



workforce
SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

**2024–2028 Regional/Local Workforce Plan
Southwest Washington
WDA 7: Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum Counties
DRAFT**

March 2024

Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) Contact Information
Miriam Halliday, Chief Executive Officer
mhalliday@workforcesw.org | 360.567.3183

Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW) is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Washington Relay Service: 711

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Goals	5
Approach	5
Board and Committee Composition	6
Section I: Regional Designation	7
Section II: Regional Plan Components	8
Regional Analysis of Economic Conditions	8
Regional Sector Strategies	18
Regional Service Strategies	25
Regional Economic Development Coordination	26
Transportation and Support Services Coordination	27
Regional Cost Arrangements	27
Regional Performance	27
Section III: Local Component of Plan	28
Strategic Vision and Goals	28
High-Performing Board Objectives	28
Regional Alignment and Strategy	29
Expanding Access	30
One-Stop System	33
Education Coordination	39
Career Pathways and Credentials	39
Employer Engagement	39
Rapid Response Services	41
Supportive Services	41
Cooperative Agreements	41
Procurement	42
Section IV: Performance Accountability	43
Attachments	46
Attachments A-C	46
Attachment D: Local Area Profile	47
Attachment E: Board Membership & Certification	49

Attachment F: Local Assurances	51
Attachment G: Local Certification	55
Attachment H: Public Comment Process	56
Attachment I: Performance Targets	57
Board Nomination Procedures	58
Funding Disclosures	60

Introduction

Workforce Southwest Washington's (WSW)¹ Local Plan for 2024-2028 will guide our investments in regional solutions for workforce and industry challenges. This plan incorporates the thought leadership of industry, labor, nonprofits and government agencies and is meant to be a broad vision that serves Southwest Washington and the Portland Metropolitan region.

WSW is committed to providing and using high-quality information, gathered from a variety of sources, to support regional investments in workforce development. Together with our partners in Oregon, Worksystems and Clackamas Workforce Partnership, we function as the [Columbia-Willamette Workforce Collaborative](#) (CWWC). As a collaborative, we share research reports: the [State of the Workforce Report](#) and [Opportunity Youth Report](#); sector reports and skills needs assessments for our key sectors.

Through combined efforts and leveraged funding, this information is regularly updated and presented in a way that allows the aligned regional partners in economic development, education, labor, and government to better understand and respond to the needs of their clients and communities. We work with the Washington State Employment Security Department and our local labor economist to ensure data is accurate and timely. We also invest in staff and tools to access data from multiple sources and present data in a variety of ways.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) provided significant renewed opportunities to engage with partners at many levels. At WSW, we are engaging with the "Core Five" partners (Local Workforce Board, Department of Social and Health Services, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Basic Education, and Employment Security Department) as well as the Department of Services for the Blind, Washington State University, Lower Columbia College, Clark College, K-12 school districts, city and county workforce programs, Labor and Industries, and nonprofit organizations. Our goal is to fully engage our partners in workforce development efforts to move our community to higher wages and advanced skills, making us more attractive to businesses and thereby improving the community.

WSW Board and staff engaged in a variety of processes to ensure this local plan incorporates all partners and is consistent with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 and the State of Washington's *Talent and Prosperity for All* plan. WSW hosted public events and board retreats and engaged partners in regularly scheduled board meetings. As a member of the Washington Workforce Association, members of the staff engaged in the committees that informed the *Talent and Prosperity for All* plan. We remain committed to continued education and engagement to ensure the federal and state plans are implemented effectively.

¹ The SW Washington Workforce Development Council is doing business as (dba) Workforce Southwest Washington. The new dba went into effect July 1, 2016.

Under WIOA, the primary functions of WSW as the Local Workforce Development Board are:

- Developing a Local Plan
- Regional Research & Labor Market Analysis
- Convening, Brokering, and Leveraging Resources Across Regional Investors
- Leading Employer Engagement
- Leading Career Pathways Development
- Technology
- Program Oversight
- One-Stop Service Delivery System Oversight
- Negotiation of Local Performance Accountability
- Selection of Operators and Providers
- Coordination with Education Providers
- Budget and Administration
- Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities

Goals

WSW's Local Plan will:

- **For Employers** – Develop innovative approaches to meet the talent needs of our regional targeted industries.
- **For Job Candidates** – Empower individuals to realize their full potential through meaningful education, training and work.
- **For the Workforce System** – Create a world-class opportunity engine for Southwest Washington through sustaining a public-private partnership of business, education, government and community-based partners.
- **For Financial Stability** – Invest in, evaluate and advocate for what works as entrusted stewards of public resources.

