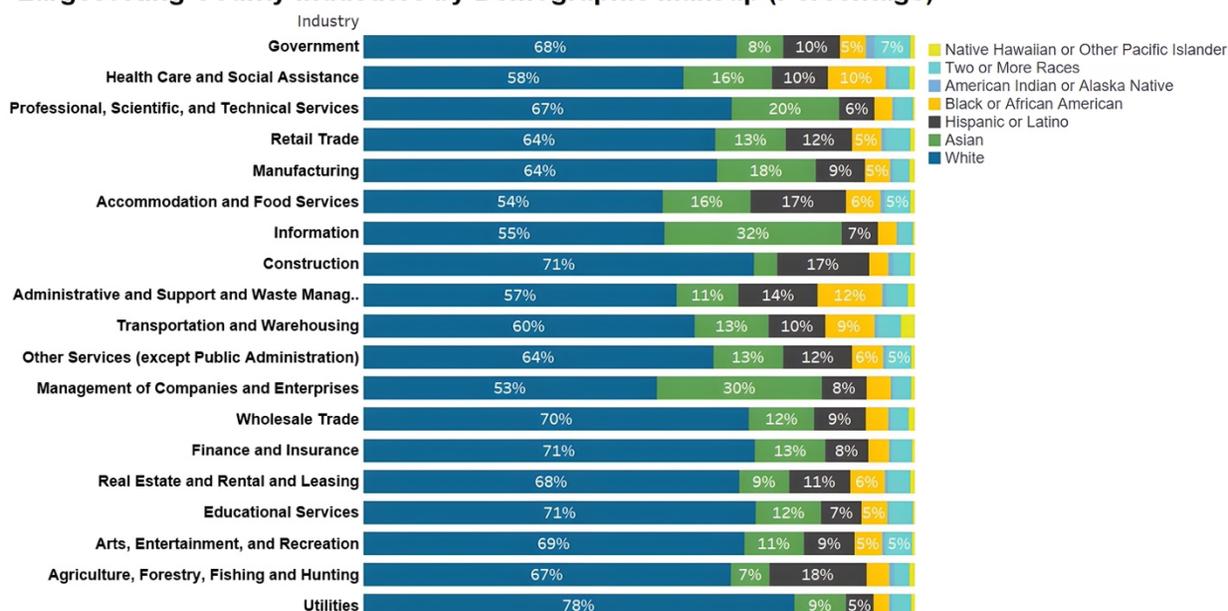


Figure 1: Largest King County Industries by Demographic Makeup (Percentage)

This same pattern holds true for occupational employment. For example, Black or African American workers make up 15 percent of employment in healthcare support occupations, which have a median wage of \$19.48 an hour, but only 5 percent of employment in health practitioners and technical occupations, which have a \$48.03 median hourly wage. Hispanic or Latino workers comprise 10 percent of employment across all occupations but make up 27 percent of building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations, 20 percent of construction and extraction occupations, and 17 percent of food preparation and serving related occupations.

Seattle-King County Occupational Employment by Demographics, 2023

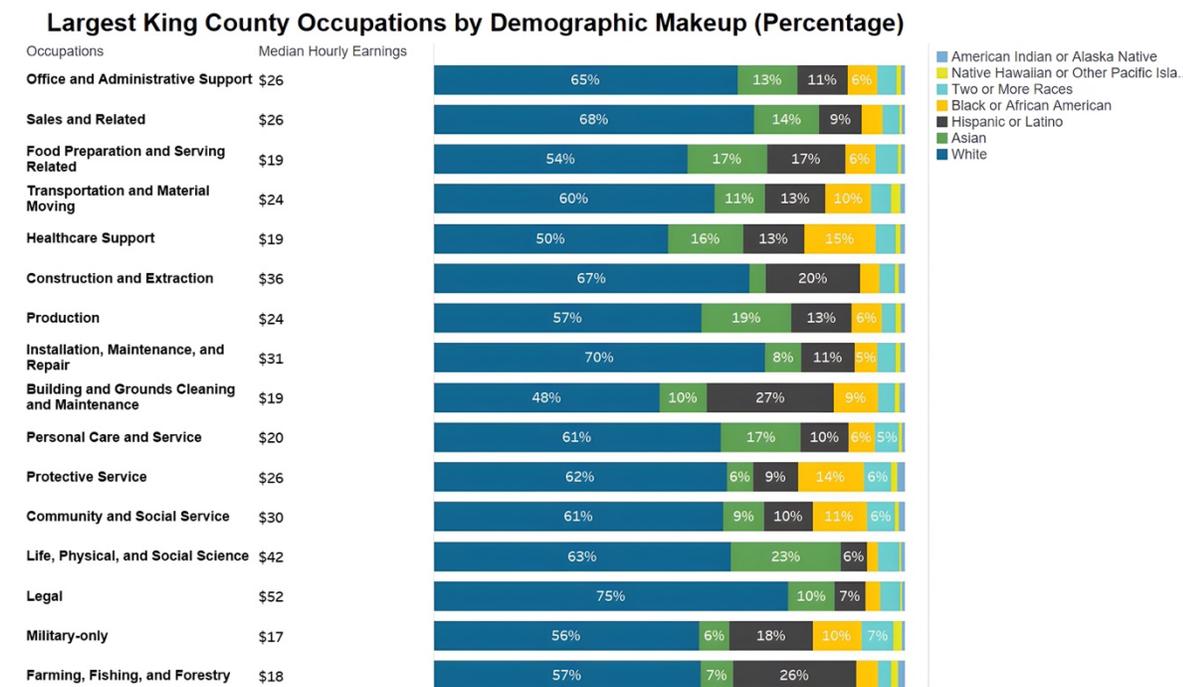


Figure 2: Largest King County Occupations by Demographic Makeup (Percentage)

This analysis of the regional economy and labor market highlights Seattle-King County's in-demand industries and occupations as well as some of the structural, systemic issues needing to be addressed, including the growth in jobs at the extremes of the earnings and preparation spectrum and occupational segregation. The analysis helped inform the WDC's 2024-2028 priorities, including centering racial equity, addressing job quality, building career pathways, and prioritizing opportunity sectors such as construction, healthcare, and information technology.

In its work on job quality, the WDC will take into account the multiple dimensions of job quality, including pay and benefits, work environment (e.g., stable hours and scheduling, health and safety, and job security), supervision quality, training, career development, mentoring and coaching, and worker voice, as spelled out in the National Fund for Workforce Solution's job quality framework.³ And in its work on career pathways, the WDC will take into account the breakdown that has occurred in internal job ladders over the years and the need to build pathways for workers in low wage, entry jobs to advance to higher wage, pathway jobs. Among the things this requires are: career navigation; job coaching; changes in employer practices; changes in education and training programs so they provide in-demand skills and are accessible to and affordable for working adults; and wrap-around supports.

³ National Fund for Workforce Solutions, Job Design Framework, available at <https://nationalfund.org/job-design-framework/>

Workforce Demographics and Metrics

Population Growth, Age & Race/Ethnicity

King County’s estimated population was nearly 2.3 million in 2022. The county’s population grew at a faster rate (1.6 percent per year) than the state (1.4 percent per year) over the most recent decade. This trend is due to population growth centered in cities, newly created cities, and annexations of formerly unincorporated areas - adding eight new cities, going from 31 incorporated cities in 1990 to 39 cities in 2018. Much of this growth has been in South King County cities, Kent (243%), Renton (153%) and Federal Way (45.8%), with Seattle (47.4%) and Bellevue (70.5%).

Labor Force Demographics

King County’s December 2023 civilian labor force was nearly 1.35 million, slightly higher than the pre-pandemic level. The unemployment rate for King County was 3.5 percent, with 46,783 unemployed. The county’s unemployment rate is the lowest in comparison to the rest of the state, yet the unemployed population represents 25% of Washington state’s total.⁴

Gender

In 2022, men held 55.3 percent and women held 44.7 percent of the jobs in King County. The labor force participation rate for males (88.2%) exceeds that of females (77.4% overall). The gap is even greater for participation rate for females with children in need of care.

The proportionally male-dominated industries included goods producers such as mining (85.1 percent), construction (80.4 percent), and manufacturing (70.2 percent). Among service-providing industries, information and wholesale trade stand out as the most male-dominated industries (68.1 and 67.5 percent respectively). The most female-dominated industries included health care and social assistance (75.1 percent), educational services (67.2 percent), other services (60.0 percent) and finance and insurance (57.4 percent).

King County, Washington

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION POPULATION GENDER

	Total		Labor Force Participation Rate		Employment/ Population Ratio		Unemployment rate	
	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error
Population 20 to 64 years	1,459,326	±780	83.0%	±0.6	80.2%	±0.6	3.2%	±0.3
<u>SEX</u>								

⁴ ESDWAGOV – King County Profile: <https://esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo/county-profiles/king>.

Male	759,720	±388	88.2%	±0.6	85.1%	±0.7	3.2%	±0.4
Female	699,606	±680	77.4%	±0.8	74.8%	±0.8	3.3%	±0.5
With own children under 18 years	221,802	±6,327	72.8%	±1.6	70.4%	±1.6	3.3%	±0.9
With own children under 6 years only	51,137	±4,054	71.4%	±4.0	70.1%	±4.0	1.8%	±0.9
With children under 6 and 6 to 17 years	39,758	±3,180	64.7%	±3.6	63.4%	±3.5	1.8%	±1.3
With own children 6 to 17 years only	130,907	±5,254	75.9%	±2.0	72.6%	±2.0	4.3%	±1.4

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates. American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP05.

Age

The workforce tends to be relatively young compared to the rest of Washington state. As of 2022, workers aged 25 to 44 constitute 50.2 percent of the workforce in King County.

King County, Washington

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION POPULATION - AGE

	Total		Labor Force Participation Rate		Employment/Population Ratio		Unemployment rate	
	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error
Population 16 years and over	1,879,109	±1,836	69.9%	±0.5	67.3%	±0.5	3.6%	±0.4
AGE								
16 to 19 years	96,661	±1,924	38.1%	±2.9	32.7%	±2.7	14.3%	±4.1

20 to 24 years	138,334	±711	79.9%	±2.2	75.2%	±2.5	5.0%	±1.5
25 to 29 years	195,087	±640	89.3%	±1.0	85.0%	±1.5	4.6%	±1.1
30 to 34 years	218,551	*****	88.4%	±1.4	85.6%	±1.6	3.1%	±0.8
35 to 44 years	360,809	±1,004	86.2%	±1.2	83.3%	±1.2	3.2%	±0.7
45 to 54 years	292,485	±1,004	84.6%	±1.1	82.3%	±1.2	2.5%	±0.5
55 to 59 years	128,908	±4,500	75.4%	±1.6	74.0%	±1.7	1.8%	±0.5
60 to 64 years	125,152	±4,454	62.4%	±2.3	60.8%	±2.1	2.7%	±0.9
65 to 74 years	190,349	±743	29.8%	±1.7	28.7%	±1.8	3.6%	±1.4
75 years and over	132,773	±728	6.8%	±1.1	6.6%	±1.1	2.4%	±2.0

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates. American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Data Profiles.

Educational Attainment

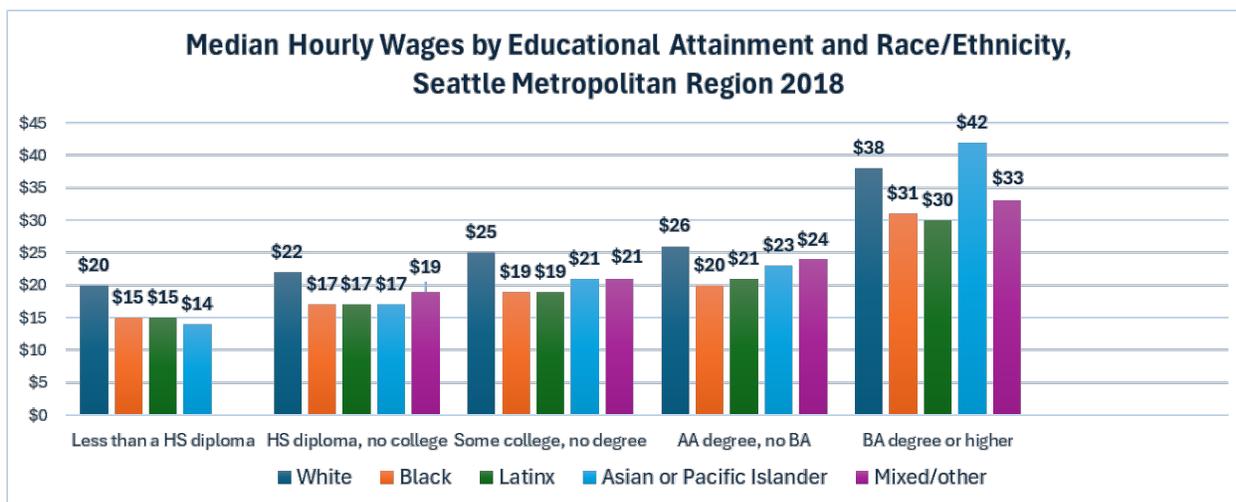
King County is one of the most educated regions in the United States, with 56.4% of King County residents ages 25 or older holding a bachelor's degree or higher in 2021 compared to 38.9% statewide. The high educational attainment rate is in part attributed to importing workers from out of state and other countries. In 2021, over 70% of residents who moved to King County from another state or country within the previous year held a bachelor's degree or greater, compared to around half of workers already residing in King County. For King County residents over the age of 25, 71.9% were born outside of Washington State. Greater than 50% of these transplanted workers hold college degrees, as compared to 46.9% of Washington state natives residing in King County.⁵

There exist significant gaps in educational attainment by race or ethnicity. White and Asian residents of King County hold college degrees at rates of 59.2% and 67.2%, respectively, while only 28.5% of black and 30.7% of Hispanic residents hold a college degree. Educational inequities perpetuate racial gaps in employment and wages. These disparities are deeply rooted in economic inequities and structural racism that influence a person's chance to succeed in education and training. Along with

⁵ Office of Economic and Financial Analysis, King County, Washington, Educational Attainment in King County
<https://kingcounty.gov/en/legacy/independent/forecasting/King%20County%20Economy%20Status/King%20County%20Economic%20Indicators/Educational%20Attainment.aspx>

rising costs and a growing racial wealth gap, these dynamics drive longstanding racial inequities in higher educational attainment, with lifelong implications for the economic prospects of workers and their families.

Higher educational attainment is strongly correlated with labor force and unemployment rates and wages across all racial groups, but it does not eliminate racial gaps.



Source: *Advancing Workforce Equity in Seattle, Analysis of the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA*. Data reflect a 2014-2018 average; Native American workers and mixed/other race workers at certain educational levels, are not included because of small sample sizes. Note: Asian or Pacific Islander is combined and masks the wide disparities across nearly 50 different races and ethnicities subgroups.

Education Attainment	Total	Labor Force %	In Labor Force	Unemployment Rate
Less than High School	74,946	69.5%	52,087	6.1%
High School or Equivalency	182,569	75.3%	137,474	5.9%
Some college or Associate's degree	308,790	80.2%	247,650	5.0%
Bachelor's degree or higher	750,276	87.7%	657,992	2.8%

Race/Ethnicity

King County’s population is increasingly racially and ethnically diverse. White, non-Hispanic population make up 53.4% of the population – down from 56.9% in 2020 and 65% in 2010. Among the county’s non-white population, Asians comprise the largest racial group at 20.7%. The Hispanic/Latino population is 10.5%, followed by multi-racial (7%), Black/African American (6.5%), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (0.8%) and American Indian/Alaska Native (0.4%). The county has a higher proportionate share of Asian (62% of the state’s Asian population) and nearly half of the state’s Black/African American population.

This ongoing demographic transformation underscores the urgent need to center racial equity, not only as a moral imperative but also as a crucial ingredient for continued economic prosperity.

King County Population by Race ⁶

Race	King County		Washington State	
	Population	Percentage	Population	Percentage
White/non-Hispanic	1,209,674	53.4	4,941,456	63.5
Asian	469,904	20.7%	755,832	9.7
Hispanic/Latinx	237,734	10.5	1,093,313	14
Black/African American	147,698	6.5	299,537	3.8
Multiple Races	159,343	7.0%	523,448	6.7%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	17,198	0.8%	52,231	0.7
American Indian/Alaska Native	9,162	0.4%	69,024	0.9
Other	16,076	0.7	50,945	0.7
Total	2,266,789		7,785,786	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. "ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates." American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP05, 2022.

The region's workforce is increasingly diverse

While white workers have the lowest labor force participation rate (67.6%) of all races, the region's workforce continues to be predominantly white. Other race and Hispanic and Latinx had the highest labor force participation rates at 73.8% and 73% respectively. Black workers had the next lowest labor force participation rate, and highest unemployment rate. Latinx, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, participated in the labor force at higher levels than whites, however, they had higher levels of unemployment. Unemployment stood at 2.8% for Asian populations and 3.4% for whites in 2022, the lowest unemployment rates among all populations in the County.

It is important to note that, because of the lack of demographic data disaggregation, visibility is lost regarding the experiences of specific racial populations that are included in larger groupings. As noted above, data for different ethnic groups within the Asian category, show significant differences across subgroups. Further disaggregation would allow specific communities' needs to be identified and addressed.

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau. "ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates." American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP05, 2022, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP1Y2022.DP05?q=DP05&g=040XX00US53_050XX00US53033&y=2022 Accessed on February 26, 2024.

King County, Washington

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION POPULATION Race/Ethnicity (2022)

RACE/ HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN	Total		Labor Force Participation Rate		Employment/ Population Ratio		Unemployment rate	
	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error
Black or African American alone	118,127	±4,386	68.2%	±3.4	(64.7%)	±3.2	4.5%	±1.5
American Indian/Alaska Native alone	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Asian alone	402,548	±4,486	72.9%	±1.1	70.7%	±1.2	2.8%	±0.6
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander alone	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Some other race alone	87,565	±6,466	77.1%	±2.6	73.8%	±2.8	4.2%	±1.6
Two or more races	170,999	±7,998	74.3%	±2.4	70.8%	±2.5	4.6%	±1.0
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	172,118	±984	76.2%	±1.9	73.0% 125646	±2.1	4.1%	±1.1
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	1,050,339	±5,010	67.6%	±0.6	65.2%	±0.6	3.4%	±0.4

Foreign Born

Much of King County’s population growth has been due to an influx of foreign-born residents. As of 2022, foreign-born individuals account for close to 25% of the county's total population, which is higher than the statewide average in Washington at 15.3%. In Seattle, foreign-born individuals account for

19% of the city's population growth. Within the foreign-born population there is great diversity in countries of origin, educational levels, languages spoken, and income.⁷

The largest proportion of the foreign-born population, nearly 57% are from Asia, followed by Latin America (18%), Europe (13.2%), Africa (8.3%) and Oceania (1.9%). In King County, India stands out as the No. 1 country of birth for immigrants. There were around 83,000 county residents born in India, constituting 14% of the county's foreign-born population. China ranked second at around 80,000 residents, while Mexico ranks third with 55,000 residents.⁸ This rich diversity not only underscores the multicultural fabric of King County, but also highlights the crucial role of the foreign-born population in fueling region's economic growth.

FOREIGN & U.S. BORN POPULATION (WASHINGTON, KING COUNTY AND SEATTLE, (2021)⁹

Location	Total	US Born	Foreign-Born	% Foreign-born
WA State	7,617,364	6,500,835	1,116,529	15%
King County	2,240,876	1,699,483	541,393	24%
King County (Minus- Seattle)	1,514,822	1,113,531	401,291	26%
Seattle	726,054	585,952	140,102	19%

Language

More than 31% of King County residents speaking a language other than English at home, 1.5 times the rate in Washington (21.1%). The non-English language spoken by the largest group is Asian and Pacific Island languages 13.7%, followed by other Indo-European (7.6%), Spanish (7%). Seattle Public Schools reports its students speak more than 169 primary languages and dialects. The top five languages spoken by families and students are: Spanish, Somali, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Amharic. More than 200,000 residents report having limited proficiency in speaking English.

In 2022, 29% of King County's labor force were foreign born. Immigrant workers are disproportionately represented in both high wage and low wage sectors. Census data for 2022 shows more than 90,000 foreign-born residents – mostly from India or China are employed in computer-related occupations in the Seattle metro area, making up roughly 45% of tech workers. The large number of H1-B temporary worker non-immigrant visa holders in our region are counted in the number of the foreign born in the workforce data. This is an important distinction because the inclusion of the temporary visa workforce in the data skews the overall picture, failing to accurately represent the challenges and barriers faced by immigrant workers' experiences and needs.

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. "Selected Characteristics of the Foreign-Born Population by Region of Birth: Europe." American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S0503, 2022, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2022.S0503?q=050XX00US53033>. Accessed on February 28, 2024.

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau. "Selected Characteristics of the Native and Foreign-Born Populations." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S0501, 2022, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.S0501?q=DP05foreignborn&g=040XX00US53_050XX00US53033&y=2022. Accessed on February 27, 2024.

⁹ Migration Policy Institute. 2023. "Custom Washington State County and City Demographic Dataset Based on U.S. American Community Survey Data." Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute

Foreign Born percentage of Workers by occupation in King County



Figure 3: Foreign Born percentage of workers by Occupation in King County

This underscores the necessity for services that are culturally and linguistically relevant, customized to the diverse language, culture, and education/skill levels within this population. E.g., language access-translation and interpretation, access to training (including English language instruction and contextualized occupational training), foreign credential assessment, and supportive services are critical in fostering stabilization of refugees, humanitarian parolees, and immigrants, facilitating their active engagement in the labor force. Status

There are 112,031 working age individuals with disabilities in King County. People with disabilities have the lowest labor force participation rate (54.6%) and the highest unemployment rate (11.1%) of all population groups. This is a significant indication that barriers to employment exist for this group.

The presence of high unemployment rates and low labor force participation rates among individuals with disabilities underscores the difficulties they encounter in accessing job opportunities. Poverty among this group can exacerbate these challenges, leading to limited access to essential resources such as healthcare, education, transportation, and housing.

