2017–2019

TECHTOWN TALENT STRATEGY PLAN

Cultivating a skilled workforce throughout Clark, Cowlitz, Wahkiakum, Washington, Multnomah and Clackamas counties.

THE COLUMBIA-WILLAMETTE WORKFORCE COLLABORATIVE
working together to advance diversity, equity and inclusion
in the regional tech economy.

work. systems
The Portland Metro Workforce Development Board

workforce
SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

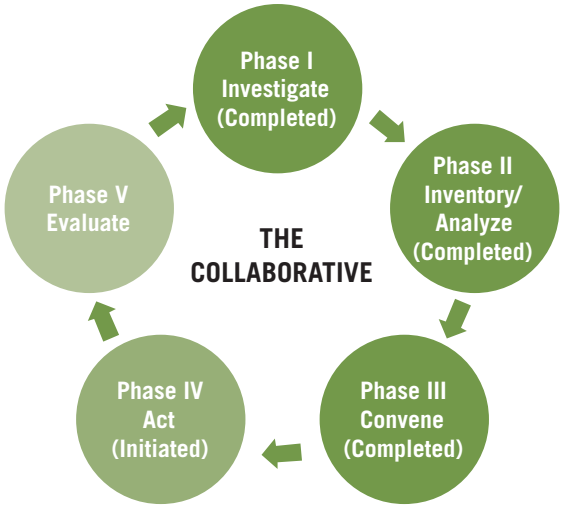
Clackamas Workforce Partnership
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

WHY A REGIONAL PLAN?

A variety of good public and private efforts are underway to improve the quality of the regional tech workforce. The challenge is these efforts often work in isolation, which diminishes the overall impact to the industry. The magnitude of the challenge requires multiple stakeholders to work together to have a meaningful and sustainable impact on the supply of well-trained workers.

COLLABORATIVE MODEL

Our proven five-step business model directly involves industry in the design, development, delivery and oversight of regional workforce programs and services. The Columbia-Willamette Workforce Collaborative is a partnership that delivers a unified approach to serve industry, support economic development and guide public workforce investments in the Portland-Southwest Washington Metropolitan area. We work with industry to identify and remove barriers that stand in the way of cultivating and sustaining a skilled workforce.



DRIVEN BY THE INDUSTRIES WE SERVE

Technology crosses nearly every sector in our economy. From health care and manufacturing to finance and retail, technology is changing the economic landscape of the region. As businesses adopt technological practices that allow them to be more productive, more efficient, and branch into new markets, workers must remain agile to adapt to changing business needs. Achieving this balance is tricky. The CWWC works with industry to pinpoint their key workforce challenges and develop strategies that will advance business opportunity, while benefiting workers and the economy of the region.

The regional tech ecosystem appears to be thriving. **Tech and tech-enabled industries are expected to grow 20% with 10,000 new jobs projected by 2026.** An influx of young, skilled, creative talent has fueled the development of new startups and innovative solutions across a broad swath of industries. A diverse array of training providers has emerged to increase the supply of skilled workers. However, on closer examination, one sees an ecosystem that is less healthy. Tech company employees and leadership are predominantly white and male. This lack of diversity chokes off new ideas and inhibits companies' ability to attract and retain top talent. Meanwhile, the reliance on in-migration of talent has limited the cultivation of local talent and contributed to lack of opportunities for local residents.

With a focus on cultivating a diverse, homegrown talent pipeline and inclusive work environment, this Talent Strategy Plan supports the prosperity of the region's companies and people.

PEOPLE

Companies are challenged to engage diverse talent given their current demographics.

ACCESS

Systemic barriers and stigmas have limited the pursuit of STEM career pathways among marginalized populations.

JOBS

Employment opportunities are limited for candidates who lack on-the-job experience.

PLAN GOALS

Under the guidance of local companies, we have developed a three-point plan to address the tech industry workforce challenges of diversity, equity of access and inclusion.

1 PEOPLE: Attract and cultivate more local, under-represented candidates in order to increase numbers and levels of diversity.

Strategies

- Target outreach to and cultivate partnerships with diverse communities and organizations.
- Create intentional opportunities for professional/skill-based organizations and diversity/affinity groups to interact, plan and implement collective ideas.
- Foster an inclusive environment through a cohort-based, diversity and inclusion training program.