Approach – How We Will Achieve our Goals

- Establish a diverse Board membership that strategically represents industry clusters, geographies and stakeholders
- Collaborate regionally to use data to fully understand economic and labor needs
- Engage with economic development to recruit and retain local businesses
- Establish regular industry engagement and communication to ensure understanding of needs
- Utilize a real-time business tracking, customer satisfaction & reporting system
- Develop employment and training opportunities with special attention to youth and adults from populations that have historically been underrepresented and excluded from quality jobs
- Expand our support for and investment in Pre-Apprenticeship/Apprenticeship Prep, Apprenticeship, and other work-based earn-and-learn models
- Integrate services across the WIOA partners to ensure all clients have full access to system services
- Fully incorporate our CWWC sector strategies within our regional Service Delivery System

Over the next four years, WSW will use this plan to inform the Board's key functions and ensure that continued alignment with our collective goals and objectives is meeting the needs of employers and job candidates throughout SW Washington, Washington State, and the Portland Metropolitan region.

Board and Committee Composition

Our Board is comprised of 16 representatives of local industries including manufacturing, healthcare, information technology, construction, and entrepreneurship. These members are nominated by their professional associations, local business affiliates, colleagues, or the public. Further, criteria have been created to develop increased diversity for private sector representatives. Another 14 members of the Board represent higher education, economic development, labor, non-profit organizations, and government agencies. These members are nominated by their respective leadership. All members of the Board are appointed by their County Commissioner or County Councilor.

WSW also seats several standing and ad hoc committees:

- **The Executive Committee** is comprised of eight members of the Board and one representative from the Executive Board of County Commissioners.
- **The Finance Committee** includes up to five Board members and meets multiple times during the year to review and approve budgets and financial systems and review spending and audits.
- **The Business Committee** focuses on business engagement and ensuring workforce investments align with business needs. This committee also works to identify industry demands in high-growth, in-demand sectors to inform talent development through workforce investments.
- **The Economic Mobility Committee** drives program development, implementation, oversight and evaluation for youth and adult job seekers. This committee is informed by business and system partners to ensure program development aligns with industry and community needs.
- **The System Committee** focuses on aligning system partners within the one-stop service delivery system and the broader local system to ensure that workforce development efforts across the region are complementary to regional demand. This committee reinforces sector strategies and program development to support people entering high-growth, in-demand occupations. This committee is also charged with finding data and reporting solutions that will help us better understand the people, businesses and communities we serve.
- **Regional Collaborative Committee (RCC)** – As detailed in Section II, WSW is engaged in a formal regional collaboration with two contiguous workforce boards and has established a common committee to guide the work. Each of the three Workforce Boards designates two to four Board members to represent their workforce area in the collaborative work.

Section I: Regional Designation

Southwest Washington region (WDA 7) includes the counties of Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum. The fiscal agent for the area is the Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council (SWWDC), doing business as Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW).

Governor Jay Inslee declared each of the 12 workforce areas a “region” under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). However, WSW has long been engaged in formal regional planning and coordination with workforce partners in the Portland Metro Area and intends to not only continue this partnership but to include additional partners and expand our efforts to adopt our Job Quality efforts throughout Oregon and Washington.

Section II: Regional Plan Components

Regional Analysis, Data and Demand

WIOA calls for a data-driven, employer-focused approach to workforce development, planning, service delivery, implementation and continuous improvement. Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW) utilizes our extensive partnerships with local labor market analysts, economic development partners, industry panels and “real-time” labor information tools such as JobsEQ (an online access point to local labor market data) to determine the employment, wages, demographic data, and occupational projections to forecast, adjust and predict workforce and economic changes in our area. WSW uses information gained from all sources to compare target industry positions to training available in the community and to then compare those against local employer demand to determine training and outcome targets. Projected outcomes are then shared with service providers, colleges and workforce development partners to incorporate individual area variations.