Disability by Age, Race, and Ethnicity, King County, 2017-2012 Average

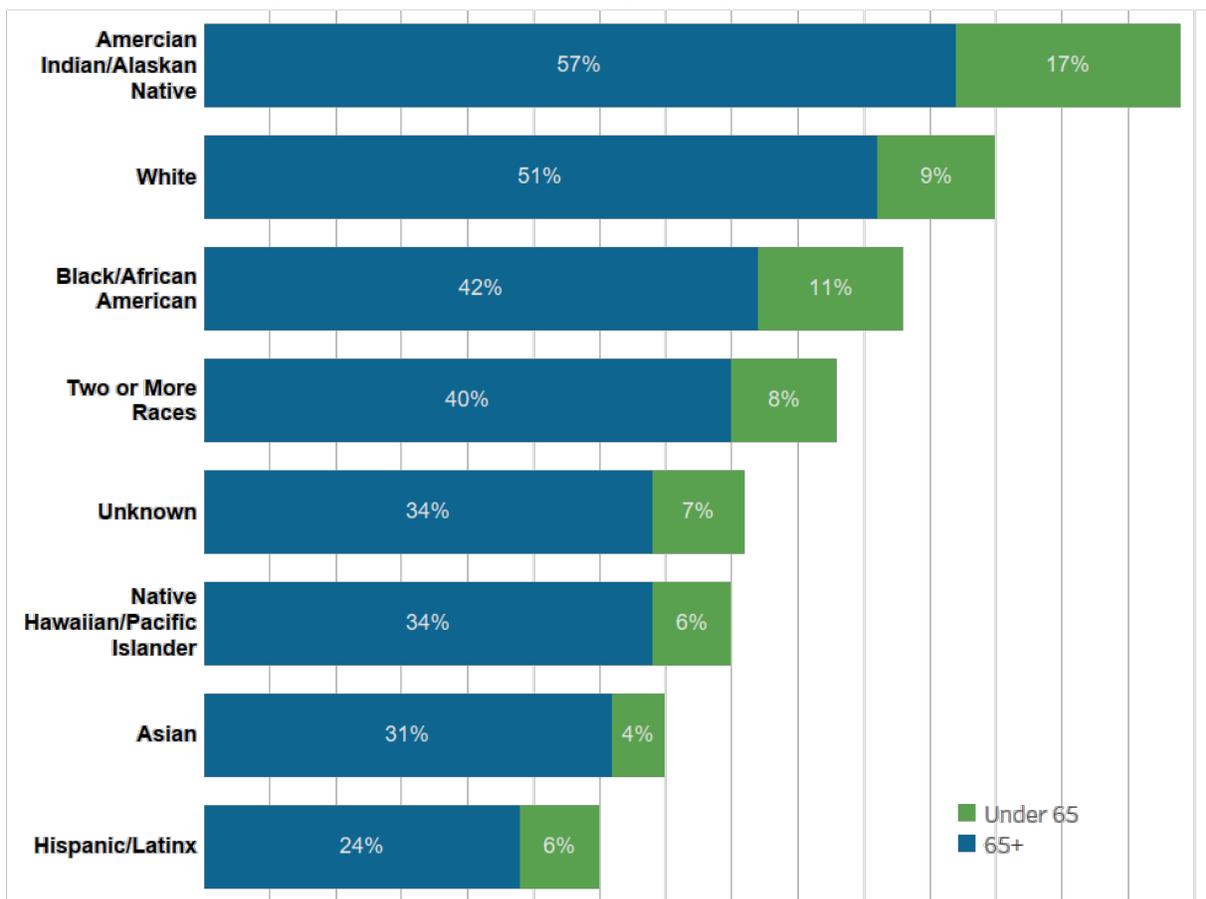


Figure 4: Disability by Age, Race, and Ethnicity, King County, 2017-2012 Average

Data from the 2024-2027 Area Plan for Seattle-King County, which guides the work of Aging and Disability Services (ADS), reveals that disability rates are notably higher among older adults living in poverty and disproportionately affect people of color¹⁰. In response to these challenges, initiatives like within Open Doors for Multicultural Families (ODMF) have emerged to provide essential support to individuals with disabilities. Their model lies in its culturally responsive approach by ensuring their staff members reflect the background of the communities they serve. This deliberate staffing strategy fosters trust, understanding, and meaningful communication, thereby enhancing the quality and relevance of support provided to individuals with disabilities and their families.

These findings highlight the complex intersection of poverty, disability, and systemic inequalities, emphasizing the urgent need for targeted interventions and workplace accommodations.

¹⁰ King County Area Plan 2024-2027. Retrieved from https://www.agingkingcounty.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/185/2023/11/ADS_AreaPlan2024-2027_submitted2023-11-02.pdf

Youth

In King County, there are at least 19,400 young people disconnected from school and/or work. This is about 8.5% of the young people in King County, and likely a severe undercount due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a significant impact on their lives. Of all disconnected youth, young black men are disproportionately outside of formal work or education system. When we examine data, we can see troubling trends emerge. Young black men, specifically ages 18-21, tend to be most at risk of low educational attainment and unemployment. We found that 60% are not in school or are unemployed, over 50% have not obtained a secondary credential, and are geographically situated in the southern parts of King County. Furthermore, Young Black men face unique challenges when navigating the ladder of opportunity in the workforce.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the youth population was significant and will have long-lasting effects if left unaddressed. The shutdown of in person classes and move to virtual online instruction disproportionately impacted youth of color and those from low-income households. A recent report on the impacts of COVID-19 on Opportunity Youth, "*In Their Own Words*" spoke to the myriad of challenges youth experienced: "Emerging adulthood is a time of significant transition, deepening self-knowledge and increasing autonomy, yet many of the milestones that mark this transition have been cancelled or paused indefinitely. More than one-third of young people reported changes to their long-term goals due to the pandemic even in May, when the survey was administered. "The survey found that COVID-19 impacted all areas of their life with the most negative impacts around employment, education, relationships, and mental health. Youth cited being uncertain about the future and pointed to specific setbacks - often in education, employment, or both. Many youths reported that pandemic had negatively affected their access to basic needs, and when asked what resources or support they needed, responses underscored the life-or-death nature of this crisis for many families and individuals. Top resource needs identified included help with bills, housing security, food, transportation, Wi-Fi access and employment support.

These findings highlight the need for a range of support, including mental health, financial, education and career guidance to address the setbacks and other negative impacts of COVID-19.

Individuals and Households Living in Poverty

According to the U.S. Census¹¹, 187,794 (8.4%) of King County population lived in poverty in 2022. More than 54% (102,160) were female and 21.7% (40,690) of this population were children under 18 years who had an overall poverty rate of 9.3%. Unsurprisingly, there are significant disparities by race –only 6.3% of the white population lived in poverty compared to Black-African Americans with the highest percentage (18.5%), followed by American Indian/Alaska Native (18%), Latinx (13.1%), and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (10.9%) and Asians (8.1%). Nearly 25% (45,970) of this population were employed.

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1701. Retrieved March 3, 2024, from <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.S1701?q=King County Washington, poverty demographics>.

OUR WORK IN ACTION: WORKFORCE DYNAMICS

Data about racial inequity must be viewed within the historical context of race and racism in the United States. Without this history, the data can be misinterpreted or misused to promote racist ideologies. In fact, the data reveals the consequences of a long history of racial oppression.

In 2022, the WDC launched [Workforce Dynamics](#), a data visualization tool created to inform the work of WDC and our partners to advance racial equity. WIOA does not require tracking of outcomes by race, resulting in critical data gaps on existing disparities within the workforce system. The project represents a sustained commitment by the WDC to strategies that center equity as the superior growth model toward building a thriving and inclusive economy that benefits all workers, residents, and communities.

Methodology

Workforce Dynamics employs mixed-method analysis to bridge economic and social data, designed to provide specific analysis and avoid over-generalization.

- ❑ **Race as a Factor:** A primary goal of this project is to utilize data to inform our work to advance racial equity in King County. Thus, race is central to our analysis of the data and to how we define and measure our progress.
- ❑ **Disaggregated Data:** Aggregation of data hides the inequities between populations by grouping disparate communities and people together. In order to understand the conditions in a particular community or population, we need to divide data into separate and distinct groups.
- ❑ **Median vs. Mean:** The median is the midpoint in a data set, separating an equal number of higher and lower data points. The mean represents an average calculated by dividing the sum of all values by the total number of values.

The median is preferred in this analysis as it offers a more consistent value for comparison across multiple data sets and is less prone to distortion by outliers. These distortions can mask drastic racial inequities.

Income Adequacy

Traditional mechanisms for measuring income adequacy, such as the Federal Poverty Level, are insufficient. In collaboration with the University of Washington's Center for Women's Welfare, the WDC commissioned a report released in September 2023 titled "Overlooked and Undercounted: Struggling to Make Ends Meet in Washington State."¹² The report was developed using the UW Self-Sufficiency Standard, a much more accurate indicator of income adequacy that is localized for actual participant conditions, including family size and a variety of necessary expenses. According to the report, "45% of Latinx, 44% of American Indian households, 45% of Black, and 36% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander households struggle to make ends meet. White and Asian households have an income

¹² Kucklick, Manzer & Mast, Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington, "Overlooked and Undercounted: Struggling to Make Ends Meet in Washington State" Sept 2023
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/53c04ba6e4b0012ad48d079e/t/651309bd095f895f6152e6fe/1695746501187/WA2021_Demo_SSS.pdf

inadequacy rate of 24%.” Wage disparity for BIPOC residents is simply not allowing them to achieve income adequacy in an already costly area.

Median Annual Income

Median annual income in Seattle-King County was \$106,300 for 2021. This is higher than the national median income at that time of \$69,000. At least part of the increase in household income in King County is attributable to the increase in both the number of jobs in the high-paying information and technology sector, as well as the rapidly increasing wages paid within the sector. While overall King County average annual wages increased 110% between 2005 and 2020, average annual wages for an information worker increased 175% over the same time period.¹³ While these wages are higher than in other areas, the cost of living in the region is also high. The Cost-of-Living Index for 2023 was 133.5 compared to the national index. With more costs coming out of workers’ wages, the effects of income disparities are magnified.

- **Racial Disparities Persist:** Median incomes for white and Asian households far exceed those of black or Latinx households. The gap between white and black incomes in King County is among the widest in the group. In 2020, the median household income for a black household was \$53,961 – or 52% that of a white household’s median income of \$103,793.¹⁴
- **Rising Income Inequality:** Looking closely at the household income quintiles (division of a population into five equal groups) for King County, we observe a widening gap between the upper and lower quintiles. However, income in the lower quintiles has begun making gains. In 2020, 20% of King County households earned \$41,888 or less.¹⁵ This represents an increase of 51.6% over the 2006 figure of \$27,634, not adjusted for inflation. The second lowest quintile experienced 53% income growth between 2006 and 2020. Between 2013 and 2020, the lower two quintiles experienced the fastest income growth, with household income increasing between 40% and 41%, making up for sluggish growth during the Great Recession and immediately thereafter. All quintiles experienced a slight dip in incomes from 2019 to 2020 due to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Wage Disparities

Wage inequities among different demographic groups have persisted for decades and continued in 2020. The average monthly wage for Black and African American workers was 76.9 percent of the average for all workers, lower than it was in 1992 and 2005. Earnings for Indigenous workers were 67.0 percent below average, while Pacific Islanders earned 69.2 percent of the average and Hispanic and

¹³ Office of Economic and Financial Analysis, King County Washington “King County Average Annual Wage by Industry”

<https://kingcounty.gov/en/legacy/independent/forecasting/King%20County%20Economy%20Status/King%20County%20Economic%20Indicators/Household%20Income/KC%20Avg%20Annual%20Wage%20by%20Industry.aspx>

¹⁴ Office of Economic and Financial Analysis, King County Washington, Household Income in King County.

<https://kingcounty.gov/en/legacy/independent/forecasting/King%20County%20Economy%20Status/King%20County%20Economic%20Indicators/Household%20Income.aspx>

¹⁵ Office of Economic and Financial Analysis, King County, Washington. “King County Household Income Quintiles.”

<https://kingcounty.gov/en/legacy/independent/forecasting/King%20County%20Economy%20Status/King%20County%20Economic%20Indicators/Household%20Income/KC%20Household%20Income%20Quintiles.aspx>

Latinx workers were at 68.3 percent. The average for women was 78.8 percent of the all-job average, and 65.7 percent of the average for men, not substantially different from 1992.¹⁶

BIPOC workers overrepresented in low wage jobs

BIPOC workers are overrepresented in low wage industries and occupations, and underrepresented in high wage industries and occupations, as shown in the analysis of in-demand industries and occupations.

Addressing occupational segregation is essential for advancing equity in the regional economy and labor market. A recent National Bureau of Economic Research paper found that there is considerable racial occupational segregation in the labor market today, regardless of educational attainment, and this has significant consequences for wage inequality. Notably, Black college-educated workers are disproportionately represented in roles such as social work or counseling, while positions of higher authority, prevalent among white workers with bachelor's degrees, are notably absent from the top job opportunities for Black individuals with similar educational attainment.¹⁷

This stark contrast underscores systemic barriers contributing to occupational segregation, calling for a comprehensive approach to dismantle these obstacles.

The WorkSource system plays a pivotal role in identifying and dismantling these barriers for BIPOC workers. The WDC has initiated strategic initiatives to address these challenges, committing to ongoing evaluation and refinement. These initiatives include expanding access to career pathways, strengthening partnerships, advocating for policy change, and utilizing the Workforce Dynamics Dashboard to advance racial equity through data disaggregation.

¹⁶ ESD February 2022, "2021 Labor Market and Economic Report"

¹⁷ Ashley Jardina, Peter Q. Blair, Justin Heck, and Papia Debroy, "The Limits of Educational Attainment in Mitigating Occupational Segregation Between Black and White Workers," National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper 31641 (August 2023), available at <http://www.nber.org/papers/w31641>

OUR WORK IN ACTION: EMPOWERING FRONTLINE STAFF – CAREER ADVANCEMENT PATHWAYS

The WDC recognizes the importance of equipping frontline staff with the essential tools, resources, and opportunities for professional development. This ensures they can expand their skills, acquire new knowledge, thrive in their roles, and advance in their careers. However, a recent study conducted by the University of Washington highlights a persistent issue: human services workers consistently receive lower pay compared to their counterparts in non-care industries. This wage gap is significant, with estimated differentials of 30% or higher across various econometric models.¹⁸

In response to this challenge, the WDC has taken proactive steps to address job quality within this sector. Recognizing the demands inherent in their roles, the WDC launched a professional development program, aiming to increase access to credentials, and creating clear pathways for their career advancement. 24 individuals have successfully completed the program since the start of the program.

This program focuses on increasing access to training and the following certification and credentials:

- Certified Workforce Development Professional (CWDP),
- Certified Career Services Provider (CCSP), and Global Career Development
- Certified Business Services Consultant

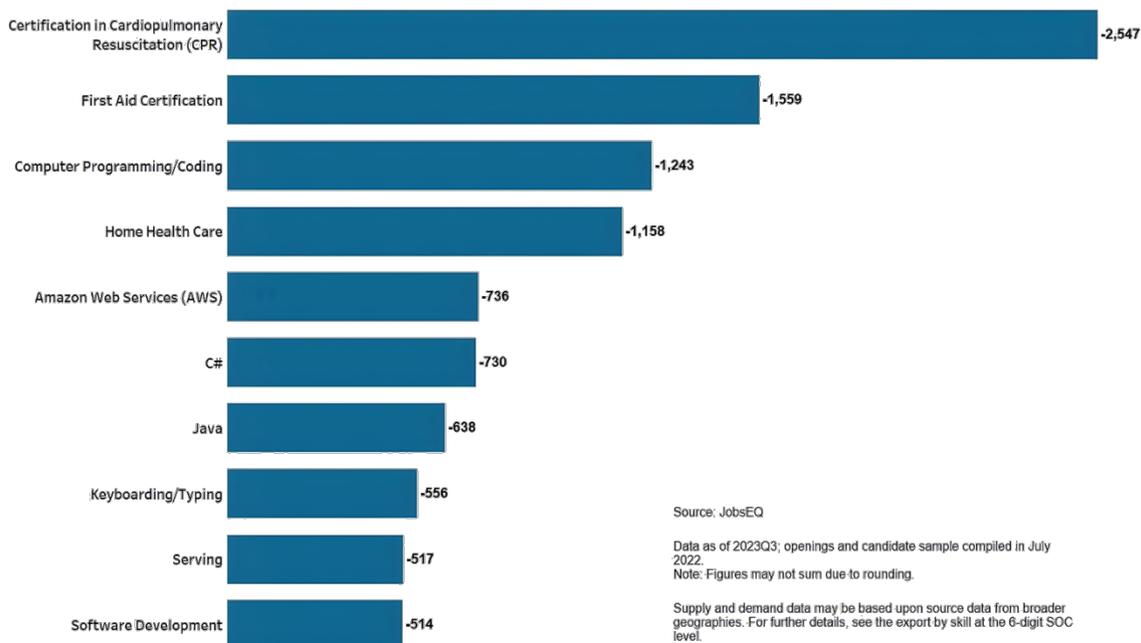
Through these interventions, frontline staff are empowered to expand their skill sets, acquire new knowledge, and stay abreast of industry best practices. This empowerment not only enables them to deliver high-quality services and support to our communities but also positions them to move up the wage career ladder, enhancing their earning potential and professional growth opportunities.

Skills and Knowledge

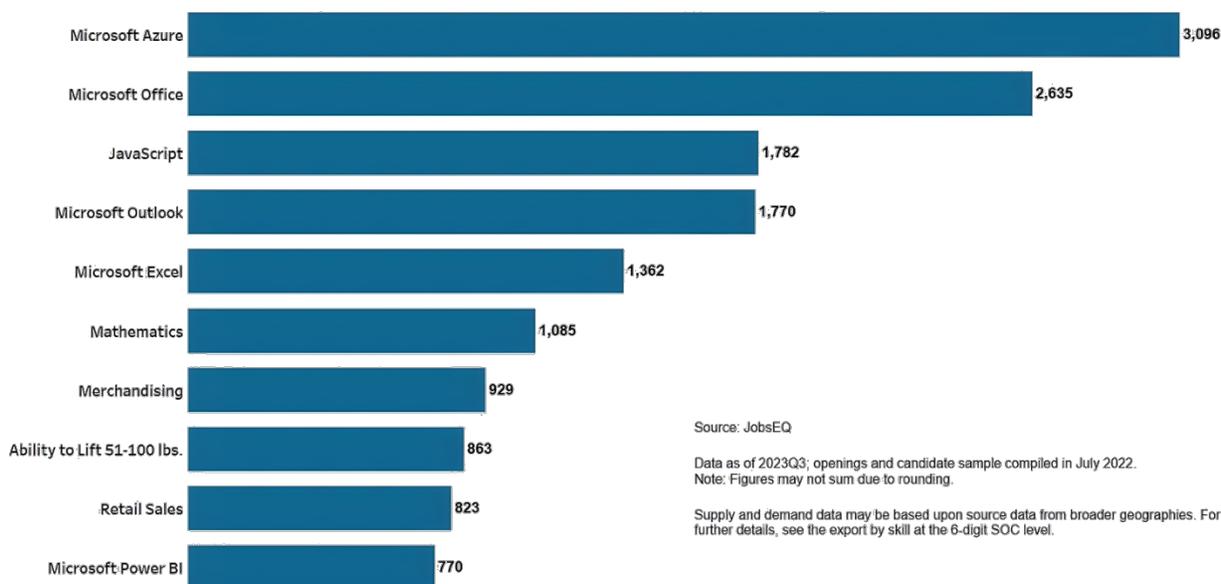
The tables below gather data from job postings and online candidate submissions to analyze the skills sought by employers and the capabilities offered to job applicants.

¹⁸ University of Washington (2023, February). Wage Equity Study: Wage Equity for Non-Profit Human Services Workers. Retrieved from <https://socialwork.uw.edu/wageequitystudy>

Largest Skill Deficits, All Occupations, King County Washington



Largest Skill Surplus, All Occupations, King County Washington



The identified gaps show the specific skill sets and credentials that may be in higher demand. Surpluses deliver a view into how the supply for a specific skill or credential might be trending away from existing demand. Surpluses can affect various factors in the labor market including a reduction in overall openings and higher candidates-to-openings ratios.

In the Seattle-King County labor market, the needed skills and certifications skew heavily toward those required by healthcare and information occupations. Both groupings are projected to see considerable

growth, as shown previously. Information occupations also represent a significant cross-industry workforce. However, skills and certifications for these groupings are not immune to having surpluses. Surpluses can be caused by a variety of factors including changing technologies, shifts in industry practices, and having more people gaining specific skills or credentials than a market can support at the time.

Gaps and surpluses related to skills and credentials must be analyzed on an ongoing basis as they reflect a snapshot in time of current trends and must be combined with direct relationships with employers to define their needs. The WDC continues to engage with employers and workforce development partners in Industry Leadership Tables (ILTs) to develop strategies for addressing the needs of employers and to provide a forum to voice industry needs around skills and credentials. Additionally, business services staff engage in ongoing conversations with employers.

However, these tools do not capture the rapidly changing structure of work and skills needs with the increasing automation of jobs and new and changing skills needed in renewable energy and with the adoption of other green technologies and practices. The WDC is developing a new industry and business services strategy and building capacities to support our priorities:

- Reskilling and upskilling
- Addressing barriers to economic mobility
- Job quality

Digital Skills Divide

In the context of an increasingly digital world, the lack of digital skills, devices, and internet access is intricately linked to limited job opportunities, constrained professional development, reduced educational access, and income disparities, contributing to the widening of racial economic gaps. According to the National Skills Coalition, 92% of jobs now necessitate digital skills, with one-third of workers possessing low or no digital skills due to historical underinvestment and structural inequities.¹⁹ Even entry-level jobs increasingly demand digital skills, a trend mirrored in roles with minimal educational requirements.

These shifts have pronounced implications for certain workers, particularly those overrepresented in industries prone to automation, such as construction, manufacturing, agriculture, and transportation. Overrepresentation in jobs demanding lower skills and educational levels implies reduced resources and limited opportunities for retraining, placing these workers at a higher risk of job displacement.

Digital skills are in high demand in job ads for entry-level workers (2021)

Education level required	Percentage of ads requiring a likely digital skill	Percentage of ads requiring a definitely digital skill
<i>High School</i>	94%	46%
<i>Associate's</i>	97%	47%

¹⁹ National Skills Coalition (2023). Closing the Digital Skills Divide Report: The Payoff for Workers, Business, and the Economy. Retrieved from <https://nationalskillscoalition.org/resource/publications/closing-the-digital-skill-divide/Report>.

<i>Bachelor's</i>	99%	74%
<i>Master's</i>	97%	46%
<i>PhD</i>	97%	39%

Source: National Skills Coalition

Digital literacy emerges not only as a critical skill for the future workforce and the evolving job landscape but also as an opportunity for Washingtonians to upskill, fostering lifelong learning that can lead to economic mobility, wage progression, and career success.

**King County (2023)
Top Software Skills – All Occupations**

Microsoft Office	Microsoft Azure
Microsoft Excel	C++ (Programming Language)
Microsoft Outlook	Dashboard
Python (Programming Language)	Salesforce
Microsoft PowerPoint	JavaScript (Programming Language)
SQL (Programming Language)	Application Programming Interface (API)
Amazon Web Services	Spreadsheets
LESS	Tableau (Business Intelligence Software)
Java (Programming Language)	C# (Programming Language)
Microsoft Word	R (Programming Language)

The top software skills in job listings. Digital skills required for many non-Information jobs

Moreover, a recent community research initiative led by the City of Seattle reveals that approximately 8,123 households within the city lack access to the internet at home²⁰. Inequities persist for specific population groups, as highlighted by the following disparities:

- Those living in poverty (at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level) are 5.5 times more likely to lack internet access at home.
- Individuals with a primary language other than English are 4.4 times more likely to lack internet access at home.
- Households with a member living with a disability are three times more likely to lack internet access at home.

²⁰ City of Seattle. Technology Access and Adoption Summary Report (2024). Retrieved from [2024 SeattleTechAccessStudy SummaryReport final.pdf](https://www.seattle.gov/technology/2024-SeattleTechAccessStudy-SummaryReport-final.pdf)

- Black households are three times more likely to lack internet access at home.
- Native households are 2.5 times more likely to lack internet access at home.
- Older adults (60+ years of age) are 2.5 times more likely to lack internet access at home.

A comprehensive assessment commissioned by the WDC on its Digital Navigator program sheds light on the importance of tailored instruction in digital skills programs. The evaluation, aimed at creating a needs assessment for digital access within the region, reveals that effective learning in digital skills programs often depends on access to instructors who can cater to individual needs and language preferences. The evaluation identifies various teaching methods, such as in-person or online classes, workshops, or one-on-one sessions, as suitable for specific circumstances. Group learning proves effective for those at similar skill levels, while individual sessions or short workshops are more beneficial for learners with unique needs. English proficiency emerged as a key predictor of technology knowledge, emphasizing the importance of accessible instruction in one's language. A lack of technological access, particularly for those with low incomes, hinders progress. Having a home computer significantly enhances comfort with technological tasks. However, low-income individuals face challenges, with some finding even affordable programs burdensome.

Addressing these profound disparities in digital access becomes not just a matter of technological inclusion but a critical step toward promoting equity. It ensures that every member of the community can fully participate in the labor market, underscoring the significance of digital access as a linchpin for workforce development. By bridging the digital gap, we empower individuals with the indispensable tools and skills needed to not only enhance their employability but also to contribute actively to economic growth, foster innovation, and elevate the overall well-being of the region.