2 ACCESS: Develop tools and resources to increase access to information and training to help under-represented populations pursue careers in tech.

Strategies

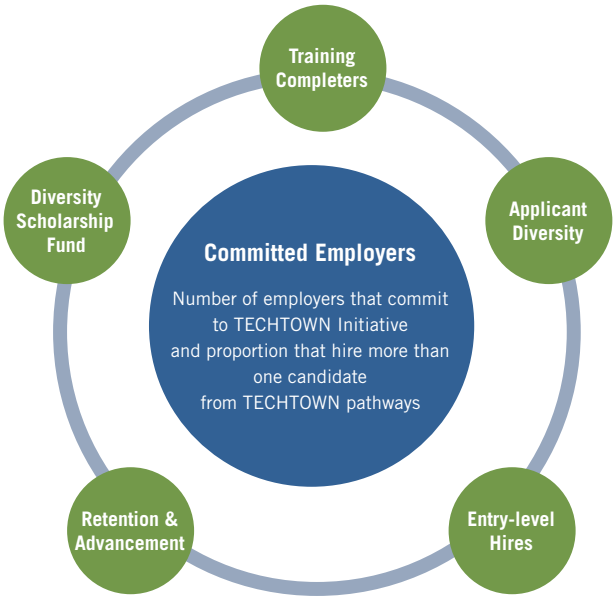
- Develop a web portal for candidates and companies to learn about and apply to training and hiring onramps.
- Create a Diversity Scholarship Fund to offset training costs for under-represented populations, including but not limited to women and people of color.
- Promote a common platform to facilitate connections between educators and industry to engage and inspire students to pursue careers in tech.
- Convene a centralized curriculum advisement group to share needed skills and better align with industry demand.

3 JOBS: Develop and share working models to increase hiring, retention and advancement of women and people of color.

Strategies

- Expand opportunities for people in the early part of their careers by broadening the number of entry-level opportunities and communicating career pathways into technical roles.
- Launch a vocational-focused internship program including a common set of processes and resources.
- Advocate for and implement apprenticeship as an alternative path to a tech occupation.
- Coach, mentor and upskill under-represented employees into more technical roles or leadership positions.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



Training Completers
Number and demographics of individuals who complete accelerated training programs for in-demand tech roles/skills.

Applicant Diversity
Number and proportion of women and people of color who apply for open positions with TECHTOWN employers.

Entry-level Hires
Number and demographics of individuals hired into entry-level, career pathway tech jobs with TECHTOWN employers.

Retention & Advancement
Percentage of new hires from under-represented populations that are still in the role or have been promoted after 12 months.

Diversity Scholarship Fund
Amount of scholarship funds awarded and proportion of investments coming from private employers.

TECHTOWN PARTNERSHIP

We would like to thank the following industry partners that collaborated on the development of this plan:

Advisicon
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Edward Jones
Epicodus
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Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce
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Jaguar-Land Rover
Jama Software
Janrain
LaunchCode
Metal Toad
Multnomah County
NWEA
Open Sesame
Oregon Computer Science Teachers Association
Oregon Employment Department
Oregon State University
Paytrace
PDX Women in Tech
Perka
Portland Public Schools
Prolifiq
Prosper Portland
Puppet
Renaissance Systems, LLC
RLA Engineering
Ruby Receptionists
Scout Savvy
ScoutFor
Simple Sprinkler
SuperGenius
Tech Academy
Technology Assoc. of Oregon
The Startup Brand
ThinkShout
Treehouse
Umpqua Bank
Uncorked Studios
Urban Airship
Young Entrepreneurs Business Week
Zapproved

COLUMBIA-WILLAMETTE WORKFORCE COLLABORATIVE (CWWC) is a partnership of three local Workforce Development Boards including Worksystems, Workforce Southwest Washington and Clackamas Workforce Partnership. Together, this group collaborates to deliver a unified approach to serve business, support economic development and guide public workforce investments in the Portland-Southwest Washington Metropolitan Area. The CWWC works with industry to cultivate and sustain a skilled workforce throughout Clark, Cowlitz, Wahkiakum, Washington, Multnomah and Clackamas counties.

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Clackamas Workforce Partnership
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Cass Parker
cparker@workforcesw.org
360.567.1076

Reese Lord
rlord@worksystems.org
503.478.7340

Bryan Fuentez
bryan.fuentez@clackamasworkforce.org
503.657.6644

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