Workforce Demographics

In 2021, the population in the Southwest Washington WDA was 610,324. Between 2017 and 2021, the region’s population grew at an annual average rate of 1.6% across all three service area counties. Annually, individual counties have also experienced continued population growth, with Clark growing by 1.7% in 2021, Cowlitz growing by 1.0%, and Wahkiakum growing by 1.6%.² Access to clean water, inexpensive and reliable power, a skilled workforce, great schools, hundreds of miles of hiking and bike lanes and proximity to a major international airport continue to make Southwest Washington a desirable place to live, grow and thrive for many individuals and families.

The region has a civilian labor force of 300,368, with a participation rate of 62.2%. This echoes the national labor force participation rate of 63.4% as of 2021.³ The civilian labor force is described as the number of people working or looking for work. This population has gone through substantial changes in size and demographic composition over the last several decades. In the 1970s and 1980s, many areas across the nation watched as labor force participation rates increased and more women entered the workplace. It was a time comprised of extensive baby-boomer generation participation coupled with economic opportunity. However, the labor force participation rate of women, which peaked in the late ‘90s, has been on a declining trend ever since, and it is further strained by the large number of baby boomers retiring and exiting the workforce without a significant entry of youth and young adult workers to fill existing and new positions.⁴ Many of these challenges are related to the limited adaptation of the workforce system to support and engage younger workers and employers differently to support culture shifts. Recent studies indicate current and future workforce requires more flexible work schedules where they can work any

² JobsEQ, Demographics Report, Chumura Economics 11 December 2023

³ Bureau of Labor Statistics, Databases, Tables, & Calculators by Subject, “Labor Force Statistics for the Current Population Survey,” <<http://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LNS11300000>>

⁴ Mitra Toossi, Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Labor force projections to 2022: the labor force participation rate continues to fall,” <<http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2013/article/labor-force-projections-to-2022-the-labor-force-participation-rate-continues-to-fall.htm>>

time, any place, and on any device to drive results and blaze their career paths.⁵ The strategy of bringing together the foundation of good work principles and the knowledge and wisdom of past generations, as well as the ideas and technology-minded characteristics of the emerging workforce, can assist Southwest Washington employers in developing well-rounded companies. Many current employers, however, are not seeing this diversity in their talent pool. Many factors may prevent individuals from entering the labor force, including access to training and quality jobs, knowledge and awareness of these opportunities, education levels, transportation, childcare, established familial cultures of working, citizenship, and other basic and social needs, as well as cyclical and structural changes in the economy, among other factors.

In addition to all these reasons, our country has experienced three severe economic recessions, with one in 2001, the second in 2008-2009, and the third in the 2020 COVID-19 recession. In one month, employment decreased more than it did during the first two years of the Great Recession. While the recovery was also much more rapid, COVID has permanently altered the economy by accelerating existing trends in remote work, e-commerce, and automation.

In Southwest Washington, 19.5% of individuals ages 25 to 64 have a bachelor's degree or higher, the median household income is \$79,081, and the median house value is \$359,577.⁶ The Southwest Washington area continues to be predominantly white with 82.4% of the population; but every year, we have seen an increase in a variety of cultures, ethnicity and races, particularly Hispanic or Latino populations (10.2%) and Russian populations (see chart below). At least half of the population across the region either has their high school diploma or equivalent (25.8%) and some college but no degree (25.9%). In more rural areas, we see higher high school graduation rates, with 32% of Wahkiakum's population and 30.8% of Cowlitz County residents receiving a high school diploma or its equivalent, compared to 24.7% in Clark County. Currently, 9.8% of the population or 58,939 individuals live in poverty in Southwest Washington, with the highest poverty rate in Cowlitz County at 12.8%.

Another growing population in the area is adults in transition. This includes veterans, the long-term unemployed, and individuals with disabilities. Veteran populations ages 18 to 64 are present throughout the region with approximately 22,508 individuals residing in the tri-county region. We are also beginning to see a large increase in younger veterans entering the workforce system and accessing services at both our youth programs and our American Job Centers. In addition to veterans, the percentage of individuals ages 18 to 64 experiencing a disability is at 11.7 % of the area population, with the highest percentage in Cowlitz at 17.7%, Wahkiakum at 16.8%, and Clark at 10.4% of the overall population. High levels of poverty, coupled with varying education levels and high disability populations, demand immediate strategies and plans to support and serve disadvantaged populations differently moving forward.