OUR WORK IN ACTION: ADDRESSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

In the Spring of 2022, the WDC launched actionable recommendations to advance digital equity strategies within the Regional Strategic Plan. Since its release, significant milestones have been achieved:

- Introduced the [Digital Navigator Cohort Grant](#) to enhance digital navigation services through partnerships with 12 community-based organizations.
- Conducted a Statewide [Workforce Development Digital Equity Survey](#) with 176 frontline staff, revealing gaps in digital assessment tools, the need for industry-specific digital skills, and barriers faced by job seekers.
- Developed the [Digital Needs Assessment Tool](#) for WIOA job seekers, resulting in over 1,000 participants benefiting from it since August 2022.
- Created the [Digital Equity Asset Map](#), a first for the Seattle-King County Region, to locate digital skills programs and advocate for digital inclusion.
- Launched the [AmeriCorps Digital Navigator Pilot](#) with partners to deploy navigators at WorkSource offices and libraries, with three navigators already placed in the region and more planned in 2024.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Services

Strengths of the regional workforce development system and its activities include:

- Racial equity and job quality as the system's north stars.
- Innovation, examples of which include a flexible financial assistance pilot that provides participants \$500 a month to help meet their basic needs and enable them to participate in workforce development activities; work-based learning programs; a Young Black Men pilot, based on the concept of targeted universalism; universal intake; free language interpretation services; and efforts to address the digital divide. (These and other innovations are highlighted throughout the plan.)
- Community partnerships, including over 40 diverse community partners.
- Capacity building, including professional development for front-line workforce staff.
- Advocacy, including advocating for improved language access to services for immigrants and refugees, digital equity and access, flexible financial assistance, and wrap-around supports.

Challenges include:

- Categorical programs and different funding streams, which serve to limit the ability of the system to help job seekers and workers achieve economic mobility.
- Administrative barriers and a compliance heavy focus, which pose challenges to integrated service delivery and co-enrollment (e.g., lack of common intake and data across system partners).
- Duplicative efforts at engaging industry across multiple systems (e.g., Career Connect, ESD, colleges, etc.) and different geographic areas (Seattle-King County, the Puget Sound region, and the state).

Other, broader challenges also have an impact on the regional workforce development system and its ability to meet the needs of employers, job seekers, and workers. These include loss of middle wage jobs; the breakdown of internal job ladders; credential inflation, with employers using credentials as a proxy for skills; and the region's high cost of living (e.g., housing and childcare).

Item 2: Regional Sector Strategies

Identification and Prioritization

The WDC has prioritized six opportunity sectors, first identified in our 2021 regional strategic plan.²¹ These are:

²¹ Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County, *Recover Better: A Regional Plan for Equitable Economic Recovery* (January 2021), available at [Recover Better - A Regional Plan for Equitable Economic Recovery — Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County \(seakingwdc.org\)](https://www.seakingwdc.org/recover-better)

- Construction
- Healthcare
- Information Technology
- Manufacturing (including aerospace)
- Maritime
- Retail Trade

These sectors were evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. **Size and presence of sector in regional economy** – Sectors are regionally significant (e.g., number of jobs and location quotient).
2. **Job recovery/growth** – Employment within sector returns to pre-pandemic levels, current or projected job demand, and growth.
3. **Wages and benefits** – Targeted occupations within sector provide a living wage/family wage and benefits.
4. **Education and training requirements** – Targeted occupations require some postsecondary education and training, but less than a four-year degree (e.g., on-the-job training, short-term certificates, one- and two-year certificates and degrees, apprenticeships, etc.)
5. **Career pathways** – Sector has targeted occupations that offer pathways to higher wage, higher skill jobs or can be developed in partnership with employers, unions, and regional workforce development system.
6. **Workplace safety** – Low-risk occupations and/or employer assurances to minimize exposure to adverse health or physical risks where they exist.
7. **Sector engagement, commitment, and readiness** – Employers, industry associations, and unions in sector are engaged, committed, and ready to partner (or can be). This includes readiness in terms of racial equity and job quality.

Construction

The construction sector had over 83,000 jobs in 2023, with average earnings per job of \$111,587 a year. Looking beyond this average figure, the construction sector stands out for the portion of jobs in the \$32 to \$56 an hour range – 44 percent, compared to 28 percent for all jobs (data are for 2021).²² Below average employment growth is projected for this sector in the next few years, but construction and extraction occupations are expected to generate over 32,000 total job openings a year due to growth and separations.

The construction sector has historically been and continues to be predominately white and male – for example, workers of color make up 28 percent of the construction workforce in Seattle-King County, compared to 34 percent of the workforce overall.²³

²² Washington State Employment Security Department/DATA.

²³ Regional Public Owners Construction Workforce Analysis 2022 Update, available at <https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/FAS/PurchasingAndContracting/Labor/FAS-PC-CAI-RPO-Construction-Workforce-Forecast-Update.pdf>

A more detailed look at the largest construction occupations shows workers of color are overrepresented in some construction occupations and underrepresented in others. For example, Black or African American workers make up 7 percent of cement masons and concrete finishers, an occupation with a \$31 median hourly wage, but 3 percent of electricians, with a \$42 median wage; 3 percent of plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters, with a \$38 median hourly wage; and 3 percent of carpenters, with a \$32 median hourly wage. Hispanic or Latino workers make up 32 percent of painters, with a \$25 median hourly wage, but 9 percent of operating engineers, with a \$42 median hourly wage.

Largest Construction Industry Occupations by Demographics

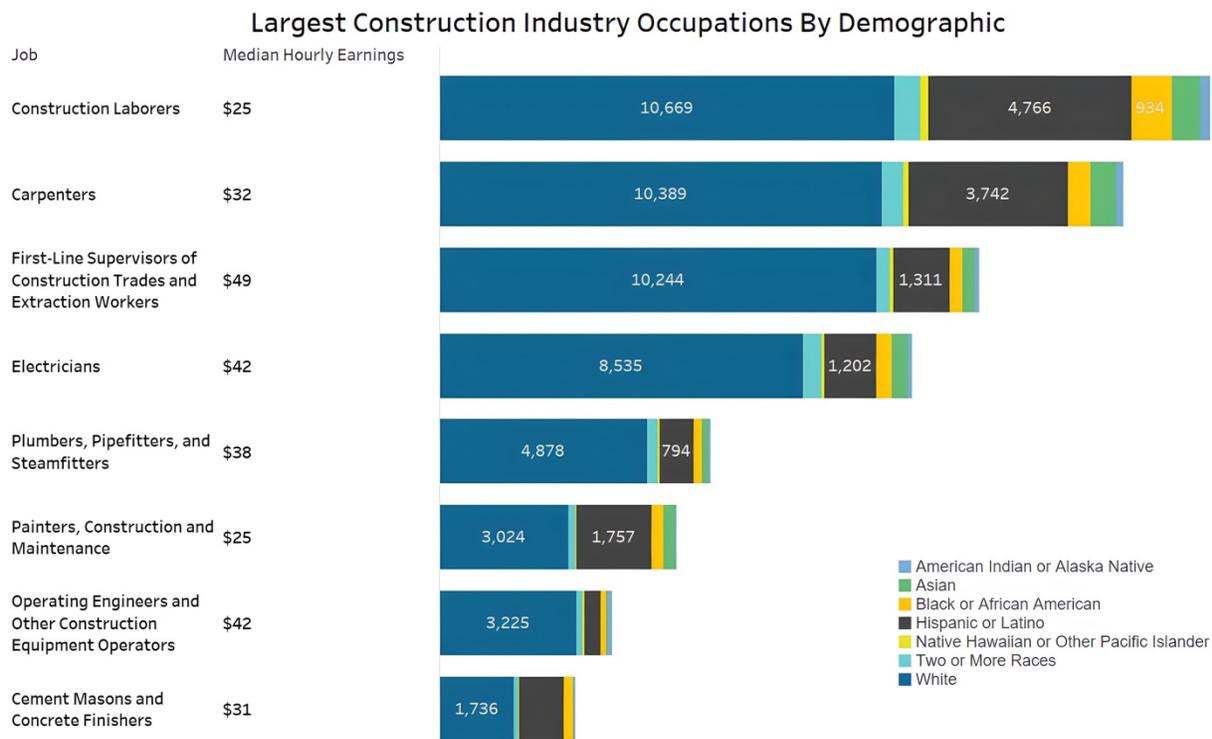


Figure 5: Largest Construction Industry Occupations by Demographics

This presents an opportunity for greater racial and gender diversity, with many efforts already underway. Apprenticeships provide the education and training required for the construction trades. They also provide clear, established career pathways.

The industry has many strong leaders and examples of race-centered approaches to workforce development that can be built on in construction and replicated in other industries. One example is the Regional Pre-Apprenticeship Collaborative. Their 2024 focus is launching a website and social media campaign to establish a comprehensive, central hub of information for all stakeholders working on the career pathway, from community to contractors.

Regional Public Owners (RPO) is a collaboration of regional public agencies—including the City of Seattle, King County, Port of Seattle, Seattle Public Schools, and Washington State Department—that have policy and investments in place to reduce economic inequities by opening doors to well-paying

construction careers. and others are focused on leveraging their investments in public infrastructure to address race and gender-based disparities in the construction industry.

The WDC is working to support and expand the construction sector partnership to:

- Support and advance the work of Regional Public Owners and the Priority Hire program to advance racial equity in the construction sector.
- Continuously improve alignment of WorkSource services to meet the demand and investments being made under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act.
- Support the development of digital skills curriculum.
- Provide regional workforce development backbone support: grant writing and program/capacity building support for CBOs, pre-apprenticeship programs, and apprenticeship programs.
- Spotlight the successes of industry leaders and grassroots champions who are leading workforce diversification.
- Support prison-to-construction career pathways.

Healthcare

The healthcare and social assistance sector had almost 162,000 jobs in 2023, making it one of the region's largest sectors in terms of employment. Average earnings per job were \$86,640 a year. About average employment growth is projected for this sector in the next few years. Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations are projected to generate almost 23,000 job openings a year due to growth and separations; for healthcare support occupations, the figure is almost 22,000.

Healthcare industry employment is fairly representative of the Seattle-King County workforce as a whole. However, when looking at employment by occupational group, workers are color are overrepresented in healthcare support occupations and underrepresented in healthcare practitioners and technical occupations. For example, Black or African American workers make up 15 percent of those in healthcare support occupations, which have a \$19.48 median hourly wage, but 5 percent of those in healthcare practitioners and technical occupations, which have a \$48.03 median hourly wage. Similarly, Hispanic or Latino workers make up 13 percent of healthcare support occupations, but 6 percent of healthcare practitioners and technical occupations.

The disparities in representation across major healthcare occupations reveal a consistent pattern of over- and under-representation. For instance, Black or African American workers constitute 16 percent of home health and personal care aides, roles typically associated with a median hourly wage of \$18.63. In contrast, they represent only 6 percent of registered nurses, who earn a significantly higher median hourly wage of \$49.16. Similarly, Hispanic or Latino workers account for 18 percent of dental assistants, where the median hourly wage is \$24.81, yet they make up only 7 percent of dental hygienists, who earn a median hourly wage of \$58.05.

Largest Healthcare Occupations by Demographics

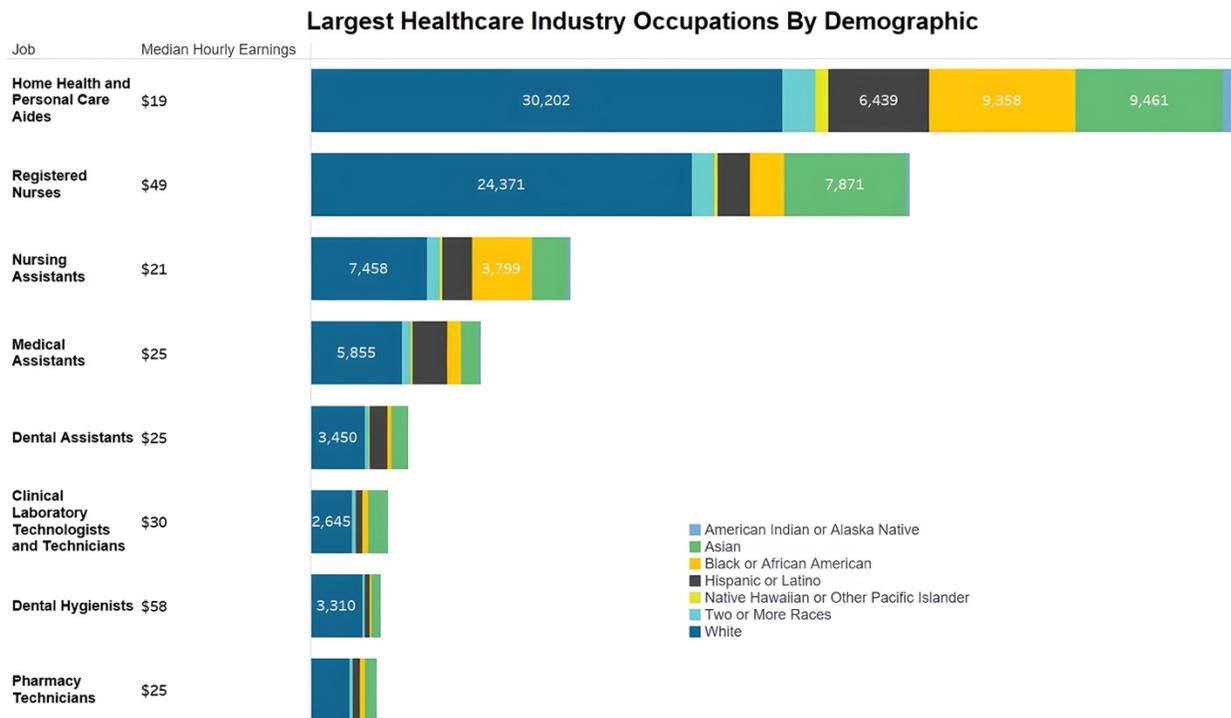


Figure 6: Largest Healthcare Industry Occupations by Demographics

These wage disparities are reflective of broader issues centered around jobs lacking good pay and benefits, which contributes to economic inequities and limited upward mobility for underrepresented groups within the healthcare sector. Moreover, barriers like limited training accessibility, unclear career paths, and racial segregation in job roles further compound these difficulties.

One critical area of concern is the acute shortage of direct support professionals in Supported Employment and related fields, fueled by insufficient Medicaid/Medicare reimbursements that prevent agencies from offering competitive wages. Addressing these disparities demands a multifaceted approach, encompassing training enhancements, improved hiring practices, policy reforms, and system change.

As pointed out by the Equitable Recovery and Reconciliation Alliance (ERRA), the pandemic served as a stark reminder of the urgent need to diversify the healthcare sector. Vaccination efforts highlighted the need to build trust in BIPOC communities, which faced a disproportionate impact. Yet, disparities persist beyond the pandemic, including racial disparities in healthcare access, infant mortality rates, mental health outcomes, and overall life expectancy, as noted in the [King County Community Health Needs Assessment](#).

Efforts to address these disparities are underway, with a focus on creating pathways for BIPOC individuals to ascend to upper-tier healthcare leadership positions. The [Washington State Black, Indigenous, and People of Color \(BIPOC\) Health Careers Ecosystem](#), for instance, is a collaborative effort advocating to increase the representation of BIPOC professionals in higher-paying healthcare roles, thereby fostering equity and leadership within the sector.

Similarly, initiatives like the [Kent Community Development Collaborative](#) (KCDC) are actively engaged in advocating for equitable community development, particularly in enhancing healthcare access for communities of color, immigrants, refugees, and low-income residents. Community Healthcare Navigation, identified as a priority by KCDC, aims to bridge critical gaps in information dissemination and access to healthcare services, especially for non-English-speaking communities and those with limited trust in the healthcare system²⁴.

Sector engagement includes the Healthcare Industry Leadership Table (HILT). Launched in 2018, HILT is a network of healthcare organizations that come together to share and act on expanding equitable access to a skilled healthcare workforce. The HILT currently counts 50+ hospitals, care providers, colleges/training providers, public health clinics, community organizations and others among its partners. The WDC and partner agencies staff and support the HILT and two HILT subcommittees—Behavioral Health and Talent Pipeline & Recruitment. The WDC is also pursuing a partnership with the BIPOC Health Careers Ecosystem and Pierce County Behavioral Health Consortium, formed in partnership with 15 behavioral healthcare providers and partners brought together by WorkForce Central to address ongoing needs to support this workforce.

Information

The information sector had almost 140,000 jobs in 2023, making it another one of the region's largest sectors in terms of employment. (This figure doesn't take into account IT jobs found in other sectors.) Average earnings per jobs were \$315,874 a year – the highest of all sectors by far. Faster than average job growth is forecasted in the next few years. Computing and mathematical occupations are projected to generate almost 8,500 job openings a year due to growth and over 60,000 a year due to both growth and separations.

In looking at the demographics of the information sector workforce, white and Asian workers make up 87 percent of all workers. All other racial and ethnic groups are underrepresented. For example, Hispanic or Latino workers make up 7 percent of information sector employment and Black or African American workers 3 percent.

A more detailed look at the largest IT occupations by demographics shows this same overall pattern. For example, white and Asian workers make up 92 percent of software developers, the largest IT occupation by far, which has a median wage of \$73 an hour. By contrast, Black or African American workers make up less than 2 percent of software developers; Hispanic or Latino worker, 3 percent; and American Indian or Alaska Native workers and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander workers, less than 1 percent.

²⁴ Equitable Recovery Reconciliation Alliance Workforce Policy Paper. Retrieved from https://drive.google.com/file/d/16PCOmMwqhIhVYy0iel6qjLcVX9IszcOS/view?usp=drive_link

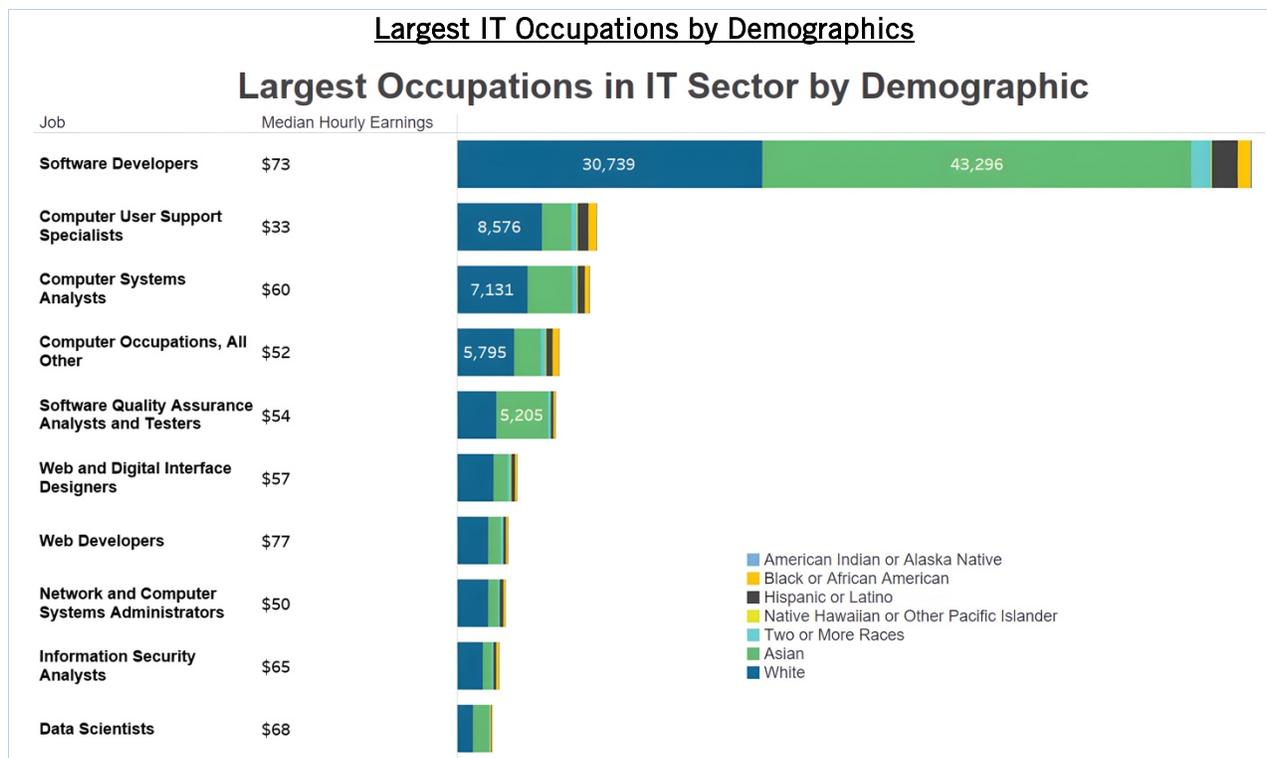


Figure 7: Largest Occupations in IT Sector by Demographic

The 2021 regional strategic plan assessment of the information sector found that, although it has a significant presence in the region, growth is projected, and its jobs pay well, historically, the sector has required advanced educational credentials and does not have well established pathways to access and move up in jobs, especially for workers of color.

Manufacturing

The manufacturing sector had over 93,000 jobs in 2023, with average earnings per job of \$132,579 year. This sector is projected to lose jobs in the next few years. However, production occupations are projected to generate almost 16,000 total jobs openings a year due to separations.

With respect to the other criteria used to assess sectors, the 2021 regional strategic plan evaluation found that education and training requirements are relatively accessible; there are some barriers to advancement and/or partially established pathways; and there is strong sector engagement on workforce development issues.

Maritime

The maritime sector had an estimated 24,000 jobs in 2022, according to the Washington Maritime Federation report, *Economic Impacts of Washington's Maritime Industry 2022*. The sector covers a wide range of interdependent subsectors, which makes maritime employment and earnings data harder to come by. The report identifies the following subsectors:

- Maritime logistics and shipping
- Shipbuilding, repair, and maintenance
- Commercial fishing and seafood products

- Recreational boating;
- Passenger water transportation
- Maritime support services.

In terms of employment, maritime logistics and shipping is the largest subsector. Average annual statewide earnings in 2022 were \$112,000, including benefits. Many maritime jobs don't require a four-year degree.

The most common maritime occupations:

- Welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers
- Cargo and freight agents
- Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers
- Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers
- Captains, mates, and pilots of water vessels

In addition to the Port of Seattle, the report notes Seattle-King County is home to a “dense web of shipping and logistics operations, homeport for a large share of the North Pacific fishing fleet, cruise ships, ferry routes, shipyards, seafood processing operations, NOAA, and various maritime support services.”²⁵

The Washington Maritime Federation report as well as the Community Attributes, Inc. (CAI) *Maritime, Manufacturing, and Transportation and Warehousing Strategic Analysis* report prepared for the City of Seattle Office of Economic Development, notes workforce development is an issue for maritime. From its interviews and surveys, CAI found, “Workforce development and issues pertinent to both attracting and retaining employees highlight an increasing strain that is being seen and experienced across each of these industries by nearly all business owners. Many operators [in these industries] specifically called out workforce shortages, rising home costs, the lack of affordable housing options for their employees and difficulty finding housing near their place of employment as factors contributing to increasing workforce development challenges.” The industry acknowledges its predominately white and male and is committed to increase racial and gender diversity. Among the industry stakeholder recommendations were “Raise awareness of existing workforce development programs among employers and students while fostering better coordination between training programs and employers. Additionally, forge partnerships with industry to underscore the value of industrial jobs to individuals, families, and the broader community.”²⁶

Retail Trade

The retail trade sector had over 105,000 jobs in 2023, with average annual earnings of \$67,107. This sector is projected to lose jobs in the next few years, dropping almost one third from 2023 to 2027. However, there will be thousands of job openings due to separations.

²⁵ Washington Maritime Federation, *Economic Impacts of Washington's Maritime Industry 2022* (October 2023), available at https://www.maritimederation.com/uploads/1/0/9/1/109194033/wa_maritime_impacts_2022_-_report.pdf

²⁶ Community Attributes, Inc., *Maritime, Manufacturing and Transportation and Warehousing Strategic Analysis* (November 2023).

With respect to the criteria used to assess sectors, the 2021 regional strategic plan evaluation found that, compared to the other opportunity sectors identified, retail trade has a lower portion of jobs that pay a living or family wage; education and training requirements are relatively accessible; and career pathways are not well established. (There are also other job quality issues, including predictability of hours, worker voice, and access to health and other benefits.) In Seattle-King County, the retail trade sector is engaged in workforce development issues. Taking all the criteria into account, the evaluation found that some segments of the retail trade sector offer promising job prospects. There are also racial disparities in the retail trade sector workforce, with BIPOC workers concentrated in low paying jobs.