⁵ Worker Evolution, 1, May 2015. < <http://blog.dynamicwork.co.uk/2015/05/01/worker-evolution/> >

⁶ JobsEQ, Demographics Report, Chumura Economics 11 December, 2023

The opportunities to partner with local training providers such as community colleges, four-year institutions, and local registered and non-registered apprenticeship programs become critical in increasing the skilled labor force and the quality of the talent pool available locally to employers, driving higher median household incomes and making housing in the area more affordable to the individuals and families in our community. Additional demographics and the demographics referenced above can be seen below in the following Demographic Profile.

	Percent			Value		
	SW		USA	SW		USA
	Washington	Washington		Washington	Washington	
Demographics						
Population (ACS)	—	—	—	610,324	7,617,364	329,725,481
Male	49.7%	50.3%	49.5%	303,361	3,831,964	163,206,615
Female	50.3%	49.7%	50.5%	306,963	3,785,400	166,518,866
Median Age ²	—	—	—	39.2	37.9	38.4
Under 18 Years	23.6%	22.1%	22.5%	143,897	1,680,460	74,234,075
18 to 24 Years	7.9%	8.6%	9.2%	48,351	658,252	30,339,089
25 to 34 Years	13.1%	15.1%	13.8%	80,104	1,152,156	45,360,942
35 to 44 Years	13.2%	13.7%	12.9%	80,502	1,044,100	42,441,883
45 to 54 Years	12.9%	12.3%	12.6%	78,608	939,276	41,631,458
55 to 64 Years	13.1%	12.7%	13.0%	79,667	965,348	42,829,413
65 to 74 Years	10.3%	9.6%	9.6%	62,568	732,246	31,590,619
75 Years and Over	6.0%	5.8%	6.5%	36,627	445,526	21,298,002
Race: White	82.4%	71.7%	68.2%	502,677	5,465,011	224,789,109
Race: Black or African American	1.7%	3.9%	12.6%	10,259	293,401	41,393,012
Race: American Indian and Alaska Native	0.8%	1.2%	0.8%	4,645	90,789	2,722,661
Race: Asian	4.1%	9.0%	5.7%	24,831	682,711	18,782,924
Race: Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.6%	0.7%	0.2%	3,943	50,902	615,557
Race: Some Other Race	2.8%	5.0%	5.6%	16,959	378,956	18,382,796
Race: Two or More Races	7.7%	8.6%	7.0%	47,010	655,594	23,039,422
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	10.2%	13.2%	18.4%	62,371	1,007,881	60,806,969
Population Growth						
Population (Pop Estimates) ⁴	—	—	—	633,423	7,785,786	333,287,557
Population Annual Average Growth ⁴	1.6%	1.2%	0.6%	9,123	88,719	1,940,990
People per Square Mile	—	—	—	311.6	117.2	94.3
Economic						
Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 16 years and over)	62.2%	64.3%	63.4%	300,368	3,899,915	166,672,597
Prime-Age Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 25-54)	81.2%	82.7%	82.5%	193,956	2,561,962	106,173,534
Armed Forces Labor Force	0.1%	1.0%	0.5%	410	58,657	1,196,529
Veterans, Age 18-64	6.1%	5.9%	4.4%	22,508	277,420	8,848,937
Veterans Labor Force Participation Rate and Size, Age 18-64	79.2%	77.8%	77.0%	17,831	215,818	6,809,906