Highest Occupation in Retail Industry by Demographics

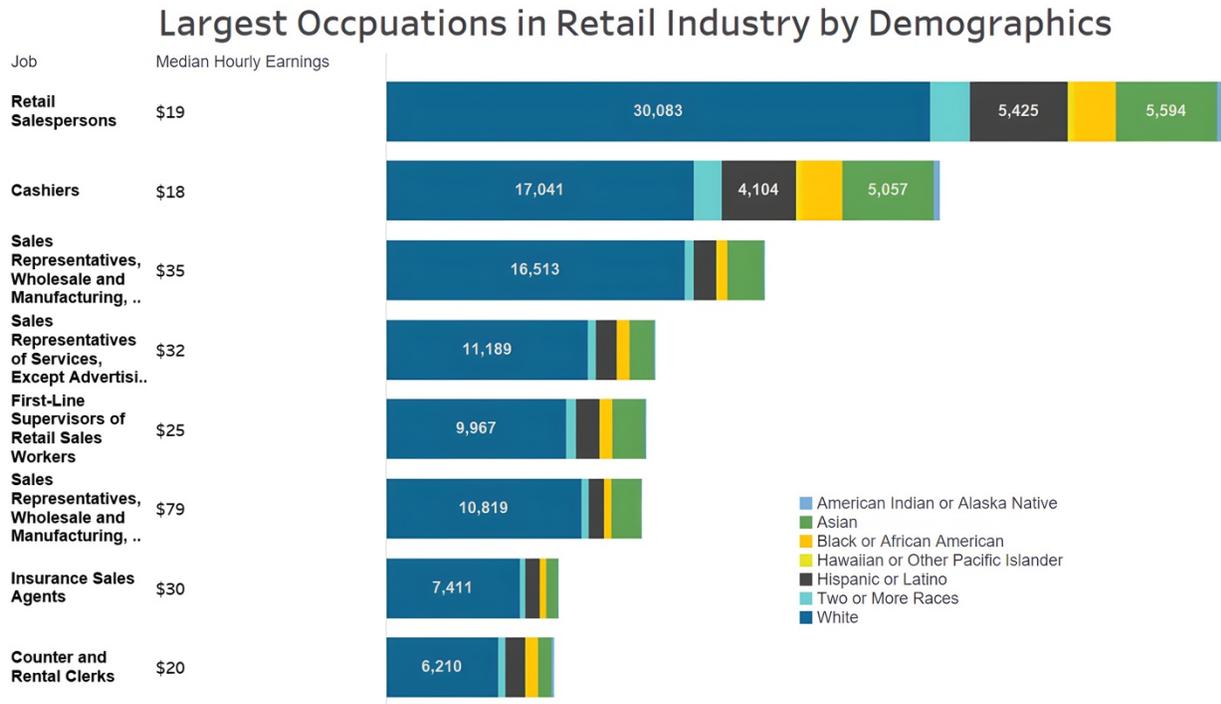


Figure 8: Largest Occupations in Retail Industry by Demographics

Collaborative Approaches

Over the next four years, the WDC will focus its regional sector partnerships and strategies on advancing structural, systemic changes that address racial equity and job quality, and incorporating more fully worker and community voice in these efforts. In undertaking this work, the WDC will also take a system, collaborative approach, as a way to address fragmentation and duplication of effort that can result in sector partners being asked to sit at multiple tables and difficulty getting to scale.

More specifically, this will include:

- **Prepare team** – Build buy-in and support among workforce, education and training, and economic development. This includes determining respective roles and responsibilities, developing agreements, and committing resources.
- **Investigate** – Confirm the opportunity sectors identified in the 2021 regional strategic plan and determine if there are other sectors to prioritize, based on criteria.

- **Inventory and analyze** – Analyze regional economic and labor market data and review existing research on opportunity sectors and develop sector profiles. Analysis will include examination of sectors from the vantage point of racial equity and job quality, as well as career pathways. It will also include both quantitative and qualitative data, with the latter including input from community and worker representatives.
- **Convene** – Build sector partnerships and develop strategies. In some sectors, this might mean creating new partnerships; in others, recalibrating or reimagining existing partnerships; and in still others, taking a regional approach along with Pierce and Snohomish counties (an example, here might be the HILT). However, in some sectors, it might mean participating in and supporting other partnerships in the region or at the state level, where appropriate.
- **Act** - Implement sector strategies. This will include developing implementation plans and then implementing them, assessing progress, and making course corrections or improvements, as needed.
- **Sustain and evolve** – Grow partnerships. This will include identifying additional opportunities.

Multi-Regional Focus

The WDC recognizes the need for and value of collaborating with both Snohomish and Pierce counties. The WDC is committed to pursuing opportunities to collaborate across the Puget Sound region to strengthen our services and increase our impact on employers, workers, and job seekers. Regional collaboration will reduce duplicative industry engagement, enable us to leverage resources, and provide coordinated service.

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) has been an advocate and ally in calling for a regional approach to workforce and economic development. As it notes in its *Opportunity Occupations and Workforce Recovery* report, “A regional approach to workforce and economic development is critical given the nature of the 21st century economy. Rapid transformations in technologies, corporate structures, and the skills required to advance are not confined by municipal borders.” Counties in the region “are connected through their economies, transportation networks, and their very populations. Any approach to workforce development and economic development that is not specifically focused on region-wide strategies will struggle to fully leverage the capacity of the regional workforce and the skill-building infrastructure that exists to help prepare workers for in-demand, high-wage jobs. Region-wide strategies ensure efficient use of federal, state, and local resources to best meet the needs of workers and employers.”²⁷

Examples of multi-regional collaboration include pursuing opportunities to develop a shared, tri-county Healthcare Industry Leadership Table and coordinating workforce and economic development efforts with PSRC.

²⁷ Puget Sound Regional Council, *Opportunity Occupations and Workforce Recovery in the Central Puget Sound Region* (May 2022), available at <https://www.psrc.org/media/6295>

Item 3: Regional Service Strategies

Based on the comprehensive regional analysis, the WDC has identified the following regional service strategies and interventions to address the challenges, opportunities, and target populations:

1. Systems Change – Center Racial Equity and Job Quality

- **Community Engagement:** Implement robust community engagement strategies to involve stakeholders in decision-making processes.
- **Job Quality Framework:** Develop a framework to assess and improve job quality.
- **WorkSource Reimagined:** Redesign WorkSource programs and services to better meet the needs of job seekers, workers, and employers.
- **Data:** Utilize data-driven approaches to inform decision-making and measure impact.
- **Advocacy:** Advocate for policies and initiatives that promote racial equity and job quality.
- **Digital Equity:** Address digital inequities to ensure all workers have foundational digital skills and opportunities for workplace digital upskilling to empower workers to adapt to shifts in the labor market.
- **Professional Development:** Build the field and improve practice.
 - Foster community partnerships to enhance collaboration and resource sharing.
 - Build capacity within organizations and communities to implement effective strategies that support the professional development and upward mobility of human services workforce professionals.
 - Implement innovative approaches through WorkSource Reimagined initiatives.

2. Human-Centered Pathways

- **Population-based Strategies:**
 - Focus on targeted universalism with initiatives such as the Youth RFP focusing on Young Black Men.
 - Develop reentry programs to support individuals returning to the workforce.
 - Address the needs of Opportunity Youth to ensure pathways to employment and education.
 - Provide tailored services for immigrant and refugee populations to facilitate integration and economic mobility.
- **Customer Voice:** Incorporate feedback from customers to improve service delivery and outcomes.
- **Wrap-around Supports:**
 - Strengthen flexible financial assistance programs to support the economic mobility of workers.
 - Expand benefits planning across the workforce system and the use of the tools such as the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta's [CLIFF Dashboard](#) to identify benefits cliffs and analyze how public benefits interact with career pathways.

- Offer robust incentives, stipends, and support services to incentivize participation and retention.
- Allocate flexibility funds to address individual needs and barriers.

3. Subsidized Employment Programs that Advance Workforce Equity

The issue of underemployment and unemployment among skilled immigrants and refugees, and BIPOC talent remains a pressing concern in our region. Despite their qualifications and expertise, many of these individuals find themselves underutilized in the workforce, facing barriers such as the pervasive impact of racism in hiring and career advancement, and lack of recognition of foreign credentials and experience²⁸.

- **Work-Based Learning:**

- Expand work-based learning opportunities to bridge the gap between skills, education, and employment.
 - Harness the healthcare skills and expertise of immigrants and refugees, including their critical cultural and language expertise. Support efforts and strategies that formalize their roles and collaborate with educational institutions to create inclusive curriculum and flexible supportive services.

- **Career and Credentialing Pathways:**

- Promote upskilling, reskilling, and training to enhance career prospects.
- Expand apprenticeship opportunities to facilitate skill development and career advancement.

4. Inclusive Industry Growth and Engagement

- **Skills-based Hiring:** Promote hiring based on skills versus credentials, a more inclusive approach.
- **Business Services Reimagined:** Redesign WorkSource business services to better meet the needs of the region's employers. Collaborate closely with businesses to improve the quality of existing jobs, particularly in critical sectors like healthcare, childcare and food service.
- **Focus on Targeted Sectors:** Develop and implement sector partnerships and strategies with a focus on advancing structural, systemic changes that address racial equity and job quality, and incorporating more fully worker and community voice. (See the Regional Sector Strategies section for more information.)
- **Regional Collaboration:** Collaborate as a region on workforce and economic development, where possible. (See the Regional Sector Strategies and Coordination with Regional Economic Development Organizations sections for more information.)

²⁸ Migration Policy Institute. Leaving Money on the Table: The Persistence of Brain Waste among College-Educated Immigrants (2021). Retrieved from <https://www.luminafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/leaving-money-on-the-table.pdf>

Item 4: Coordination with Regional Economic Development Organizations

The WDC coordinates with regional economic development organizations—such as the Puget Sound Regional Council, the Metropolitan Seattle Chamber of Commerce, and Greater Seattle Partners—to further the region’s workforce and economic development goals. Further, we are committed to exploring collaboration with Snohomish and Pierce Counties given the current workforce and economic interdependencies of the three-county region.

In approaching this work, the WDC is emphasizing talent-driven economic development, which, as spelled out by Brookings, recognizes human capital is the fundamental driver of a region’s economic vitality. However, Brookings notes there are two labor market challenges to realizing this vision. One is unclear and unequal pathways; and the other is shifting private sector hiring and training norms, which undermine inclusive talent development and deployment. An example of the latter is degree inflation. Some specific priorities identified by Brookings are investing in proven training solutions, targeting incentives towards business practices that help build local talent pipelines, developing skills-based hiring tools that facilitate more efficient and equitable hiring practices, and testing talent financing solutions.²⁹

Executive leadership from the tri-county partnership recently met with leadership from Greater Seattle Partnership to calendar a series of ongoing meetings to create a shared economic and workforce development regional plan for economic and workforce development. Early discussions focused on the need to cultivate local talent, align talent with economic needs and opportunities, share strategies and relationships across the three regions, head off mistakes of the past that resulted in inequalities, examine public policy strategies, and examine possible growth and/or reforms in training and credentialing. While this agenda is ambitious, we are encouraged by the enthusiasm we see among the partnership, and we discussed narrowing our focus—at least at the start—to ensure that we commit the resources and energy needed to achieve meaningful, systemic change.

This collaboration reflects alignment with Puget Sound Regional Council and Greater Seattle Partners’ objectives pertaining to coordination with economic development activities and acknowledgement of shared strategic interests in job creation and meeting the growing demands for talent in the region. PSRC is the governing body for the federally designated economic development district of King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. In December 2021, the PSRC adopted its most recent regional economic strategy, informed heavily by the then-ongoing recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Like our own Regional Strategic plan, the PSRC plan centers racial equity, identifies childcare as a particularly pressing issue, and includes strategies for aligning education and workforce development strategies with future growth.

Item 5: Coordination of Transportation and Other Support Services

The WDC works to highlight the crucial role support services, community resources and transportation plays in individual’s lives – and work together with our partners to ensure historically underserved communities have full access and opportunity through coordinated regional service delivery strategy.

²⁹ [Talent-driven economic development: A new vision and agenda for regional and state economies | Brookings](#)

The WDC understands that WIOA alone will not be sufficient to meet the needs of the region and works to coordinate community resources to improve outcomes for individuals by consulting with key stakeholders, including government agencies, service providers, community organizations, and residents to gather input on existing challenges and potential solutions.

To understand how best to coordinate support services across the region, the WDC will conduct a thorough analysis of community supports to understand the needs of populations with a specific focus on racial equity, demographics, economic activities, and social factors that may influence the demand for services. The analysis and stakeholder input will inform a comprehensive plan for coordinating transportation and support services across the region. The WDC will explore how technology can be utilized to enhance coordination which may include using data analytics for demand forecasting or leveraging telecommunication for remote service delivery.

Expanding Supportive Services through Community Engagement

The WDC works to expand supportive services through community engagement across the region and develop trusted relationships that contribute to improving service delivery throughout the workforce development system. By engaging with community, the WDC works to connect with job seekers and businesses that might not otherwise engage with workforce development but would benefit from career services and supportive services.

Examples of services that might require coordination include healthcare, education, social services, emergency response, and employment support. The coordination can involve optimizing transportation routes, sharing resources, and ensuring that services are accessible to all regions within the area of focus. WDC and partner organizations might assess interdependencies between different services. For example, efficient transportation may be crucial for timely healthcare delivery or access to educational facilities.

WIOA Supportive Services Include:

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provides program guidelines for supportive services for adults and dislocated workers defined in WIOA Sections 3(59) and 134(d)(2) and (3). These include services such as transportation, childcare, dependent care, housing, and assistance with uniforms and other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, including such items as eyeglasses and protective eyewear, and NRPs needed to enable individuals to participate in WIOA Title I activities. Supportive services for youth as defined in WIOA Section 29(c)(2)(G) can additionally include assistance with educational testing, reasonable accommodations for youth with disabilities, and referrals to health care.

Based on individual assessment, supportive services may be awarded to eligible participants. Supportive service awards are intended to enable an individual to participate in programs and activities to secure and retain employment. Supportive services are provided through a variety of sources, including: WIOA supportive services, resources through DSHS, and other community partner supportive services. Supports include:

Assistance with clothing, counseling, family/health care, food, housing, tools, union dues, driver licenses, or car repairs to help participants become or stay independent while actively engaged in job search, work activities or training

Goods in the form of transportation assistance to help participants become or stay independent while actively engaged in job search, work activities or training.

Needs Related Payments (NRP) to eligible adults, dislocated workers, and youth 18-24 in training to enable them to participate in training.

Transportation Supportive Services

King County Metro's ORCA LIFT Reduced Fare Program authorized enrollment offices are located in and around WorkSource centers and Connection Sites. The WDC works to expand and promote the ORCA LIFT program through connection at WorkSource offices.

Item 6: Regional Cost Arrangements

Inapplicable.

Item 7: Regional Performance Negotiation and Evaluation

The WDC utilizes a collaborative approach to performance negotiation and evaluation to ensure that workforce development efforts are tailored to the unique needs of the local labor market and contribute to overall state and national economic goals. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Section 116(c) outlines a process for regions to collaboratively negotiate and reach agreements with the state regarding local levels of performance and report on performance accountability measures.

During the target development process, the WDC collaborates with the state and other local areas to analyze performance and understand local needs and changing landscapes to set targets for the local area. Based on goals and priorities through the Regional Strategic Plan and regional analysis, the WDC works collaboratively to establish local levels of performance - performance levels include measures such as employment rates, earnings, skills attainment, and other relevant indicators.

The WDC utilizes consultation with stakeholders, including community organizations, chief local elected officials, educational institutions, and other partners, to gather input and feedback on proposed performance measures and targets.

The WDC negotiates targets for federally reported common measures with the State Workforce Board for two program years. This process includes data gathering and consolidation to establish a series of draft targets based on the state regression model. As many relevant factors as possible are considered and judged for analytic inclusion based on the data and subsequent statistical analysis. These factors include past performance, regional economic conditions, and others. The State Workforce Board develops and negotiates state-level targets with U.S. DOL. Once the state targets are approved, local area targets are developed and negotiated between the State Workforce Board and the local areas. Local area targets must roll up mathematically to achieve the approved state-level targets. Performance data for the Federal Common Measures is analyzed throughout the year to identify positive and negative trends, areas of success and concern, and service provider performance.

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation help ensure that the region is making progress towards meeting the established goals. Additionally, the WDC regularly reports on performance outcomes to the state and other relevant stakeholders, providing updates on the region's progress in achieving agreed-upon

targets. Transparent reporting mechanisms help assess the effectiveness of workforce development efforts and inform future planning.

Federal Common Measures

Federal Common Measures are established in WIOA law and US DOL policy and are as follows:

- Percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment during second quarter after exit
- Percentage of program participants in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit
- Median earnings of participants in unsubsidized employment during second quarter after exit
- Percentage of participants who obtain a recognized post-secondary credential, secondary school diploma or equivalent during participation or during second quarter after program exit
- Percentage of participants who during a program year are in education that leads to recognized post-secondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable gains toward those goals

Evaluation

Working with state and local leaders, WorkSource ensures investments in employment, education and training programs are evidence-based and data-driven, and programs are accountable to participants and taxpayers. This includes evaluating approaches and aligning performance accountability and data systems to support program management, facilitate common case management systems, and inform policy.

Section 3: Local Component of Plan

Item 1: Strategic Vision and Goals

The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County aspires to lead transformational change that will evolve our region's workforce development efforts into an innovative industry, community, and outcome-driven system with racial equity at its core. As the regional backbone for workforce development, the WDC is committed to centering racial equity and community partnership as the cornerstones of how we approach our work, and collaboration with a diverse set of partners to elevate job quality, economic growth, and prosperity for adults and youth throughout Seattle-King County.

Workforce equity exists when all workers have equitable access to high-quality jobs that provide safe and healthy working environments and offer opportunities for advancement and meaningful growth. The current structure of our regional economy and labor market (pre- and post-pandemic) produces racial gaps in employment and wages, with stark occupational segregation in access to quality jobs, resulting from systemic barriers that have been constructed over time to benefit white people at the expense of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

Mission

The mission of the WDC is to catalyze system change in the Puget Sound region to increase the prosperity and economic growth of workers, employers, and communities, grounded in the principle of racial equity. We do so with explicit intention, and a commitment to utilize data to measure impact.

Strategic Principles

The work of the WDC is grounded in six guiding principles aimed at shaping a just and equitable future where all people in this region, regardless of race or ethnicity, share in its economic prosperity.

Racial Equity: Dismantling of structural and systemic racism across our institutions, such that all workers regardless of race or ethnicity have equitable access to quality jobs and share in the region's economic prosperity.

Job Quality: A quality job includes economic stability, economic mobility, equity, respect, and worker voice.

System Change: Systems are complex, interrelated, and were historically designed for the disproportionate outcomes they produce. Authentic and equitable system change requires exceptional attention to the detailed outcomes occurring for particular populations and implementation of targeted solutions that will force the system to behave in a qualitatively different way.

Community Partnerships: Forge and sustain strong partnerships with community-based organizations, employers, educational institutions, and local government agencies to create targeted workforce development solutions that are equity driven and align with the evolving needs of the regional labor market.

Advocacy: Through active engagement with policymakers and stakeholders across all tiers of government, advocate for policy changes that promote workforce development and equitable economic growth. Our collective efforts aim to shape and impact legislation at city, county, state, and federal levels that advances workforce initiatives and benefits the entire community.

Innovation: Prioritize data-driven decision-making and smart risks grounded in an evidence-based approach that ensures our investments yield meaningful results.

Item 2: High-Performing Board Objectives

The WDC aspires to lead transformative change that will evolve our region's workforce development efforts into an innovative industry, community, and outcome-driven system with racial equity at its core. To ensure high performance the following principles guide our work:

- **Building Backbone Capacity** - With robust, sustained investment, the WDC is well-positioned to lead and drive an expansive set of strategies proposed in the 2021 Regional Strategic Plan – a blueprint conceived by an alliance of community, business, labor, philanthropic, and educational partners.³⁰
- **WDC Dashboard** - Aligns measures, goals, and timelines with transformation objectives in program strategies and organizational development. It offers a concise view of progress towards our vision and goals.
- **Data, Research, and Innovation** – The WDC's primary goals and approach to data are to: Evaluate performance and impact of WDC programming and investments as aligned with labor market demand to promote economic stability and job quality, centralize data as an essential tool to advance evidence-based, racially equitable outcomes and to test and scale innovative approaches to workforce development.
- **Job Quality** – The WDC is advocating for job quality frameworks with policymakers, employers, and workforce development entities as a strategic investment in the future. Embracing these frameworks ensures the creation of an equitable, prosperous, and sustainable labor market that benefits all stakeholders.

OUR WORK IN ACTION: WDC DASHBOARD

Launched in July 2023, the strategic dashboard reflects the full complexities of the work needed to achieve our transformation goals and provides current and aligned measures, goals, and timelines for measuring our progress in program strategies and organizational development (people and culture, operations, Board). The aligned measures indicate those that are specific to the transformation goals and vision.

³⁰ Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County, Recover Better: A Regional Plan for Equitable Economic Recovery <https://www.seakingwdc.org/regional-strategic-plan>

Item 3: Regional Alignment and Strategy³¹

The WDC's regional alignment and strategy are underpinned by an unwavering commitment to racial equity, community partnership, and data-driven decision-making and advocacy. Through the cultivation of collaborative relationships among diverse stakeholders, evidence backed alignment of resources and initiatives, and advocating for policy reforms, we endeavor to build a more inclusive and equitable workforce development ecosystem that empowers individuals to thrive in the rapidly evolving economic landscape of Seattle-King County. Grounded in our overarching mission and strategic principles, we remain steadfast in our pursuit of a future where all residents have equitable access to high-quality jobs and economic prosperity. Additionally, we are staunch advocates for policy reforms at the local, state, and federal levels, advocating for changes that bolster workforce development, foster equitable economic growth, expand worker protections, bridge the digital divide, and promote economic self-sufficiency. Workforce equity exists when all workers, regardless of race or ethnicity, have equitable access to high-quality jobs that provide safe and healthy working environments and offer opportunities for advancement and meaningful growth. The current structure of our regional economy and labor market (pre- and post-pandemic) produces racial gaps in employment and wages, with stark occupational segregation in access to quality jobs, resulting from systemic barriers that have been constructed over time to benefit white people at the expense of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. The mission of the WDC, and this Partnership, is to catalyze system change in the Puget Sound region to increase the prosperity and economic growth of workers, employers, and communities, grounded in the principle of racial equity. We do so with explicit intention, and a commitment to utilize data to measure impact.

Local Workforce Development System

WorkSource Services

JOB SEEKER SERVICES		
Basic Career Services	Individualized Career Services	Training
Outreach, intake and orientation to the information, services, programs, tools and resources available through the Local workforce system	Comprehensive and specialized assessments of skills levels and service needs	Occupational skills training through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)
Initial assessments of skill level(s), aptitudes, abilities and supportive service needs	Development of an individual employability development plan to identify employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the	Adult education and literacy activities, including English language acquisition (ELA), provided in combination with the training services described above

³¹ Reference attachment D.

	customer to achieve the employment goals	
In and out of area job search and placement assistance (including provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations and non-traditional employment)	Referral to training services	On-the-Job Training (OJT)
Access to employment opportunity and labor market information	Group counseling	Incumbent Worker Training
Performance information and program costs for eligible providers of training, education, and workforce services	Literacy activities related to work readiness	Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction which may include cooperative education
Information on performance of the Local workforce system	Individual counseling and career planning	Training programs operated by the private sector
Information on the availability of supportive services and referral to such, as appropriate	Case management for customers seeking training services; individual in and out of area job search, referral and placement assistance	Skill upgrading and retraining
Information and meaningful assistance on Unemployment Insurance claim filing	Work experience, transitional jobs, registered apprenticeships, and internships	Entrepreneurial training
Determination of potential eligibility for workforce Partner services, programs, and referral(s)	Workforce preparation services (e.g., development of learning skills, punctuality, communication skills, interviewing skills, personal maintenance, literacy skills, financial literacy skills, and professional conduct) to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training	Customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training
Information and assistance in applying for financial aid for training and education programs not provided under WIOA	Post-employment follow-up services and support (This is not an individualized career service but listed here for completeness.)	Other training services as determined by the workforce partner's governing rules

YOUTH SERVICES

<p>Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized post-secondary credential.</p>	<p>Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate.</p>
<p>Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include: Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing, and on-the-job training opportunities.</p>	<p>Occupational skill training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved.</p>
<p>Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.</p>	<p>Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate.</p>
<p>Supportive services.</p>	<p>Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months</p>
<p>Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate.</p>	<p>Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate.</p>
<p>Financial literacy education.</p>	<p>Entrepreneurial skills training.</p>
<p>Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services.</p>	<p>Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.</p>

BUSINESS SERVICES

<p>Serve as a single point of contact for businesses, responding to all requests in a timely manner</p>	<p>Provide information and services related to Unemployment Insurance taxes and claims</p>	<p>Assist with disability and communication accommodations, including job coaches</p>
<p>Conduct outreach regarding Local workforce system's services and products</p>	<p>Conduct on-site Rapid Response activities regarding closures and downsizings</p>	<p>Develop On-the-Job Training (OJT) contracts, incumbent worker contracts, or pay-for-performance contract strategies</p>

Provide access to labor market information	Provide customized recruitment and job applicant screening, assessment and referral services	Provide employer and industry cluster-driven Occupational Skills Training through Individual Training Accounts with eligible training providers
Assist with the interpretation of labor market information	Conduct job fairs	Develop customized training opportunities to meet specific employer and/or industry cluster needs
Use of one-stop center facilities for recruiting and interviewing job applicants	Consult on human resources issues	Coordinate with employers to develop and implement layoff aversion strategies
Post job vacancies in the state labor exchange system and take and fill job orders	Provide information regarding disability awareness issues	Provide incumbent worker upgrade training through various modalities
Provide information regarding workforce development initiatives and programs	Provide information regarding assistive technology and communication accommodations	Develop, convene, or implement industry or sector partnerships

WIOA Programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth)

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) helps job seekers and workers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and match employers with skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. The WorkSource system, a cornerstone of the public workforce ecosystem, brings together key employment, education, and training programs.

Adult Program

Adult program under Title I-B of WIOA provides quality employment and training services to assist eligible individuals to find, qualify for and obtain employment leading to self-sufficiency while ensuring that employers find the skilled workers needed to fill their job openings.

Providers of Adult programs uphold delivery of services that:

1. Progress towards economic self-sufficiency;
2. Sector-driven strategies;
3. Realizing the One-Stop vision;
4. Serving a diverse customer base; and
5. Efficient, lean, and effective job seeker services, reflective of WIOA's aim to increase opportunities to serve individuals with a barrier to employment.

Emphasis to serve populations with barriers which include:

1. Displaced homemakers
2. Low-income individuals
3. Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians

4. Individuals with disabilities, including youth with disabilities
5. Older individuals
6. Ex-offenders
7. Homeless individuals or homeless children and youths
8. Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system
9. Individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers
10. Eligible migrant and seasonal farm workers
11. Individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility for TANF
12. Single parents (including single pregnant women)
13. Long-term unemployed individuals
14. Such other groups as the Governor involved determines to have barriers to employment

Dislocated Worker Program

The Dislocated Worker program under Title I-B of WIOA provides quality employment and training services to assist eligible individuals to find, qualify for and obtain employment leading to self-sufficiency while ensuring that employers find the skilled workers needed to fill their job openings.

Dislocated Worker funding provides resources to individuals who are unemployed as a result of general economic conditions in the community. Dislocated Workers include three categories:

1. Have been terminated, laid off, or received a notice of termination or layoff and are unlikely to return to their usual occupation or industry because of a permanent plant closure, a substantial layoff, foreign competition, or a lack of demand for specific skills.
2. Are self-employed, but the economy or a natural disaster has put them out of work. Examples include farmers, ranchers, and commercial fishers.
3. A displaced homemaker who is either unemployed or working a job that does not support their household.

Youth Program

WIOA Title I-B offers a comprehensive year-round program to eligible youth ages 14-24. Youth Programs provide opportunities for youth ages 14 – 24 to gain paid career-related work experiences, soft skills, job readiness, career exploration, resume building, financial literacy, and summer internships. Youth services begin with a full assessment and include the 14 required service elements per WIOA Section 129 (c) (2).

The WDC envisions a system where youth in Seattle-King County have equitable access to comprehensive and integrated education and training supports that increase the number of young adults productively engaged in the workforce with the end goal of self-sufficiency. The WDC seeks to develop and lead successful workforce development strategies with added emphasis on career-connected learning opportunities and paid work experience. WDC-funded programs help youth obtain employment, re-engage in school, prepare for postsecondary education, and/or connect to industry-focused education and training programs.

Service providers make the full range of WIOA services available for all enrolled youth. Each WIOA youth participant undergoes a comprehensive assessment that reviews basic skill levels, occupational

skill levels and interests, and the support service needs of the participant. Each individual works with a qualified case manager or other professional to develop an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) that identifies a career goal, service plan, and reasonable outcomes related to education and employment. Service strategies prepare participants for post-secondary educational opportunities, implement linkages between academic and occupational learning, support preparation for employment, and make connections to the job market and employers. Youth providers deliver and make available 14 required WIOA youth elements. Youth programs are designed to offer multiple options for accessing career information, career preparation activities, and work experiences.

Out-of-School Youth

Seattle-King County WIOA-funded programs for out-of-school youth (OSY) target young people who are between the ages of 16 and 24, not attending any school, and face at least one barrier to employment. Out-of-school youth programs are designed to lead youth to self-sufficiency through attainment of full-time, long-term employment or a post-secondary credential.

Strong community partnerships are instrumental to the sustainability of programs for out-of-school youth. Out-of-School Youth programs integrate the youth reengagement network, including Open Doors, as well as Adult Education programs through Adult Basic Education providers. WIOA OSY programs integrate comprehensive collaboration, including leveraged resources, among local school districts, the juvenile justice system, community colleges, and community-based organizations.

Out-of-School Eligibility Requirement:

- Not attending any school (as defined under state law)
- Not younger than 16 or older than the age of 24 at the time of enrollment

Additional Conditions (Must Meet At Least One):

- School dropout
- Within the age of compulsory school attendance, but has not attended school for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter
- Recipient of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent who is low-income and either basic skills deficient or an English language learner
- Subject to the juvenile or adult justice system
- A homeless individual, a homeless child or youth, a runaway, in foster care or has aged out of the foster care system, a child eligible for assistance, or in an out-of-home placement
- Pregnant or parenting
- An individual with a disability
- Low-income individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment

In-School Youth

WIOA-funded programs for In-School Youth target ages of 14 and 21, who are low-income and face at least one barrier to employment. The WIOA in-school program functions as a dropout prevention strategy by intervening with youth with an emphasis on exploration of careers and training and post-secondary credit retrieval activities.

In-School Eligibility Requirement:

- Age 14 to 21 and attending school; (young people with disabilities can be under 14) and
- Low-income individual

Additional Conditions (Must Meet At least One):

- Individual with a disability
- Basic skills deficient
- English language learner
- Offender
- Homeless, runaway, or foster child
- Pregnant or parenting
- An individual who requires additional support to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment

Referrals

The WDC holds a strong commitment to getting individuals and employers to the agency or program where they will be best served by establishing a common referral system through the UniteUs platform. The One-Stop Operator will establish WorkSource Center and Affiliate points of contact that will be collaborative partners to test and provide input to the system-wide launch of UniteUs. This is part of an effort to expand access to wraparound services to job seekers and establish a streamlined, electronic means of making referrals across agencies, while limiting the amount of duplicative information that individuals are required to share each time they are referred. The WDC is committed to strengthening that system over the next three years, removing barriers to access, and building robust assurances to create "closed loop" mechanisms that ensure referrals receive immediate follow-up and that the referring agency is made aware that follow-up occurred. UniteUs is not simply an electronic mechanism for referral but is also a network of agencies and programs committed to better understanding the work each partner does so that meaningful referrals can be made through whatever means necessary.

Career Pathways and Exploration

WDC reviews industry sectors in King County to determine which are most likely to provide opportunities for self-sufficiency employment. WDC provides Map Your Career as a guide to career pathways in key industries of King County. Schools use this resource in career planning supports through classroom activities and for one-to-one counseling. WIOA Youth programs use this tool along with the Self Sufficiency Calculator to provide participants with real time information about training and potential wages, the actual cost of living in their communities, and the benefits of financial planning.

OUR WORK IN ACTION: INVESTMENTS IN HIGH DEMAND CAREER PATHWAYS

Over the past three years, the WDC has invested over \$6 million in Work-Based Learning programs. These investments have been strategically prioritized and scaled with funding from WIOA, the Washington State Department of Commerce, and King County Career

Corps. The primary goal of these investments has been to create opportunities that not only identify talent in our communities but also bridge the gap for BIPOC workers, immigrants, refugees, and other low-income individuals, connecting them to quality jobs in rapidly growing industry sectors.

The WDC's focus on subsidized employment programs is particularly vital due to the concentration of underemployment among racial and ethnic minorities³². One of the key factors contributing to this underutilization of skills is the lack of recognition of foreign credentials and the limited opportunities resulting from discriminatory practices.

Required 14 WIOA Youth Program Elements

1. Tutoring, Study Skills Training, Instruction, and Dropout Prevention activities that lead to completion of a high school diploma or recognized equivalent
2. Alternative Secondary School and Dropout Recovery Services assist youth who have struggled in traditional secondary education or who have dropped out of school
3. Paid and Unpaid Work Experience is a structured learning experience in a workplace and provides opportunities for career exploration and skill development
4. Occupational Skills Training is an organized program of study that provides specific skills and leads to proficiency in an occupational field
5. Education Offered Concurrently with Workforce Preparation is an integrated education and training model combining workforce preparation, basic academic skills, and occupational skills
6. Leadership Development Opportunities encourage responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination, and other positive social behaviors
7. Supportive Services enable an individual to participate in WIOA activities
8. Adult Mentoring is a formal relationship between a youth and an adult mentor with structured activities where the mentor offers guidance, support, and encouragement
9. Follow-up Services are provided following program exit to help ensure youth succeed in employment or education
10. Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling provides individualized counseling to participants, including drug/alcohol and mental health counseling
11. Financial Literacy Education provides youth with the knowledge and skills they need to achieve long-term financial stability
12. Entrepreneurial Skills Training provides the basics of starting and operating a small business and develops entrepreneurial skills
13. Services that Provide Labor Market Information offer employment and labor market information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations
14. Post-secondary Preparation and Transition Activities help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training

³² Migration Policy Institute: Leaving Money on the Table. The persistence of Brain Waste among College-Educated Immigrants.

Integrated Service Delivery (ISD)

Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) is the delivery of WorkSource services in a manner that aligns or braids the resources and services of WorkSource partners to seamlessly address the employment and training needs of system customers - job seekers and businesses. ISD approaches service delivery to focus more on value-added services to assure that job seekers have the skills to succeed in the regional economy and businesses have skilled workers to maintain and grow. ISD does this by actively working to reduce and eliminate administrative barriers in seamless service delivery.

ISD pushes our traditional understanding that WorkSource operates as a set of programs that collaborate to a vision focused on high-quality services and reducing barriers for job seekers, as possible. Rather than providing a “countable” service or referring a customer to another “program,” ISD connects the customer to a robust set of high value system services and resources relevant to the regional economy, including assessment, skill development and training, work-readiness, skill validation and certification, and employee recruitment/job placement. Services are organized into functions, rather than programs. Staff highly skilled and capable of delivering functions are deployed regardless of agency.

Agency service coordination and staff collaboration are often conflated with integrated service delivery. ISD goes beyond collaboration, coordination and/or good partnership and challenges the myth that simply putting different organizations under one roof results in seamless service delivery. ISD requires the system to look for flexibility and question the federal and state administrative rules that limit ability to serve the customer, regardless of the eligibility criteria of a specific funding stream.

Key components of Integrated Service Delivery include:

- Organization of staff around functions/customer needs
- Functional leadership/supervision to support functional teams
- Co-enrollment of customers
- Continuous quality improvement based on customer data/feedback
- Providing services where the customers are (i.e., Resource Room or In-Community)

For staff, this means:

- The customers (jobseekers and employers) and their needs are at the forefront
- Every customer is everyone’s customer
- Staff development and training to support transition to new roles under functional teams
- Meeting customers where they are physically (in the lab/resource room) and in the career development process
- Serving as navigators to ensure customers access services they need from various partners
- Outreach to jobseekers in the community and providing services in the community

Under Integrated Service Delivery, customers will experience:

- Experience “value-added” interaction during each visit (including their first)
- Seamless transition between staff, programs, and/or services
- “No Wrong Door”

The WDC expects jobseekers who enter the WorkSource System or remotely connect to be greeted, engaged, have needs appropriately triaged and referred to services and resources. This approach

requires staff to be able to serve customers in a culturally appropriate manner, be well informed about the services available through the system, including web-based resources, and be prepared to offer each customer the full range of resources and services available to facilitate job search.

- **Direct Referral:** Direct linkage referrals will be made by phone, video conferencing, texting, etc. to a program staff member who can provide meaningful information or services to a customer in real time.
- **Interactive Workshops and Labs:** WorkSource will develop and deliver a comprehensive series of career planning and exploration activities and sessions to serve larger groups of customers more effectively (e.g., resume and interview labs), allowing staff time to work with small groups of individuals. Workshops, delivered by trained facilitators, will offer up to date information and tools for job seekers for a variety of subjects e.g., career pathways, local labor market information, learning about specific industry and career sectors. Ongoing job clubs encourage peer networking and peer-to-peer support and serve as a helpful means for sharing information and providing feedback on interview skills, including the best job-seeking tools and successful job search practices.
- **In-Community Outreach (ICO):** To strengthen connections between WorkSource and community-based organizations, including coordination with connection sites and affiliate sites, partners will remain flexible in meeting with customers in community and at community-based organizations. With the WorkSource Operator team, WorkSource will continue to broaden outreach and connections between WorkSource offices/Connection sites and other community-based organizations that guide job seekers in primarily self-directed career exploration and job search. ICO teams, including WorkSource partners, will join in assessing and delivering needed job seekers services at various community-based locations.

Economic Security for All (EcSA)

Economic Security for All (EcSA) is a poverty reduction initiative in Washington that enhances existing programs to support low-income residents in their quest for equity and self-sufficiency. Through intensive navigation, local innovation, and flexible support, EcSA fills gaps within existing programs.

Program Priorities:

- Achieve or surpass local and statewide goals for helping people attain self-sufficiency, showcasing EcSA as an effective model for alleviating poverty equitably.
- Integrate WIOA and non-WIOA services (e.g., nutrition assistance, housing) to provide stability for customers with convenience and dignity.
- Create and execute tailored career plans to ensure 100% participant income adequacy, using the UW self-sufficiency calculator.
- Offer comprehensive wrap-around services to support stability as customers follow their customized career plans until they achieve income adequacy.
- Engage Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities, rural areas, and people experiencing poverty in program design and execution.
- Collaborate across local, state, and federal levels to eliminate obstacles in delivering multiple benefits.

Available Program Services:

- Basic Career Services: Job readiness workshops, skills assessment, labor market information, job search.
- Individualized Career Services: Employment plan creation, personalized career planning, workshops on resume building, LinkedIn, interviewing, referrals to education/training programs.
- Training Services: Work-based training (e.g., On-the-job, Registered Apprenticeship), Occupational Skills Training.
- Financial Literacy Training: Three components - Money Mechanics (personal finance basics), 1:1 Financial Coaching, 2:1 Savings Match.

Monthly Flexible Financial Assistance Pilot for State Funded EcSA Program:

Launched in Fall 2022, the pilot program was designed to explore the efficacy of flexible financial assistance in King County, Washington's priciest region and home to over 27% of the state's households that struggle to meet basic needs. BIPOC households are especially overrepresented in this group, including more than 45% of Latinx, Black, American Indian, and Native Hawaiian households, which is part of why the WDC prioritized racial equity in program design.

Adopting a targeted universalism framework, the pilot aimed to cater to the specific needs of communities most impacted by poverty by providing \$500 monthly payments to 102 individuals ranging from low-income households to post-secondary students and justice-involved adults. The WDC sought to lower financial barriers linked to "benefits cliff" and "benefits plateau" effects. These issues arise when income growth results in the loss or stagnation of public assistance, straining families financially. The program also aimed to open doors to new opportunities in careers, housing, and education.

For post-secondary students, the program acknowledges the unique challenges they face in their educational journey. Data from an analysis by the American Association of Community Colleges underscores these challenges, revealing that 41% of public two-year students complete their programs within six years³³. Over this period, life events such as job loss, housing instability, childcare disruptions, and other challenges are constant realities. These barriers highlight the pressing need to address the [Social Determinants of Learning](#), which encompass a range of factors beyond academics that significantly impact a student's ability to succeed. Flexible financial assistance programs play a vital role in supporting student retention and completion of credentials.

Supported by state, federal, and private funders, the pilot yielded a tangible return on investment; most participants secured better-paying jobs with an average increase in income that nearly matched the incentive amount, creating sustainable improvement in their financial well-being.

³³ American Association of Community Colleges: Trends in Community College Enrollment, and Completion Data, Issue 6. https://www.aacc.nche.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Final_CC-Enrollment-2020_730_1.pdf

OUR WORK IN ACTION: REIMAGINING WORKFORCE SAFETY NET

What difference can \$500 make?

Improved employment, financial stability, health and well-being, and educational advancement.

“
This money doesn't cover all our living expenses, but it does help us as we work toward our career goals.
- Program Participant

Employment

Employment nearly doubled from 37% to 66%, with better-paying jobs and increased benefits

Finances

More financially stable, able to pay bills, meet basic needs, manage debt, and develop savings, especially for families with children

Quality of Life

Significant improvements in quality of life, physical pain and fatigue, and ability to travel and move, with positive trends in anxiety and focus

Title II - Basic Education for adults provides adult basic education (ABE) and literacy services—including workplace literacy, family literacy, English literacy, and Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) –which are part of the state’s Basic Education for Adults services.

Title III - The Wagner-Peyser program provides universal access to an integrated array of labor exchange services so that workers, job seekers and businesses can find the services they need. The Wagner-Peyser program often serves as the “front door” in which many jobseekers, including dislocated workers receive services through WorkSource. Wagner-Peyser focuses on providing a variety of employment related labor exchange services including but not limited to job search assistance, job referral, and placement assistance for job seekers, re-employment services to unemployment insurance claimants, and recruitment services to employers with job openings. In addition to the above universal access offerings, individuals receiving services under Wagner-Peyser are referred to other appropriate programs, including the Dislocated Worker program.

Title IV - The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) provides employment-related services to individuals with disabilities who want to work but need assistance. Individuals might experience difficulty getting or keeping a job due to a physical, sensory, or mental disability. A DVR counselor works with each individual to develop a customized plan of services designed to help the individual achieve his or her job goal. DVR services include but are not limited to the following: counseling and guidance, medical and psychological services, vocational and technical training services, rehabilitation technology services and devices, and job placement and retention services.

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program provides aid to workers who lose their jobs or whose hours of work and wages are reduced as a result of increased imports. TAA offers a variety of benefits and reemployment services to help unemployed workers prepare for and obtain suitable employment. Workers may be eligible for training, job search and relocation allowances, income support, and other reemployment services.

The Dislocated Worker program is a critical partner with the TAA program in identifying and serving trade-impacted workers. Co-enrollment of workers covered under certified petitions (TAA-certified workers), in partnership with the WIOA Dislocated Worker or Adult program, allows for the timely provision of individualized career services and improves the overall effectiveness of the TAA program. In addition to the Rapid Response services, American Job Centers (AJC) can also provide supportive services relating to childcare, transportation, dependent care, housing assistance, and needs-related payments. The TAA program generally provides case management and employment services, training, income support, job search allowances, relocation allowances, wage supplements for older workers, and a health coverage tax credit for TAA-certified workers.

Unemployment Insurance

Unemployment Insurance (UI) programs play a vital role in the comprehensive, integrated workforce system by providing temporary income support to eligible individuals. These benefits allow unemployed workers to survive economically while engaging in work search activities for suitable work. UI claimants are important AJC customers who have recent attachment to the workforce and are often eligible for the Dislocated Worker Program.

Beyond providing income support, the UI program(s) serves as one of the “gateways” to the AJCs and is frequently one of the first workforce programs accessed by individuals who need training or career services. UI programs include several targeted initiatives that directly refer claimants to WIOA programs or partner with other programs to provide career and supportive services. The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program is UI’s primary reemployment initiative and combines a UI continued eligibility assessment with reemployment services and appropriate referrals to other programs, including the Dislocated Worker Program. All workforce program partners, including the UI and Dislocated Worker programs, have a shared responsibility to facilitate the reemployment of UI claimants, which is best met when these programs are integrated.

National Dislocated Worker Grants

At times when there is higher-than average demand for assistance exceeding state and local resources, National Dislocated Worker Grants (DWGs) are available to temporarily serve more dislocated workers. These funds can also be used to meet increased demand for employment and training services for laid off workers.

Major economic dislocations or other events that qualify for a DWG include:

- Plant closures or mass layoffs affecting 50 or more workers;
- Closures and realignments of military installations;

- Situations where a higher-than-average demand for employment and training activities for dislocated members of the Armed Forces exceeds state and local resources for providing such activities;
- Emergencies or major disasters which have been declared eligible for public assistance by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA);
- An emergency or disaster situation of national significance declared or otherwise recognized by a Federal Agency; and
- Other events as determined by the Secretary of Labor.

Item 4: Expanding Access

An integral aspect of our transformative vision is the prioritization of community partnerships, especially with organizations historically overlooked by the traditional workforce system. These partnerships are crucial, serving as the cornerstone for generating equity-driven solutions that pave the way towards a more just and inclusive future. Our focus is directed towards empowering Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), immigrant and refugee communities. Over the past four years, the WDC has partnered with immigrant and refugee leaders to elevate language access concerns with Employment Security Department (ESD) and to identify opportunities to coordinate our immigrant and refugee workforce strategies.

To build a coordinated WorkSource system, the WDC partnered with UniteUs to provide a referral system that allows community-based site staff to search for programs, make customer referrals, and track their status, all from within one simple, user-friendly dashboard. The UniteUs platform allows employment specialists to refer customers to any organization in the network, including to those that offer healthcare, housing, transportation, and utility assistance – services that are often necessary for a successful job search, training, and sustainable employment.

Recognizing the challenges within the current system, where participants often bear the burden of repeatedly sharing their stories during intake while accessing services, the WDC conducted a recent survey. The findings revealed that a single customer is required to complete over 35 pages of intake documents just to enroll in a WIOA program. To address this issue and streamline the intake process, the WDC, in collaboration with partners like YWCA, is embarking on a pilot program. The goal is to simplify and enhance the onboarding experience for participants, reducing the paperwork burden and ensuring a more efficient and user-friendly engagement with WIOA programs.

Our partners are committed to targeting the recruitment of special populations prioritized under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This includes individuals with disabilities, low-income individuals, youth, and English language learners. Additionally, given the diverse demographics of Seattle King County, our partners have taken proactive measures to hire staff members proficient in various languages to cater to the linguistic diversity in our region. Partners work closely with the WDC and the Operator to pinpoint communities requiring specific outreach efforts, ensuring that our services are accessible and culturally relevant.

WORKSOURCE: FREE LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION SERVICES

A significant milestone was achieved when the WDC, in collaboration with the WorkSource Operator team, introduced a streamlined process for thirty-nine (39) WorkSource community-based site partners to access free language interpretation services through a language line vendor. In its first quarter of use, over 4,000 minutes (about 3 days) of interpretation services were provided in 19 languages across 9 organizations. This reinforces our commitment to addressing accessibility and the needs of our diverse communities who primarily use languages other than English.

- **Veterans and Eligible Spouses:** Veterans services staff are embedded in the local WorkSource Centers. Community partners work in collaboration with on-site veterans' specialists to provide a host of services to veterans and eligible spouses including, referrals to for housing and food security, job search, employment and training benefits and services, and assistance transitioning from military to civilian services. Community partners collaborate with veteran support organizations, attend veteran job fairs and events.
- **Unemployment Insurance (UI) Claimants:** Community partners work closely with other community-based organizations, places of worship, state agencies and other community sites to identify and reach UI claimants.
- **Older Workers:** Partner with local area agencies supporting older adults, such as the City of Seattle Aging and Disability Services. Partner with local nonprofits, senior centers, senior meal programs, and retirement communities providing services to older adults.
- **At-Risk Youth:** Leverage social media platforms popular among youth in tandem with traditional outreach methods. Collaborate with youth providers, local government agencies, schools, youth centers, and local community organizations. Develop engaging and youth-friendly outreach materials.
- **Low-Income Adults:** Engage with community centers, food banks, community organizations, and affordable housing organizations. Highlight services that specifically address financial barriers. Ensure information is accessible through multiple channels.
- **Dislocated Workers:** Partner with companies undergoing layoffs or closures. Provide rapid response services, including job fairs and training opportunities. Collaborate with local chambers of commerce and economic development agencies to align outreach strategies and access to services.
- **Individuals with Disabilities:** Work with disability organizations. Ensure physical and digital accessibility of services.
- **Other Marginalized Groups:** Identify specific community organizations representing diverse groups. Tailor outreach efforts to address unique challenges faced by each group.

Item 5: Education Coordination

The WDC maintains collaborative relationships with secondary and postsecondary education institutions in the region and the broader organizations that support them. Whether it's developing equitable career pathways, reducing barriers to education leading to quality jobs, aligning education and training programs with the needs of the regional economy, or pursuing other goals, the WDC leverages these relationships to ensure coordination and enhance impact.

Secondary schools in our region are served by the Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSES), which supports 35 public school districts, 291 private secondary schools, 10 charter schools, and two tribal compact schools in King and Pierce Counties. In collaboration with our government partners at King County and the City of Seattle, we also maintain connections to Seattle Schools and school districts across the region. Finally, the WDC has relationships with Career Connect Washington, a statewide coalition of Career and Technical Education (CTE) leaders.

CTE programs in middle and high schools in our region provide 21st century, academic, and technical skills in alignment with the Washington State CTE Program Standards. CTE classes fall into career clusters, where each cluster provides a choice of specific career pathways. Work-based learning activities extend the classroom into the workplace, directly connecting knowledge and skills acquisition to a student's future.

Seattle Public Schools operates the Seattle Skills Center, a free program that provides secondary education students advanced CTE courses to prepare them for career-focused learning in two- and four-year colleges or to allow them to join the workforce right out of high school.

The Puget Sound Skills Center (PSSC) in Burien serves high school juniors and seniors interested in specialized career and technical learning. PSSC offers 19 programs, from aerospace manufacturing to multimedia design. Students earn high school and college credit in a hands-on, workplace-oriented environment. PSSC students graduate with job-ready skills, the opportunity to earn professional certifications, and a jumpstart on post-secondary education. PSSC is a collaborative effort among Federal Way, Fife, Highline, Tahoma and Tukwila school districts and was the first such center in Washington when it opened in 1966.

Open Doors Youth Reengagement programs throughout our region provide education and services to older youth—aged 16 to 21—who have either dropped out of secondary education or who are not expected to graduate from high school by age 21. Open Doors reengages disconnected youth through programs that encourage community partnerships, create multiple pathways for students to realize success, and provide an on-ramp to post-secondary achievement. Those pathways often align with career and technical education programs leading to in-demand jobs at living wages.

Finally, secondary schools leverage funding through the Carl D. Perkins Act to support opportunities for students to explore, choose, and follow CTE programs of study and career pathways to earn credentials associated with in-demand jobs. All districts that access these funds must complete a comprehensive planning process, and we engage with and support those processes as opportunities arise. A current WDC director, for example, serves on the Workforce Advisory Committee at the Renton School District, engaging in their Perkins planning process.

All two-year community and technical colleges in the state are supported by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). The WDC maintains relationships with the SBCTC as well as the region's 10 community and technical colleges:

- Seattle Central College
- North Seattle College
- South Seattle College
- Cascadia Community College
- Shoreline Community College
- Bellevue College
- Highline College
- Green River College
- Lake Washington Institute of Technology
- Renton Technical College

These colleges offer a wide range of workforce education and training programs, including certificate, associate degree, and BAS programs. They also offer related classroom instruction for apprenticeship programs. In addition, North Seattle College houses a WorkSource Center, and South Seattle College is a WorkSource affiliate site.

The Seattle-King County area has over 80 private career schools on the Eligible Training Provider List, offering courses in business, health care, IT, transportation, and a wide variety of other fields.

State-approved, joint apprenticeship programs combine on-the-job training—supervised by a journey-level craftsperson or trades professional—with classroom instruction. Depending on the program, apprenticeships range from three to five years. The programs and their standards are approved by the Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council. At the local level, Joint Apprenticeship Training Committees (JATCs)—made up of equal numbers of employer and labor organization representatives—administer the programs. Employers and workers provide financial contributions to apprenticeship programs.

Of the state-approved, joint apprenticeship programs in the Seattle-King County region, most are in the building and construction trades. Apprentices earn while they learn, starting out at a set percentage of the journey level wage and then increasing as they progress through their apprenticeship. Several pre-apprenticeship programs target women, people of color, youth and the economically disadvantaged.

Finally, we have noticed a rise of interest in skills-based hiring which could include non-degree credentials such as those offered by Coursera, LinkedIn Learning, Skillspire, and others. While not always included in the traditional definition of post-secondary education training providers, a number of these agencies have expressed interest in defining accelerated career pathways to living wage jobs through programs with direct connections with employers. 418 Intelligence, for example, has launched a tri-county partnership with King, Pierce, and Snohomish with the intention of offering cybersecurity training programs directly connected to needs identified by the U.S. Navy. We are pursuing these new, promising models with great interest.

Item 6: Career Pathways and Credentials

Career pathways are developed collaboratively with employers, labor, training providers, community stakeholders, local government representatives, and other workforce system partners to expand equitable access to training and credentials leading to high quality jobs. Through our emerging industry

strategies efforts, we are launching, supporting, or aligning with sector-based strategies to create equitable career pathways resulting in industry-recognized and stackable credentials and certificates.

In healthcare, for example, we have a robust industry leadership table that is looking to strengthen its connections both within King County and across the Pierce, King, Snohomish tri-county region. Our Healthcare Industry Leadership Table includes a Talent Pipeline subcommittee which regularly focuses on creating healthy career pathways for both immediate and long-term workforce needs in the sector. Our most recent IT collaborations, however, show a different model, where we chose to align with the efforts undertaken by Computing for All (CFA) and their Washington Tech Workforce Coalition supported by Career Connect Washington. In this case, partnering with CFA rather than launching our own duplicative effort allows us to share available resources to maximize the impact of both organizations. All our career pathway work is rooted in labor market research while also leveraging the experiences and insights of business leaders, labor leaders, and other sector experts.

Our most recent career pathway work through our industry strategies team has focused heavily on actual attainment of employment, as we have previously had success identifying needs and creating training opportunities, creating a need for stronger connections with the actual hiring professionals who ultimately employ graduates. As mentioned earlier, our work with 418 Intelligence provides an excellent example. 418 Intelligence has a tri-county partnership that is designed not only to provide training in cybersecurity but to engage employers in ways that both illustrate the need for more cybersecurity professionals and position our shared job seekers as highly qualified candidates.

Map Your Career (www.mapyourcareer.org) is another example of our efforts to illustrate promising career pathways. Map Your Career is an educational tool designed and published by the WDC to illustrate the current and predicted labor market in our region. The resources are grouped by sector chosen based on projected growth, job demand, and potential for career advancement. Career pathway diagrams illustrate occupations and industry-wide pathways available in a particular sector, including overall trends, sample wages, and career progression possibilities. Map your Career is invaluable for both job seekers and workers considering how to advance in a career and decide which pathway might best fit their needs.

Regarding our efforts to support credentialing reforms that offer equitable access and enhance economic mobility, apprenticeship models continue to offer great promise. Apprenticeships reduce barriers by offering the opportunity to earn right away, to learn in-demand skills, and to complete training without student debt. Further, apprenticeships can offer college credit that can be applied toward a two-year degree in applied science in certain fields of study.

The WDC has also partnered with Coursera, 418 Intelligence, and other training providers offering non-degree, skills-based credentials with the specific intention of engaging with HR professionals within targeted sectors to promote skills-based hiring. Changes in hiring practices offer the potential for transformative reform in credentialing, as job seekers would have accelerated options to high quality, in-demand jobs by circumventing the barriers associated with traditional two- and four-year college pathways. Our recent analysis of these non-traditional credentials revealed a compelling opportunity. Many non-traditional training providers offer credentials in IT. Jobs associated with those credentials showed higher than average wages along with a clear career path toward greater opportunities. Many openings in IT for these entry level positions are with public sector employers. Public sector employers generally have a strong commitment to ensuring quality jobs for their employees. While this pathway is still emerging, it is these types of opportunities—clear career paths, low barriers to entry, high quality jobs—that we intend to uncover, map, and support.

Finally, Seattle Promise and King County Promise are two flagship programs reducing barriers to postsecondary credential attainment. Both programs provide a mix of tuition assistance (to ensure no tuition costs beyond costs covered by existing federal and state tuition assistance programs) and support services such as advisors, navigators, and career pathway models informed by local labor market needs. These programs, alongside existing tuition assistance programs such as Worker Retraining funds or Basic Food Employment and Training funds support students on the path toward a post-secondary credential aligned with in-demand, living wage jobs, and recognized by employers.

Item 7: Employer Engagement

The WDC has served a cumulative total of 1,246 businesses in the first two quarters of our current program year, including 804 small and medium-sized businesses and 95 BIPOC-, Woman-, or Veteran-Owned businesses. Services have included events and event support, career pathway meetings, work-based learning opportunities and referrals, on-the-job training, customized training, and support for businesses seeking to leverage the WorkSource WA or WorkSourceSKC websites. These services are regularly adjusted based on local labor market conditions and information and feedback we receive directly from employers. They are readily available and responsive.

At the same time, we have recognized that being responsive to short-term needs while critical can, at times, take resources and focus away from our broader efforts to align with longer-term economic development initiatives, stronger alignment of efforts and strategies within the local workforce ecosystem, and ultimately optimal use of resources and opportunities. So, while we remain committed to providing highly responsive business services, our broader industry strategies are working to create a more harmonious, strategic, and aligned system.

Within the WDC, this process has meant that we intend to spend the first quarter of 2024 talking to a variety of employers across three groups—small/medium-sized BIPOC-owned businesses, a selection of businesses drawn from our opportunity/focus sectors, and a selection of thought leaders and other key stakeholders in the regional workforce system. In addition to informing our renewed approach to industry strategies, this effort will inform the refresh of our regional strategic plan. A second phase of work will take place in the second quarter of 2024, for the purpose of examining exemplar LWDBs across the country along with other leading workforce organizations doing compelling work in equity and quality jobs.

We expect new relationships and strategies to emerge as a result of this work, helping us ensure that we've spoken directly with a range of key employers and that we gain new insight into how those (and other) employers want to engage on pressing systemic issues including fostering more quality jobs, achieving greater racial equity, aligning various partners in our workforce ecosystem—King County government, City of Seattle government, other local government, labor leaders, the Port of Seattle, and others—behind one, coherent regional plan. In many ways, this has been the ongoing charge of our regional transformation that sought to position the WDC as the backbone of the workforce ecosystem, and we are encouraged by our progress.

We will also continue to support our on-going industry initiatives, such as the Healthcare Industry Leadership Table (HILT), our collaboration with Computing For All toward a Technology Industry Leadership Table (or similar model), and our efforts with the Office of Economic Development at the

City of Seattle toward creating a local/regional maritime table (alongside the statewide table, which we participate in and support).

Regarding our support for entrepreneurial skills and microenterprises, the WorkSource system provides regular Self-Employment Assistance Program (SEAP) workshops where individuals receive entrepreneurial counseling and business coaching. We also facilitate connections to a variety of small business funding and assistance including Business Impact NW, the City of Seattle Small Business Programs, Small Business Support Liaisons in King County, the Small Business Association (SBA), and more. Consistent with our racial equity mission, a collection of resources is available designed specifically to break down system barriers and improve racial equity, such as the Business Resource Group for Members of the Black Community (BUILD), Latino Leadership Network, Rainbow Alliance and Inclusion Network, and Washington Immigrant Network.

Item 8: One-Stop System

The One-Stop System is the cornerstone of the federal mandate for job centers in each state. The concept of the One-Stop Center is to provide all required services outlined by applicable laws and the US Department of Labor under one roof. Affiliate offices have more flexibility and can refer to services not offered at a specific location. In Seattle-King County, there is also a network of 39 Connection Sites that provide access to WorkSource services by introducing clients to available resources and making referrals to options available at centers or affiliate offices. Connection Sites create strong links to the community, ensuring that Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, refugees, and other low-income households have equal access to financial resources, training programs, and high-quality jobs within in-demand sectors. Connection site organizations provide many services to clients that, when braided with WIOA services, form wrap-around services that can provide the safety net needed to allow clients to pursue viable career pathways. These services can include:

- Food
- Transportation
- Clothing
- Counseling
- Employment readiness
- Education
- Housing
- English language classes
- Disability and mental health resources

The network is designed to reach into communities and meet people where they are. This fits into the WDC's Regional Strategic Plan (RSP) goal of establishing strong links within the many, diverse communities in King County and creating vibrant partnerships with many community-based organizations providing services.

Providing system management, the One-Stop Operator is responsible for working in partnership with the WDC to:



- Integrate and streamline service delivery for all WorkSource programs and partners
- Maintain standards and accountability
- Support communication across the system
- Provide and facilitate professional development and staff training
- Provide guidance and technical assistance for all WorkSource staff, including access to resources and information for Connection Site staff
- Share system best practices
- Recruit new partners

Figure 9. WorkSource centers, affiliates, and connection sites as of 1/29/24.

To accomplish these purposes, the One-Stop Operator is comprised of a team that includes an Integrated Service Delivery Director, a Training and Curriculum Coordinator, and an Outreach Coordinator. This team provides critical management and coordination for the entire regional One-Stop system.

Each of the centers and affiliate offices that make up the local One-Stop system can serve clients either in-person or via remote services. During the COVID-19 pandemic, service delivery adaptations had to be made quickly to respond to customer needs when safety protocols did not allow for in-person services. Virtual services addressed the ability of people to continue to access services. In a post-pandemic environment, virtual options are still available and provide service access on customers' terms. Many clients are more comfortable navigating the online environment, so it is critical that they have access to services. The pandemic served as a jumpstart to provisioning a wide variety of services clients can access wherever they are. This access has also created a more equitable landscape by making access easier for those living throughout the County, including the more rural areas in east King County.

While virtual services can be a leveler for many people, there are those who still need to access in-person services or services delivered using specific accommodations. The One-Stop Operator (OSO) is tasked with working to ensure that all One-Stop offices comply with Section 188, if applicable, and any applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.).

The increased access for clients extends to all programs, especially UI customers. UI provides much-needed support for workers who have lost their employment, helping to bridge the gap between jobs. UI claims are often the first step for clients working with the WorkSource system. Once UI claimants are connected to WorkSource via the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) process, they gain access and information about a wide variety of programs that they may be eligible to

enroll in. The WDC relies on the Employment Security Department (ESD) to assist in outreach to UI claimants regarding services. One-Stop centers and affiliates have staff able to provide UI assistance. Additionally, many clients can access the UI system virtually. However, some may need assistance with filing and updating electronic claims. Staff are available to assist with these needs.

The WorkSource system in Seattle-King County has a wide variety of tools and accommodations designed to make all features accessible to those with disabilities. WorkSource makes every effort to provide reasonable accommodations to all programs, policies, and procedures to accommodate any participant-acknowledged physical, mental, or sensory disability. The King County Area Manager for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation sits on the WDC Board of Directors and Vocational Rehabilitation counselors are located at WorkSource sites. The effective partnership between DVR and WorkSource has resulted in identifying and recommending solutions for service delivery gaps to people with disabilities.

Staff undergo extensive, ongoing training providing the highest quality services to all individuals and ensure support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Technology and facilities assessments are conducted to identify deficits, possible violations, and enhancement opportunities. Assistive technology investments are made through partner investments in the infrastructure funding agreement (IFA) cost sharing structure.

The local Equal Opportunity Officer (EO Officer) facilitates Equal Opportunity mandatory annual training sessions for all one-stop staff. Through site visits and regular monitoring, the Local EO Officer ensures all service delivery locations are not only meeting, but exceeding, compliance standards for access. This includes, but is not limited to, full EO monitoring walkthroughs of all sites, facilitating partner walkthroughs as requested through the AIC (e.g., Department of Services for the Blind and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation accessibility walkthrough), and annual State EO monitoring. The One-Stop Operator is an authorized EO trainer and monitor, providing support to the EO officer when needed.

The entire network design of the local One-Stop system is focused on creating greater access and meeting client needs. The WDC, serving as a Regional Workforce Development Backbone organization, developed the Regional Strategic Plan (RSP) to serve as a blueprint to achieve greater impact and scale by aligning regional resources. The RSP seeks to create a streamlined and coordinated workforce development system through:

- Leveraging federal funding with more flexible dollars
- Establishing a unified (shared) regional workforce development strategy & system alignment
- Breaking down silos to minimize administrative costs and redundancies
- Pooling and/or coordinating diverse fund sources increase efficiency and impact: leverage WDC's federal funding and infrastructure

The key to achieving these goals is partnership. The RSP outlines the methodology that the WDC and its partners have agreed to follow to develop a comprehensive regional workforce development system. System partners in One-Stop centers and affiliates are represented in the Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) and in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to align costs and resource contributions.

The Seattle-King County WorkSource system is a network of service providers working for the benefit of clients. Through its work with system service providers, the WDC works to ensure that there is a strong focus on performance and client outcomes. The WDC analyzes provider performance and has regular

quarterly meetings with providers to review performance, successes, challenges, and budget status. Client data is reviewed to ensure that the WDC’s goals around targeted universalism are being pursued and services are being targeted to those most in need. The WDC uses a team approach to working with service providers with program, data, and fiscal staff working side-by-side with service providers to provide guidance, technical assistance, monitoring, and program design and delivery recommendations. Through ongoing communications, WDC staff help to coordinate provider recommendations for policies and procedures, identify best practices, and coordinate with other programs or services available for clients. The WDC leads bi-weekly peer-to-peer meetings for providers to come together to share information, receive updates, discuss technical assistance, and identify opportunities for collaboration. The One-Stop Operator (OSO) also provides ongoing training and staff development sessions that are available to all WorkSource system staff. The OSO will also be launching a new round of functional working groups, tentatively scheduled for 2024. This will provide another forum for system staff to collaborate and share information with the purpose of improving how clients are served.

Item 9: Title I Activities

WIOA Title I Service Providers

Dislocated Worker Program **Indicate service(s) provided by each:**

List all current and potential service providers in the area	Basic	Individualized	Training	WIOA Funded
1. <i>Asian Counseling and Referral Service</i>	☒	☒	☒	☒
2. <i>Pacific Associates</i>	☒	☒	☒	☒
3. <i>TRAC Associates</i>	☒	☒	☒	☒

Comments regarding the adequacy and quality of Dislocated Worker Services available: As indicated throughout the plan, the WDC offers an aligned network of service providers operating in our local WorkSource system. We continuously seek to improve the system and services to meet the needs of the community, job seekers and businesses.

Adult Program **Indicate service(s) provided by each:**

List all current and potential service providers in the area	Basic	Individualized	Training	WIOA Funded
1. <i>Asian Counseling and Referral Service</i>	☒	☒	☒	☒
2. <i>Neighborhood House</i>	☒	☒	☒	☒
3. <i>TRAC Associates</i>	☒	☒	☒	☒

4. YWCA

☒	☒	☒	☒
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Comments regarding the adequacy and quality of Adult Services available: As indicated throughout the plan, the WDC offers an aligned network of service providers operating in our local WorkSource system. We continuously seek to improve the system and services to meet the needs of the community, job seekers and businesses.

Youth Program

Indicate service(s) provided by each:

List all current and potential service providers in the area	Basic	Individualized	Training	WIOA Funded
1. <i>King County Children, Youth and Young Adult Division (CYRAD)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	☒	☒	☒
2. <i>Evergreen Goodwill of Northwest Washington</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	☒	☒	☒
3. <i>El Centro de la Raza</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	☒	☒	☒
4. <i>Partner in Employment</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	☒	☒	☒
5. <i>Boys & Girls Clubs of King County</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	☒	☒	☒
6. <i>Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	☒	☒	☒

Comments regarding the adequacy and quality of Youth Services available: As indicated throughout the plan, the WDC offers an aligned network of service providers operating in our local WorkSource system. We continuously seek to improve the system and services to meet the needs of the community, job seekers and businesses.³⁴

Item 10: Rapid Response

The mission of Rapid Response is to provide comprehensive information and technical assistance that will lead dislocated workers impacted by a layoff, closure, or natural disaster, into reemployment as quickly as possible.

All local areas provide Rapid Response services to businesses and employees when a layoff or closure is going to occur, or has occurred, in compliance with state and federal regulations. Rapid Response services are time sensitive. Local areas will develop strategic protocols to ensure contact with affected parties occurs within 48 hours of receiving notice of a layoff, closure, or crisis event.

³⁴ See attachment D.

The Rapid Response program is carried out by state and local Workforce Development agencies in partnership with local American Job Centers - known as WorkSource® in WA State. Many services are available through American Job Centers, from resume and interview workshops, career counseling, and job search to re-skilling, skills upgrading, and job training.

The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County locally oversees the program's execution and ensures partner coordination on behalf of the WIOA Title 1 Business Services Program. Each of the 12 local Workforce Development Council's in the state has a designated person to respond to WARN notices and lead the program's execution. By having one designated person it prevents duplication of outreach by multiple people and organizations.

The Seattle-King County Rapid Response Program Manager, under the Workforce Development Council Business Services Team, manages the Rapid Response program. One of the main responsibilities is to organize and coordinate a team of individuals from state and local agencies to provide an integrated approach in providing layoff support services. Services are typically presentations, but they can be customized for each of the business's needs.

The Seattle-King County Rapid Response team comprises the Employment Security Department, Washington Health Benefit Exchange, Department for Labor, Community and Technical Colleges, and WorkSource, including information about WIOA services. Additional information is provided regarding support services, outside reemployment needs with referrals to community-based organizations. The team may also include the Washington State Labor Council when there is union representation, or the employees may be Trade Act eligible.

The goal of Rapid Response is to perform presentations for all businesses and to reach all dislocated workers. However, in King County with the volume of businesses and workers being consistently separated or laid-off, we cannot perform presentations for everyone or effectively reach all separated workers. Thus, we created a virtual monthly open public presentation for anyone to attend, provide direct referrals for workers, offer available online content for employers and dislocated workers 24/7. Additionally, we coordinate with our local Employment Security Department to perform UI claimant outreach about layoff support and services.

Process

The Employment Security Department State Rapid Response Manager notifies the Seattle-King County Rapid Response Manager upon receipt of a WARN or other relevant request for Rapid Response services.

The Rapid Response Manager then contacts the employer to offer services. If the employer is interested in Rapid Response services, a meeting is conducted with business management to assess needs, review available services, and obtain any relevant employee information. Pre-layoff presentations are scheduled at this meeting. For businesses with fewer layoffs or who are not interested in on-site or virtual presentations, the Rapid Response Manager provides an employee packet with relevant information that can be distributed by the business to the impacted employees. Businesses who have not filed a WARN notice or have questions before filing their WARN can also be directed to the Seattle-King County Rapid Response Manager for assistance.

Integration

The local Rapid Response lead regularly coordinates its activities with local and state agencies and partners. In the case of a state-wide or multi-county Rapid Response need, we align with appropriate

partners to coordinate our response. Rapid Response team members also work with local companies with a large national presence. If a company issues a WARN notice for a lay-off impacting multiple counties, initial meetings and conference calls include Rapid Response representation from all counties. In the absence of a WARN notice and where the Seattle-King County Rapid Response manager is contacted directly by a multi-county employer, the local team lead contacts the appropriate Rapid Response contacts in other parts of the state.

Item 11: Supportive Services

As mentioned in Section II.5, the WDC works to highlight the crucial role support services, community resources and transportation plays in individual's lives – and work together with our partners to ensure historically underserved communities have full access and opportunity through coordinated regional service delivery strategy. The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County (WDC) understands that WIOA alone will not be sufficient to meet the needs of the region and works to coordinate community resources to improve outcomes for individuals by consulting with key stakeholders, including government agencies, service providers, community organizations, and residents to gather input on existing challenges and potential solutions.

To understand how best to coordinate support services across the region, the WDC will conduct a thorough analysis of community supports to understand the needs of populations with a specific focus on racial equity, demographics, economic activities, and social factors that may influence the demand for services. Based on the analysis and stakeholder input, inform a comprehensive plan for coordinating transportation and support services across the region. The WDC will explore how technology can be utilized to enhance coordination which may include using data analytics for demand forecasting or leveraging telecommunication for remote service delivery.

WIOA Supportive Services include:

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provides program guidelines for supportive services for adults and dislocated workers defined in WIOA Sections 3(59) and 134(d)(2) and (3). These include services such as transportation, childcare, dependent care, housing, and assistance with uniforms and other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, including such items as eyeglasses and protective eyewear, and NRPs needed to enable individuals to participate in WIOA Title I activities. Supportive services for youth as defined in WIOA Section 29(c)(2)(G) can additionally include assistance with educational testing, reasonable accommodations for youth with disabilities, and referrals to health care.

Based on individual assessment, supportive services may be awarded to eligible participants. Supportive service awards are intended to enable an individual to participate in programs and activities to secure and retain employment. Supportive services are provided through a variety of sources, including: WIOA supportive services, resources through DSHS, and other community partner supportive services. Supports include:

- Assistance with clothing, counseling, family/health care, food, housing, tools, union dues, driver licenses, or car repairs to help participants become or stay independent while actively engaged in job search, work activities or training

- Goods in the form of transportation assistance to help participants become or stay independent while actively engaged in job search, work activities or training.

Needs Related Payments (NRP) to eligible adults, dislocated workers, and youth 18-24 in training to enable them to participate in training.

Transportation Supportive Services

King County Metro's ORCA LIFT Reduced Fare Program authorized enrollment offices are located in and around WorkSource centers and Connection Sites. The WDC works to expand and promote the ORCA LIFT program through connection at WorkSource offices.

Item 12: Wagner-Peyser Coordination

The WDC has strategically developed practices and procedures that are designed to maximize the coordination of services for clients, regardless of the program they are connected to. The Seattle-King County WorkSource system of One-Stop Centers and Affiliates provides connection to both Wagner-Peyser and WIOA Title IB programs. Because of this co-location, an integrated service delivery (ISD) model is easier to achieve, and staff are better able to coordinate to prevent duplication of services.

Each WorkSource center and affiliate has a functional staffing plan that clearly defines the specific roles and responsibilities for staff, including supervisors and managers. This clear planning helps to implement the ISD model and create a customer experience that is customizable based on the best strategy to serve each client. These staffing plans are not static and are revised/renewed when needed. The plans align with the IFA and are documented and available for review.

The WDC will continue to lead efforts to examine various processes in our WorkSource Centers, Affiliates, and Connection Sites to continue to improve the client experience and facilitate their success. A thorough look at these processes will allow us to identify areas of best practice and gaps. A specific example of how this works for the benefit of all clients, regardless of program attachment, is the UniteUs referral system that allows staff to connect clients to needed external referrals and track that connection. Similar efficiencies may be found in other processes.

Item 13: Title II Coordination

The Seattle—King County region is served by twelve WIOA Title II providers composed of ten two-year colleges and two community-based organizations. Title II providers are supported by the Basic Education for Adults team at the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), who host statewide quarterly meetings. These meetings allow Title II providers to coordinate their goals and priorities by LWDB region with support from the SBCTC and input from colleagues from LWDB regions across the state.

The WDC has longstanding relationships with our region's Title II providers, brokered mainly by the Title II representative on our board who is drawn from the region's Title II leadership. While that board position is currently vacant, the former board member continues to broker the relationship on behalf of the WDC—bringing together leadership of the WDC with the leadership of the twelve Title II providers

and the SBCTC. Colleagues from these various organizations maintain regular contact and ensure collaboration and responsiveness, calling meetings or sharing resources as needs and opportunities arise.

To ensure collaborative review of local applications submitted under Title II, the WDC and twelve regional Title II providers meet at least once during the application period (prior to the due date). During that meeting, our various on-going and joint efforts are reviewed, including co-locating adult education and literacy activities in our one-stop center located at North Seattle Community College, our affiliate site at South Seattle College, and our various WorkSource Connection sites at thirteen Title II sites. Coordination of Title II activities with I-BEST career paths and alignment of Title II services with Title I case managers and navigators are other examples of common activities. While each provider is encouraged to craft their local plan based on the needs and opportunities of their specific community, the meeting provides a shared framework of our region's Title II goals.

Following the meeting, the WDC and providers exchange information, answer questions, and generally coordinate. Review and feedback are provided through an iterative and on-going process intended to support all parties involved prior to the submission of their application. Title II providers are also encouraged to provide input on our local plan and regional strategic plan so common aspirations can be highlighted.

Item 14: Cooperative Agreements

Partnership Plus Agreement with DVR

The WDC has a cooperative agreement (Partnership Plus) with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation to serve individuals with disabilities. The purpose of the Partnership Plus Program is to develop an agreement between DVR and the WDC under the SSA Ticket to Work program. The agreement establishes the basis for coordination of vocational rehabilitation services under the Rehabilitation Act with Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) services under the Ticket to Work program.

The Ticket to Work Partnership Plus Program:

- Builds on and strengthens the existing partnership around the provision of employment services for DVR consumers.
- Ensures best practices and ethical standards are maintained and client rights and informed choices are respected.
- Provides the Ticketholder with coordinated and seamless service transition between DVR and the EN for employment services.
- Maximizes reimbursement received by DVR under the Cost Reimbursement method and the Milestone/Outcome payment systems available to the EN under the Ticket program.

Item 15: Procurement

PROCUREMENT POLICY

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Policies and Procedures

EFFECTIVE DATE: November 5, 2021

POLICY #: A402 v.6

I. PURPOSE

This policy communicates the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County (WDC) procedures for the procurement and selection of one-stop operators and service providers

under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Final Rules, and the procurement of other goods and services. All procurements conducted by the WDC will conform to the requirements in this policy, whether through a competitive procurement or as otherwise permitted.

II. BACKGROUND

WIOA Final Rules govern the procurement and selection of one-stop operators, service providers, goods, and services. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Commonly known as the OMB Super Circular) also contains procurement requirements in eight consolidated circulars known as the Uniform Guidance document, including requirements for performance-based contracting. This policy follows the Employment Security Department (ESD) Program Policy 5404, Rev. 1, Procurement and Selection of One-Stop Operators and Service Providers.

The WDC is required to conduct open and competitive procurement processes to identify an appropriate one-stop operator and ensure that the number and quality of service providers is sufficient to meet the needs of the local workforce area it serves.

III. POLICY

The WDC and its subrecipients of WIOA/Federal funds must follow 2 CFR Part 200 on all procurement activities.

Private and philanthropic fund sources are not required to follow Federal procurement standards. However, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and WDC staff shall prepare procurement materials for the Finance & Administration Committee's approval. Projects funded by private and philanthropic fund sources will complete all necessary documentation and must follow the WDC's procurement signature procedures.

IV. GENERAL PROCUREMENT STANDARDS

All procurement processes shall be consistent with current minimum Federal and state regulations and guidance that pertain to the funds being utilized for the contract.

The WDC's Conflict of Interest Policy provides standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of employees engaged in the selection, award, and administration of contracts. No employee, officer or agent may participate in the selection, award of administration of a contract supported by a federal award if he or she has a real, perceived, or potential conflict of interest. Conflicts of interest must be disclosed in writing when known in advance or announced to the Finance &

Administration Committee in advance of discussion or vote. The party with a potential conflict of interest must recuse themselves from any further discussion and/or vote on the matter in question.

The WDC will not discriminate in the procurement and award process against any bidder because of race, color, religion, national origin, political affiliation, sexual preference, gender identity, age, or sex.

The WDC shall ensure that minority-owned businesses are provided the maximum practicable opportunity to compete for contracts.

The WDC will maintain oversight to ensure contractors perform in accordance with the terms, conditions, and specifications of their contracts.

Procurement transactions under WIOA and other federal fund source between the WDC and any of its contractors shall be conducted on a cost reimbursement basis as outlined in WIOA Sec.184(a)(3)(B) and Uniform Guidance.

The WDC, regardless of fund source, will maintain records sufficient to detail the history of all procurements. These records will include, but are not limited to:

- Rationale for the method of procurement
- Selection of contract type
- Review of independent panel, if required
- Basis for contractor selection or rejection
- Basis for contract price

The WDC will award contracts only to responsible contractors possessing the ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of a proposed procurement. Considerations include:

- Contractor integrity
- Compliance and public policy
- Record of past performance
- Financial and technical resources

All procurement transactions must be conducted in a manner providing full and open competition consistent with the standards provided in 2 CFR 200.319. To ensure objective contractor performance and eliminate unfair competitive advantage, contractors that develop or draft

specifications, requirements, statements of work, invitation for bids, or request for proposals are excluded from competing for such procurements.

V. METHODS OF PROCUREMENT

The WDC will procure goods and services using one of the following methods as outlined in OMB 2 CFR 200.320 for all WIOA and Federally funded programs.

Procurement by Micro Purchases (Under \$10,000)

Procurement by micro purchase is the acquisition of good or services, supplies or property that does not exceed \$10,000.

Purchase of ordinary supplies such as paper, pencils, tablets, and other desk items must be secured through purchasing requests and will be the responsibility of the Executive Assistant. Staff requesting special supplies shall make a request to their supervisor.

To the extent practicable, the WDC will contract equitably among qualified suppliers. Micro purchases do not require the solicitation of competitive quotations or bids if the costs are determined to be reasonable.

Procurement by Small Purchases (\$10,001 - \$ 250,000)

Small purchase procedures are those relatively simple and informal procurement methods for securing services, supplies, or other property that do not cost more than the Simplified Acquisition Threshold of \$250,000. If small purchase procedures are used, price or rate quotations must be obtained from three qualified sources, unless fewer than three sources are available.

Formal Procurement methods

As outlined in Uniform administrative Guidance 2 CFR 200.318-326, the allowable forms of competitive procurement processes are as follows:

- **Sealed Bids** are publicly solicited, and a firm fixed price contract (lump sum or unit price) is awarded to the responsible bidder. For sealed bidding to be used, the condition in 2 CFR 200.320 (c)(1) and the requirements in 2 CFR 300.320 (c)(2) must apply.
- **Competitive proposals**, used when sealed bids are not appropriate, requires advertising and includes a written method for conducting the technical evaluation. Responses must be solicited from an adequate number of qualified sources, normally with more than one source submitting an offer. The award is either fixed price or cost reimbursable.

Noncompetitive Procurement

Procurement by noncompetitive proposals is procurement through solicitation of a proposal from only one source and may be used only when one or more of the following circumstances apply:

- The item is available only from a single source;
- The public exigency or emergency for the requirement will not permit a delay resulting from competitive solicitation;
- The awarding agency authorizes noncompetitive proposals; or
- After solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate.

VI. PROCUREMENT REQUIREMENTS OF WIOA

Selecting Service Providers

The selection of service providers to carry out employment and training programs under WIOA, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or other funds shall conform to all applicable federal and state regulations and the process described in the WDC local plan. The WDC will establish and use criteria, including the ability of service providers to meet performance accountability measures based on common measures, as well as full and open competition consistent with 2 CFR parts 200 and 2900 in addition to applicable state and local procurement laws to procure eligible providers.

Procurements for new service providers or modifications of existing contracts over \$250,000 must be approved by the Finance & Administration Committee.

Selection of One-Stop Operators

Procurement of One-Stop Operators per Washington State WIOA Title I Policy 5404 Section 3(c)(i) must be designated and certified through a competitive process once every four years and following the principles set forth in the Uniform Administrative Guidance at 2 CFR 200.318-326.

Procurement by noncompetitive proposals (sole source) can be exercised as per local policies if it complies with Federal procurement regulations outlined in 2 CFR 200.320(f) and 20 CFR 678.610 and Federal guidance in TEGL 15-16.

Suspension and Debarment

Prior to making an award to a subrecipient, staff shall search and print the results from the Excluded Parties Listing System (EPLS) to verify that the individuals and/or organizations are not debarred, suspended or excluded from or ineligible for participation in Federal Assistance Programs, Website is <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/>

Petition Process

Applicants who have submitted a proposal for a particular RFP may petition the award of the contract. The process for petitioning the award is as follows:

Applicant must file via email within seven (7) calendar days from the date of notification letter from the WDC to:

Workforce Development Council of Seattle – King County
Email: Operations@seakingwdc.org
Subject Line: RFP #
Attention: Executive Office

All petitions must state the basis for the petition in clear terms and provide an alternative the petitioner finds acceptable. The basis of the petition must be a violation of state, Federal, or Local policy applicable to the contracting process.

The WDC will review and investigate all petitions. During any part of the investigation process, the WDC may require additional clarification from the petitioner. Such requests by the WDC must be responded to by the petitioner within the designated timeframe set by the WDC. In the event the petitioner fails to respond within the timeframe, the petition will be dismissed, and no further petition will be accepted relative to the identified RFP.

The WDC CEO or designee will review the petition and issue a written response that will serve as a final decision to the petitioner. A response to the petitioner will be issued no later than two weeks after the submission date (or date specified in the notice of receiving the petition)

The petition will be handled according to the WDC's Complaint Resolution Procedures. If appealed, the effective date of contract award may be delayed pending resolution of the petition.

The WDC reserves the right to renegotiate or reissue a Request for Proposals should a petition for non-award be upheld.

Conflict of Interest (see the WDC Policy A403 - Conflict of Interest)

Computer Equipment, Software, and Hardware

For purchases of computer hardware, software and other electronic devices, requests must be submitted to and approved by the WDC Director of Performance. The Director will review all requests to ensure that hardware, software, and other electronic devices meet standards set by the state and the WDC where appropriate. Once approval is made by the Director, the request will be sent to the Chief of Staff or designee for final approval.

Small items \$300 or more

All purchases of \$300 or more such as cameras, photographic equipment, data processing and video cameras, etc. shall be the responsibility of the Director of Performance. Purchases of these items must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate Program Manager and their supervisor. These items should also be received and tagged by the Property Manager. Other purchases over \$300 that are of intrinsic value such as desk, chairs, furniture, etc. shall be the responsibility of the Executive Assistant. Purchases of these items must be made by request to the Executive Assistant, reviewed and approved by the appropriate and Director, with final approval by the Chief Financial Officer, or designee.

Receipt of Goods

All goods (equipment, supplies, and small tools) must be received by the appropriate staff person responsible for procuring and route the invoice to the Fiscal Coordinator before distribution.

For ordinary supplies and desktop items, the Executive Assistant will inspect the goods against damage and to ensure the shipment is complete. In the event that staff are teleworking, these items will be shipped to the employee's workstation.

For equipment as defined by Washington State Policy, the Director of Performances will receive the equipment, inspect it for defects, and inventory the item(s) accordingly.

Invoices and other items such as packing slips for all goods will be routed to the Fiscal Coordinator.

Property Leases

All long-term property leases/rentals must be made through procurement procedures and approved by the WDC. Short-term rental agreements are those brief in duration (6 months or less) such as a facility rental for meetings or temporary space for staff. Short-term rental arrangements must follow internal processes and require approval by the CEO.

VII. REFERENCES

OMB Memo M-18-18

Public Law 113-128, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, Sections 107(g)(1), 107(d)(10), 121(d) (1-2), 134(c)(2)(C), and 123

20 CFR 678.600-635, 679.370(I), 679.410, 679.430, 680.160. 680.300 and 681.400

OMB Uniform Guidance 2 CFR 200.318-326

OMB Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards

Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 15-16

Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 23-14, Section 8

Washington State Employment Security Department WIOA Title I Policy 5404, Revision 1 - Procurement and Selection of One-Stop Operators and Service Providers

INQUIRIES

Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County

2003 Western Avenue #250 Seattle, WA 98121

Email: operations@seakingwdc.org

Website: www.seakingwdc.org



ATTACHMENT

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION AND PETITION PROCEDURE

Informal Debrief Meeting: The WDC permits applicants to request an informal debriefing meeting to seek clarification of the process or specific feedback on their application submission. Informal debrief meetings do not include review of materials unrelated to the application. This process is available to exchange information, including how to improve future bids and help improve future procurement processes.

Formal Petition Notification: This Form is to be utilized when a bidder of record, from an open procurement believes there have been procedural errors, violation of laws or regulations, or unfair or inequitable treatment in the procurement or selection process.

Only applicants from the identified procurement may file a petition. This Form must be completed and submitted to the Executive Office of the WDC within seven (7) days of the notification letter. Formal petitions are only accepted via email to the Operations@seakingwdc.org with a cc to Contracts@seakingwdc.org.

Procurement Title:	Procurement #:
Requesting Applicant Organization:	
Contact Person:	
Contact Number:	Email:

- Request for:**
- Informal Debrief Meeting
 - Formal Petition
 - Other, please describe in the box below

Formal Petition

Briefly describe the alleged violation that occurred during the RFP review or selection process:

Provide a detailed description of evidence that supports the allegations and assertions:

In support of the claim, please indicate what materials you want to review and/or to be reviewed during the investigation process.

I attest that the claims made against the WDC procurement process are based on information that is factual and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature

Date

Applicants will be contacted within 5 working days in response to the inquiry. This could include notification that the petition is not merited, request for clarification of request, providing information, access to copies or scheduling a petition conference for further discussion.

Item 16: Training Services

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Section 134, adult and dislocated worker training services are designed to assist individuals in gaining the skills and knowledge necessary to secure employment. The provision of these training services involves a coordinated approach that may include the use of contracts and individual training accounts.

Use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs):

Individual Training Accounts are personal accounts that eligible individuals can use to select and pay for approved training services. The use of ITAs allows for individualized choice and flexibility in selecting training programs. WDC allocates funds to eligible individuals through ITAs, empowering them to choose training programs that align with their career goals.

Contracted partners provide career counseling services to help individuals make informed decisions about their training options. This includes information about the labor market, demand for specific skills, and potential career pathways. Provider agencies ensure that individuals have access to comprehensive information about various training programs, including program content, duration, cost, and potential outcomes. The WDC establishes mechanisms to assess and ensure the quality of training programs available through ITAs and contracts - this involves regular evaluations, feedback loops, and monitoring of performance metrics.

ITAs may include:

- Occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment
- Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs
- Training programs operated by the private sector
- Skills upgrading and retraining
- Entrepreneurial training
- Pre-/registered apprenticeship training, tuition for training portion of an apprenticeship, supportive services, need-related payments, and work-based training options

Other Training for eligible individuals include:

- Work Based Learning such as On-the-Job Training, paid work experiences
- Incumbent Worker Training and/or customized training for employed workers
- Cohorts and other apprenticeship models

When awarding an ITA, the employment counselor must consider how to combine the ITA with other appropriate and applicable resources that may be available first, such as Pell Grants, support services, tuition assistance, and apprenticeship funds.

Consideration must also be given to labor market demand in the local area. ITAs may only be issued for occupations that are in-demand. A list of these occupations can be found in the Qualifying Occupations List published by the Employment Security Department's Labor Market Economic Analysis unit and made available on the WDC's website. To have an exception approved, evidence must exist that the occupation for which the customer is awarded an ITA is in demand and the individual will make significant wage progression to warrant the investment of resources into the training activities.

Coordinated Approach:

The WDC collaborates with training providers, educational institutions, and other stakeholders to create a seamless and coordinated system for delivering training services - establishing feedback mechanisms allows individuals to provide input on their training experiences, contributing to continuous improvement in the delivery of services. In summary, the provision of adult and dislocated worker training services under WIOA Sec. 134 involves a combination of contracts, individual training accounts, career counseling, and quality assurance measures. The goal is to empower individuals with choices, align training programs with workforce needs, and ensure accountability in the delivery of services.

Item 17: MIS

The state of Washington mandates the use of the Efforts to Outcomes (ETO case management system for the collection of client and service delivery data. ETO has been in place since 2016 and is the state's system of record. All staff working with clients in WorkSource center and affiliates must record required data entry into ETO. ETO allows recording of data across all WIOA programs as well as local and other programs. The primary intent of ETO is to create an integrated data system for use throughout the state that allows client and program service data to be consolidated and compiled for federal reporting.

Ideally, ETO would be a flexible system that local boards could use to perform all necessary case management operations. However, this is not the case. Local boards must look outside of ETO to add on needed service elements. All regional service staff will enter data into ETO as required, but the WDC, in collaboration with system partners, will continue to ensure that staff have innovative tools available to them to better serve clients. An example of this is the UniteUs referral platform. The governor has set a priority for a common referral platform, but that does not currently exist within ETO. The WDC in partnership with the Employment Security Department, contracted WIOA Title I service providers, the One Stop Operator team, and other partners have implemented the UniteUs platform to provide clients with external referrals to facilitate wrap-around service access. The WDC will continue to explore avenues for providing effective service to clients.

Work is underway at the state level to replace ETO and the WDC and its partners support this work. WDC staff serve as local board representatives on multiple working groups and on the primary design team as a Lead Development Partner (LDP). The role of LDP allows the WDC, and the region by proxy, to have input into the design, development, and functionality included in the new MIS. The WDC will advocate for the system to provide as many resources as possible to facilitate case management in a holistic way.

The replacement system is scheduled to be implemented in late 2025. The transition work to migrate staff from ETO to the new system will be a significant project requiring a team effort. The WDC will coordinate this transition locally to ensure that staff receive effective training, data entry standards are maintained, and that support for users is in place. In early 2024, the WDC added a MIS Lead position to its staffing. This position will coordinate multiple partners and resources to make the transition as smooth as possible.

The WDC will continue to provide WorkSource system staff with innovative tools and resources to augment case management system data. This includes additional options for labor market information

that presents the data in a way that is accessible, user friendly, and focuses on resolving inequities in the regional economy.

Item 18: Equity

Centering racial equity in workforce development requires a re-envisioning of how we define success and a restructuring of how the work is done. It's no longer enough to connect jobseekers to any job regardless of the nature and quality of employment. An authentic commitment to equitable economic recovery will require an explicit and intentional set of strategies to support BIPOC workers, immigrants, and refugees. As such, the WDC has successfully recruited and expanded its capabilities, with plans to continue recruiting and enhancing capacity and leadership skilled in forging effective industry and community partnerships, policy advocacy intended toward system change with racial equity analysis, and data innovation in alignment with the state's vision and strategic priorities.

A fundamental aspect guiding the redesign of workforce development is the alignment with economic development approaches. Doing so would broaden the traditional scope of workforce development from skills training and job placement to promoting family economic stability and job quality. These can then become the basis for a redefinition of measures of success to include helping families move from instability to stability, from surviving to thriving.

With substantial capacity investments in staff and infrastructure, the WDC can step into an expansive role as the regional backbone organization to lead workforce research, analysis, strategy, and policy development. The WDC will leverage its current data resources, system knowledge, connections to public workforce agencies and think tanks, trust with community-based partners, and investments by private foundations to build much-needed regional capacity for defining, measuring, and building a truly inclusive economy.

The WDC's primary goals and approach to data are to:

- Evaluate performance and impact of WDC programming and investments as aligned with labor market demand to promote economic stability and job quality.
- Centralize data as an essential tool to advance evidence-based, racially equitable outcomes.
- Test and scale innovative approaches to workforce development.

In 2022, the WDC launched Workforce Dynamics,³⁵ a data visualization tool created to inform the work of the WDC and our partners in advancing racial equity. WIOA does not require tracking of outcomes by race, resulting in critical data gaps on existing disparities within the workforce system. Workforce Dynamics challenges conventional narratives of economic prosperity, reveals systemic racial disparities by disaggregating data, and situates disparate outcomes in historical context to avoid misinterpretation or misuse of the data. The project represents the first step in a sustained commitment by the WDC to strategies that center equity as the superior growth model toward building a thriving and inclusive economy that benefits all workers, residents, and communities.³⁶

³⁵ Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County, Workforce Dynamics. <https://www.seakingwdc.org/workforce-dynamics>

³⁶ PolicyLink, "Equity is the Superior Growth Model for an All-In Nation." <https://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/Equity-Primer.pdf>

The WDC will continue to expand on this cornerstone resource, developing a suite of tools and resources that reimagine the way that labor market information has been traditionally presented. These tools will include resources that examine the regional talent pipelines and career pathways, presenting them with a focus on equity

As part of our commitment to utilize data to inform our work and decision making, the WDC commissioned [The Overlooked and Undercounted report](#). This analysis reveals the magnitude of economic insecurity in Washington State. An alarming 28 percent of working-age households struggle to meet their basic needs and the burden of economic insecurity disproportionately impacts communities of color. This data underscores the need for targeted, cross-system strategies to address income inequality, job quality, and economic inclusion.

Item 19: Board Composition

Official Name of Local Board:	Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County
Contact Name and Title:	Marie Kurose, <i>CEO</i>

Required categories	Name/Title/Organization	Nominated by
Business majority (greater than 50% of all members)		
1. Business	Gina Breukelman, Senior Manager, Global Engagement, Boeing	Boeing
2. Business	Jane Broom Davidson, Senior Director, Microsoft	CLEO/Microsoft
3. Business	Caroline Chan, VP, Human Resources, Just-Evotec Biologics	CLEOs
4. Business	Bookda Gheiser, Director-Office of Equity, Diversity &Inclusion, Port of Seattle	CLEOs
5. Business	Kate Harkess, Senior Vice President, Human Resources Director, Sellen Construction	CLEOs
6. Business	Shefali McDermott, Director of Operations, Armoire	CLEOs
7. Business	Jiquanda Nelson, CEO, Diversity Window	CLEOs
8. Business	Vaughn Taylor, Vice President, Economic Development, Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce	CLEOs
9. Business	Susan McLaughlin, Director, Behavioral Health Institute, King County	CLEOs
10. Business	Edwin Wanji, CEO and Founder, Sphere Solar Energy	CLEOs

Workforce (20% of members. Majority must be nominated by organized labor)		
1. Labor	Monty Anderson, Executive Secretary, Seattle Building and Construction	KC Labor
2. Labor	Ligaya Domingo, Racial Justice and Education Director, Service Employees International	KC Labor
3. Labor	Katie Garrow, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, MLK Labor	KC Labor
4. Labor	Lars Turner, Vice President, Offshore Pacific Ports, BridgeDeck	KC Labor
Education & Training		
1. Title II Adult Ed	<i>Pending</i>	<i>N/A</i>
2. Higher Education	<i>Pending</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Government		
1. Wagner-Peyser	Teri Holme, Acting Central Sound Regional Director, Employment Security Department	ESD
2. Vocational Rehabilitation	Nicholas Michiels, Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisor, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Social and Health Services	DVR
3. Human Services	Sharon Bias, Regional Administrator, Department of Social and Health Services	CLEOs
4. Economic Development	Vaughn Taylor, Vice President, Economic Development	CLEOs

Section 4: Performance Accountability

The WDC utilizes performance information on workforce development programs to inform local strategic planning and is used to oversee the WorkSource system and WIOA Title I. The WDC reviews program performance data throughout the strategic planning cycle to help inform strategies, challenges, and opportunities for strategic intervention. The WDC continuously reviews current data throughout the planning cycles as a mechanism for identifying challenges and areas of improvement.

Performance information plays a significant role during the procurement process as well as during contract renewals of each provider. Throughout the contract period, performance data is reviewed monthly and quarterly to provide a performance feedback loop and management tool used by the WDC and providers to identify challenges and make adjustments. Provider performance targets are calculated to ensure that regional common measures targets are met. This performance data is combined with budget status and expenditure data to review contract deliverables and modify targets, if needed.

The WDC works with WorkSource and WIOA partners to develop a reporting dashboard for the system which includes performance indicators in key outcome areas. This will give visibility of current and performance over the course of the contract period.

The consolidated performance dashboard for the WorkSource system is reviewed by the WDC to evaluate system investments. Dashboards allow the WDC to both manage current resource allocations and plan future investments that are responsive to community needs. For example, changing workforce demographics may drive the types and location of services offered. It is important to note that performance data is combined with client data to develop a richer picture of who our clients are, where they need services available, and what services are having the most impact on client success.

The WDC works with state and local leaders to ensure investments in employment, education and training programs are evidence-based and data-driven, and programs are accountable to participants and community, which includes evaluating approaches and aligning performance accountability and data systems to support program management, facilitate case management systems, and inform policy.

The WDC, in partnership with the WTECB, ESD, and all of Washington’s local workforce development boards, participates in a review of mathematical forecasting models (based on a baseline of state-level performance targets), an examination of data supporting subsequent proposed local performance targets, refinement of model inputs, and target negotiations. The end results of this process are the finalized program year performance targets for the state and local levels for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs. For program years 2022 and 2023, the specific targets for the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County are as follows:

Program	Performance Measure	PY 2022- PY 2023 Targets
WIOA Adult	Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	63.00%
WIOA Adult	Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$11,293
WIOA Adult	Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	68.00%
WIOA Adult	Credential Attainment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	63.00%
WIOA Adult	Measurable Skill Gains	16.20%
WIOA Dislocated Worker	Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	72.40%
WIOA Dislocated Worker	Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$11,862
WIOA Dislocated Worker	Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	74.10%
WIOA Dislocated Worker	Credential Attainment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	72.90%
WIOA Dislocated Worker	Measurable Skill Gains	21.30%
WIOA Youth	Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	59.00%
WIOA Youth	Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$3,946
WIOA Youth	Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	60.00%
WIOA Youth	Credential Attainment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	40.60%
WIOA Youth	Measurable Skill Gains	29.40%

The process for the next two program years is scheduled to be completed by September 2024.

Attachments

Attachment A - Sector Partnership

Information was provided in the narrative.

Attachment B - Regional Cooperative Service Delivery Agreement

Substitute agreement for Attachment B

Attachment C - Regional Economic Development Coordination Plan

Information was provided in the narrative.

Attachment D - Local Area Profile

Local One-Stop System

List all comprehensive, affiliate, and connection one-stop sites in the local area, along with the site operator. If the operator is a partnership, list all entities comprising the partnership.

Site	Type of Site (Comprehensive, Affiliate, Specialized or Connection)	Site Operator(s)
Auburn	Comprehensive	ESD
Downtown Seattle	Affiliate	YWCA
North Seattle College	Comprehensive	ESD
South Seattle College	Affiliate	South Seattle College
Rainier	Affiliate	ESD
Bellevue College, Center for Career Connections	Connection	Bellevue College, Center for Career Connections
Bellevue College, Workforce Education	Connection	Bellevue College, Workforce Education
Cascadia College	Connection	Cascadia College
Children's Home Society of Washington	Connection	Children's Home Society of Washington
Downtown Emergency Service Center	Connection	Downtown Emergency Service Center
Green River College	Connection	Green River College
Highline College	Connection	Highline College

Hopelink, Bellevue	Connection	Hopelink, Bellevue
Hopelink, Carnation	Connection	Hopelink, Carnation
Hopelink, Kirkland	Connection	Hopelink, Kirkland
Hopelink, Redmond	Connection	Hopelink, Redmond
Hopelink, Shoreline	Connection	Hopelink, Shoreline
International Rescue Committee	Connection	International Rescue Committee
King County Community Corrections Division	Connection	King County Community Corrections Division
King County Library System	Connection	King County Library System
King County Library, Auburn	Connection	King County Library, Auburn
King County Library, Covington	Connection	King County Library, Covington
King County Library, Enumclaw	Connection	King County Library, Enumclaw
King County Library, Kent	Connection	King County Library, Kent
King County Library, Renton	Connection	King County Library, Renton
Lake Washington Institute of Technology	Connection	Lake Washington Institute of Technology
Lifelong	Connection	Lifelong
Multi-Service Center	Connection	Multi-Service Center
National Asian Pacific Center on Aging	Connection	National Asian Pacific Center on Aging
Neighborhood House, Birch Creek	Connection	Neighborhood House, Birch Creek
Neighborhood House, High Point	Connection	Neighborhood House, High Point
Pioneer Human Services, Aspen Terrace	Connection	Pioneer Human Services, Aspen Terrace
Puget Sound Training Center	Connection	Puget Sound Training Center
Refugee Women's Alliance, MLK	Connection	Refugee Women's Alliance, MLK
Refugee Women's Alliance, SeaTac	Connection	Refugee Women's Alliance, SeaTac
Renton Technical College	Connection	Renton Technical College
Seattle Central College	Connection	Seattle Central College
Seattle Goodwill	Connection	Seattle Goodwill
Seattle Housing Authority, New Holly	Connection	Seattle Housing Authority, New Holly
Seattle Public Library, Ballard	Connection	Seattle Public Library, Ballard
Seattle Public Library, Central	Connection	Seattle Public Library, Central

Shoreline Community College	Connection	Shoreline Community College
Uplift Northwest	Connection	Uplift Northwest
YWCA Learning Center, Greenbridge	Connection	YWCA Learning Center, Greenbridge

Attachment E - Local Workforce Development Board Membership and Certification

Attachment F - Local Integrated Workforce Plan Assurances Instructions

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Planning Process and Public Comment	References
X	1. The local board has processes and timelines, consistent with WIOA Section 108(d), to seek input for the local plan's development. This includes providing representatives of businesses, labor organizations, education, other pivotal stakeholders, and the general public an opportunity to comment for a period not exceeding 30 days.	WIOA Sec. 108(d); 20 CFR 679.550(b)
X	2. The final local plan, and modification, is available and accessible to the public on a regular basis through electronic means and open meetings.	WIOA Sec. 107(e); 20 CFR 679.550(b)(5)
X	3. The local board has established procedures ensuring public access, including people with disabilities, to board meetings and information regarding board activities, such as board membership, meeting minutes, the appointment of one-stop operators, awarding of grants or contracts to service providers, and the local board's by-laws.	WIOA Sec. 107(e); 20 CFR 679.390 and 679.310
	Required Policies and Procedures	References
X	4. A written policy is established by the LWDB outlining potential conflicts of interest and resolutions. Entities with multiple roles under the LWDB have documented agreements with the LWDB and chief elected official (CEO), ensuring compliance with WIOA, pertinent OMB guidelines, and the State's conflict of interest policies.	WIOA Sec. 107(h); 20 CFR 679.430; WIOA Title I Policy 5405; WorkSource System Policies 1012 and 1025
X	5. The LWDB affirms that required one-stop partners actively provide access to their programs through the one-stop delivery system, contribute to its maintenance, and participate consistently with local memoranda of understanding (MOU).	WIOA Sec. 121(b); 20 CFR 678.400
X	6. The LWDB confirms the execution of MOUs with each one-stop partner detailing service provisions, costs and funding arrangements, referral methods, accessibility measures, especially for those with barriers, and periodic reviews at a minimum of every 3 years; and has provided the State with the latest version(s) of its MOU.	WIOA Sec. 121(c); 20 CFR 678.500; WorkSource System Policy 1013
X	7. The LWDB, aligned with the CEO, affirms its selection of one-stop operators through a competitive process, ensuring their eligibility, transparency, and adherence to all WIOA regulations, including conflict of interest, service coordination, and stakeholder engagement, with full operational functionality achieved by July 1, 2017.	WIOA Sec. 121(d); 20 CFR 678.600; WorkSource System Policy 5404

X	8. The LWDB has or will negotiate and reach agreement on local performance measures with the local chief elected official(s) and Governor before the start of the program year, using the required objective statistical model.	WIOA Sec. 107(d)(9) and 116(c); 20 CFR 679.370(j) and 677.210
X	9. The LWDB has procurement policies and procedures for selecting one-stop operators and awarding contracts for youth, training, and career services under WIOA Title I-B, ensuring coordination with local educational entities, budgeting, accessibility compliance, and consumer choice in line with state, local, and WIOA mandates.	WIOA Sec. 107(d)(10); 121(d) and 123; 20 CFR 679.720(l-m); 679.410; 678.600-625 and 681.400; WIOA Title I 5404
X	10. The LWDB has policies and procedures for identifying and determining the eligibility of training providers and their programs to receive WIOA Title I-B individual training accounts and to train dislocated workers receiving additional unemployment insurance benefits via the state's Training Benefits Program.	WIOA Sections 107(d)(10), 122(b)(3), and 123; 20 CFR 679.720(l-m) and 679.380; WIOA Title I Policy 5611
X	11. The LWDB has written procedures for resolving grievances and complaints alleging violations of WIOA Title I-B regulations, grants, or other agreements under WIOA and written policies or procedures for assisting customers who express interest in filing complaints at any point of service, including, at a minimum, a requirement that all partners can identify appropriate staff contacts and refer customers to those contacts. All parties will be informed of these procedures, ensuring clarity and accessibility, especially for limited-English speaking individuals.	WIOA Sec. 181(c); 20 CFR 683.600; WorkSource System Policy 1012, Rev. 2 and 1025.
X	12. The LWDB has assurances from its one-stop operator that all one-stop centers and, as applicable, affiliate sites have front-end services consistent with the state's integrated front-end service policy and their local plan.	WorkSource System Policy 1010 Revision 1
X	13. The local area has established at least one physical, comprehensive, full-service one-stop center ensuring access to specified career, training, employment services, and programs, including those from mandated one-stop partners with at least one Title I-B staff member present, access during regular business days, accommodations for alternative hours where needed, and facilitates direct technological linkages where program staff isn't physically present.	WIOA Sec. 121(e)(2)(A); 20 CFR 678.305; WorkSource System Policy 1016
X	14. The LWDB ensures all one-stop centers, and Title I-B programs or activities are accessible both physically and programmatically to individuals with disabilities in accordance with 29 CFR part 38 and WIOA sec. 188 to include accessibility of facilities, services, technology, and materials.	WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR Part 38; 20 CFR 652.8(j)
X	15. The one-stop centers undergo certification at least once every three years, based on objective criteria set by the State board in consultation with chief elected officials and local boards. This certification process assesses the centers' effectiveness, physical and programmatic accessibility, and commitment to continuous improvement, in alignment with WIOA Section 121(g) and the requisite standards related to service coordination.	WIOA Sec.121(g); 20 CFR 678.800; WorkSource System Policy 1016

X	16. The local board certifies that in all determinations, including facility locations, related to WIOA Title I-B financially assisted programs or activities, it neither employs standards nor procedures that lead to discrimination on prohibited grounds, nor does it take actions, directly or through other arrangements, that impair the objectives of the WIOA nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions. The board ensures all individuals have equitable access and benefits from one-stop services, without any form of discrimination.	WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR Part 38
X	17. The LWDB provides to employers the business services outlined in WorkSource System Policy 1014.	WorkSource System Policy 1014
X	18. The local board complies with the nondiscrimination provisions of Section 188 and assures that Methods of Administration were developed and implemented.	WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR 38; WIOA Policy 5402, Rev. 3; WorkSource System Policy 1012, Rev. 2
X	19. The local board collects and maintains data necessary to show compliance with nondiscrimination provisions of Section 188.	WIOA Section 185; 29 CFR 38; WIOA Policy 5402, Rev. 3; WorkSource System Policy 1012, Rev. 2
X	20. The LWDB complies with restrictions governing the use of federal funds for political activities, the use of the one-stop environment for political activities, and the local board complies with the applicable certification and disclosure requirements	WorkSource System Policy 1018; 2 CFR Part 225 Appendix B; 2 CFR Part 230 Appendix B; 48 CFR 31.205-22; RCW 42.52.180; TEGL 2-12; 29 CFR Part 93.100
X	21. The LWDB ensures that one-stop MSFW and business services staff, along with the Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker program partner agency, will continue to provide services to agricultural employers and MSFWs that are demand-driven and consistent with ESD's mission.	WIOA Sec. 167; MSFW Services Handbook
X	22. The LWDB follows confidentiality requirements for wage and education records as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), as amended, WIOA, and applicable Departmental regulations.	WIOA Sec. 116(i)(3) and 185(a)(4); 20 USC 1232g; 20 CFR 677.175 and 20 CFR part 603
	Administration of Funds	References
X	23. The LWDB has a written policy and procedures to competitively award grants and contracts for WIOA Title I-B activities (or an applicable federal waiver), including a process to be used to procure training services made as exceptions to the Individual Training Account process.	WIOA Sec. 108(b)(16); 20 CFR 679.560(a)(15); WIOA Title I Policy 5601 WIO Sec. 134(c)(3)(G); 20 CFR 680.300-310
X	24. The LWDB has accounting systems that follow current Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and written fiscal-controls and fund-accounting procedures and ensures such procedures are followed to insure proper disbursement and accounting of WIOA adult,	WIOA Sec. 108(b)(15), WIOA

	dislocated worker, and youth program and the Wagner-Peyser Act funds.	Title I Policy 5230; WIOA Title I Policy 5250
X	25. The LWDB ensures compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA through annual, on-site monitoring of each local sub-recipient.	WIOA Sec. 184(a)(3); 20 CFR 683.200, 683.300, and 683.400- 410; WIOA Policy 5230
X	26. The LWDB has a local allowable cost and prior approval policy that includes a process for the approval of expenditures of \$5,000 or more for equipment requested by subcontractors.	2 CR Part 200; 20 CFR 683.200; WIOA Title I Policy 5260, Rev. 4
X	27. The LWDB has a written debt collection policy and procedures that conforms with state and federal requirements and a process for maintaining a permanent record of all debt collection cases that supports the decisions made and documents the actions taken with respect to debt collection, restoration, or other debt resolution activities.	WIOA Section 184(c); 20 CFR Part 652; 20 CFR 683.410(a),683.420(a), 683.750; WIOA Title I Policy 5265
X	28. The LWDB has a written policy and procedures for ensuring management and inventory of all properties obtained using WIOA funds, including property purchased with JTPA or WIA funds and transferred to WIOA, and that comply with WIOA, Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) and, in the cases of local government, Local Government Property Acquisition policies.	WIOA Sec.184(a)(2)(A); 20 CFR 683.200 and 683.220; OMB Uniform Admin. Guidance; (GAAP); WIOA Title I Policy 5407
X	29. The LWDB will not use funds received under WIOA to assist, promote, or deter union organizing.	WIOA Sec. 181(b)(7); 20 CFR 680.830-840.
X	30. The LWDB has a written policy and procedures that ensure adequate and correct determinations of eligibility for WIOA-funded basic career services and qualifications for enrollment of adults, dislocated workers, and youth in WIOA-funded individualized career and training services, consistent with state policy on eligibility and priority of service.	20 CFR Part 680 Subparts A and B; proposed 20 CFR Part 681 Subpart A; WorkSource System Policy 1019, Rev. 8
X	31. The LWDB has a written policy and procedures for awarding Individual Training Accounts to eligible adults, dislocated workers, and youth receiving WIOA Title I-B training services, including dollar and/or duration limit(s), limits on the number of times an individual may modify an ITA, and how ITAs will be obligated and authorized.	WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G); 20 CFR 680.300-330; WIOA Title I Policy 5601, Rev. 2
X	32. The LWDB has a written policy and procedures that establish internal controls, documentation requirements, and leveraging and coordination of other community resources when providing supportive services and, as applicable, needs-related payments to eligible adult, dislocated workers, and youth enrolled in WIOA Title I-B programs.	WIOA Sec. 129(c)(2)(G) and 134(d)(2); 20 CFR 680.900-970; 20 CFR 681.570; WorkSource System Policy 1019, Rev. 8

X	<p>33. The LWDB has a written policy for priority of service at its WorkSource centers and, as applicable, affiliate sites and for local workforce providers that ensures veterans and eligible spouses are identified at the point of entry, made aware of their entitlement to priority of service, and provided information on the array of employment, training and placement services and eligibility requirements for those programs or services.</p>	<p>Jobs for Veterans Act; Veterans' Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act; 20 CFR 1010; TEGL 10-09; Veterans Program Letter 07-09; WorkSource System Policy 1009, Rev. 3</p>
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Attachment G - Local Integrated Workforce Plan Certification

Will have signed by CLEO after special full board meeting.

Attachment H - Public Comment

Every four years, in accordance with the federal Workplace Opportunity and Investment Act (WIOA), the WDC unveils a comprehensive regional workforce plan. It is intended to foster alignment among key stakeholders in the local workforce development systems. Designed to guide the WDC's roadmap, priorities, and investment plan for creating a unified, equity focused, regional workforce development system.

Duration: The local plan was made available to the public from March 5 to April 4, 2024, through the WDC's website. Following the conclusion of the comment period, we will incorporating relevant feedback as necessary, ensuring that the finalized plan is a reflection of the collective aspirations of the community.

Newsletter/E-Blast Announcement: The draft Local Plan was also made accessible through an official news release. This announcement was sent out on March 5 to a wide network of stakeholders, including labor, community-based organizations, businesses, education, and local government agencies.

Social media: Announcements were posted on WDC's social media channels with a link to WDC's website.

Stakeholder Engagement Process: The engagement process was comprehensive, incorporated various activities such as convenings, presentations, on-line survey, meetings with community-based organizations, economic development entities, labor, education, and local government. The Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEOs) also participated in parallel regional economic planning efforts to share information and drive alignment and collaboration. The strategies were informed by input received throughout the process.

Board Engagement: The board formed the Strategic Plan Steering Committee to oversee the update of the WIOA Local Plan (2024-2028) and refresh the previously adopted Regional Strategic Plan to reflect current context and current regional environments. The focus is on aligning a shared blueprint for regional workforce priorities, fostering economic prosperity, and enhancing industry engagement -all grounded in the north stars of racial equity and job quality. The committee was tasked with aligning regional workforce priorities in the comprehensive four-year plan. This involved co-convening

conversations with stakeholders, reviewing and approving policies, procedures, activities, and ensuring compliance with submission requirements.

The Board Finance & Administration Committee (FAC) & Full Board reviewed the draft Plan at its April 4th Board meeting. Based on Board input, the Plan will be presented to the full Board on April 18th for final approval on 5/15/2024.

Stakeholder Engagement	
Tri-County Refugee Planning Committee	King County; City of Seattle and Port of Seattle stakeholder convenings.
Seattle Information Technology – Technology Matching Fund Cohort Meeting Presentation (Villa Comunitaria, InterConnection; Positive Place; Ecolazos, Real Change News; Prison Scholars; Somali Family Safety Taskforce; Verizon Wireless; Friends of Little Saigon)	Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce
	AfricaTown
Beacon Business Alliance	MLK Labor
Equitable Recovery Reconciliation Alliance	Seattle Public Library
Asian Counseling and Referral Service	United Indians of All Tribes Foundation
Neighborhood House	Filipino Community of Seattle
YWCA Seattle King Snohomish	Computing for All
Pacific Associates	Communities Rise
TRAC Associates	White Center Community Development Association
South King County Cities – Economic Development Entities	Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle
Office of PortJobs	Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

Attachment I - Performance Targets

Following a review of the proportionate adjustment models based on a baseline of state-level performance targets, data supporting the proposed local performance targets, and subsequent discussions with State staffs and local area representatives, we are confirming the final performance targets for Program Year 2022 and 2023 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County as follows:

Program	Performance Measure	2022 Proposed Target	2023 Proposed Target
WIOA Adult	Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	63.00%	63.00%
WIOA Adult	Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$11,293	\$11,293
WIOA Adult	Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	68.00%	68.00%
WIOA Adult	Credential Attainment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	63.00%	63.00%
WIOA Adult	Measurable Skill Gains	16.20%	16.20%
WIOA Dislocated Worker	Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	72.40%	72.40%
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WIOA Dislocated Worker	Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	74.10%	74.10%
WIOA Dislocated Worker	Credential Attainment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	72.90%	72.90%
WIOA Dislocated Worker	Measurable Skill Gains	21.30%	21.30%
WIOA Youth	Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	59.00%	59.00%
WIOA Youth	Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$3,946	\$3,946
WIOA Youth	Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	60.00%	60.00%
WIOA Youth	Credential Attainment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	40.60%	40.60%
WIOA Youth	Measurable Skill Gains	29.40%	29.40%