	Percent			Value		
	SW			SW		
	Washington	Washington	USA	Washington	Washington	USA
Median Household Income ²	—	—	—	\$79,081	\$82,400	\$69,021
Per Capita Income	—	—	—	\$38,062	\$43,817	\$37,638
Mean Commute Time (minutes)	—	—	—	26.6	27.7	26.8
Commute via Public Transportation	1.5%	5.2%	4.2%	4,114	190,821	6,472,373
Educational Attainment, Age 25-64						
No High School Diploma	7.8%	8.0%	10.3%	24,778	329,128	17,756,046
High School Graduate	25.8%	21.3%	25.3%	82,328	872,027	43,535,564
Some College, No Degree	25.9%	22.1%	20.1%	82,717	905,147	34,637,141
Associate degree	11.5%	10.6%	9.3%	36,566	432,879	15,944,395
Bachelor's Degree	19.5%	24.0%	22.0%	62,124	984,731	37,890,674
Postgraduate Degree	9.5%	14.1%	13.1%	30,368	576,968	22,499,876
Housing						
Total Housing Units	—	—	—	239,374	3,170,695	139,647,020
Median House Value (of owner-occupied units) ²	—	—	—	\$359,577	\$397,600	\$244,900
Homeowner Vacancy	0.6%	0.8%	1.2%	908	15,119	1,021,651
Rental Vacancy	2.5%	3.9%	5.7%	1,947	43,690	2,674,125
Renter-Occupied Housing Units (% of Occupied Units)	33.4%	36.4%	35.4%	76,531	1,066,944	43,858,831
Occupied Housing Units with No Vehicle Available (% of Occupied Units)	5.0%	6.8%	8.3%	11,344	198,606	10,349,174
Social						
Poverty Level (of all people)	9.8%	10.0%	12.6%	58,939	746,904	40,661,636
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	12.8%	11.2%	11.4%	29,266	328,707	14,105,231
Enrolled in Grade 12 (% of total population)	1.2%	1.2%	1.3%	7,539	92,670	4,425,322
Disconnected Youth ³	2.6%	2.6%	2.5%	799	9,299	432,389
Children in Single Parent Families (% of all children)	27.5%	28.7%	34.0%	37,398	460,598	23,909,672
Uninsured	6.3%	6.4%	8.8%	38,074	477,069	28,489,142
With a Disability, Age 18-64	11.7%	10.5%	10.3%	42,780	488,389	20,537,729
With a Disability, Age 18-64, Labor Force Participation Rate and Size	46.0%	47.0%	44.2%	19,667	229,444	9,068,973
Foreign Born	9.5%	14.7%	13.6%	58,191	1,116,529	44,844,808
Speak English Less Than Very Well (population 5 yrs. and over)	5.4%	7.6%	8.2%	30,782	547,621	25,535,259

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

1. American Community Survey 2017-2021, unless noted otherwise

2. Median values for certain aggregate regions (such as MSAs) may be estimated as the weighted averages of the median values from the composing counties.

3. Disconnected Youth are 16-19 year olds who are (1) not in school, (2) not high school graduates, and (3) either unemployed or not in the labor force.

4. Census Population Estimate for 2022, annual average growth rate since 2012. Post-2019 data for Connecticut counties are imputed by Chmura.

Opportunity Youth

In 2022, WSW, in partnership with the CWWC, released an updated [Opportunity Youth Report](#) to gain additional insights into our bi-state, six-county (Clackamas, Clark, Cowlitz, Multnomah, Wahkiakum, and Washington) Opportunity Youth population. As described in the report, youth in transition from traditional

K-12 education to either workforce or further education represent some of the greatest opportunities for growing and strengthening the local workforce and talent pipeline. Not all youth are fully prepared to make the transition into the workforce, and those who struggle are an important focus for local workforce development efforts.

The report finds more than 34,400 youth ages 16 to 24 in the bi-state region are not in school or working. These individuals represent 13% of youth in the region. In addition, the report outlines key demographic data and barriers facing youth and young adults today. It has assisted in informing our local workforce development boards of potential program components or service delivery items that service providers and partners could integrate to better address the needs and challenges of these populations. Knowing who may be falling through the cracks enables us to create innovative strategies to serve these young adults and reconnect them to post-secondary education and/or career-track employment.

The Opportunity Youth report continues to guide WSW's investments in the SW WA region. In September 2018, WSW opened the first and only youth employment and training center, branded as Next, in Clark County. WSW continues to invest and partner in myriad organizations in Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties to ensure the services for Opportunity Youth are accessible in a more rural environment.

Employment Trends

Major industry sectors in Clark County include Healthcare and Social Assistance (30,809 employed), Retail Trade (20,135 employed), Construction (19,165 employed), Educational Services (17,173 employed), and Manufacturing (14,741 employed). The largest sectors in Cowlitz County are Manufacturing, employing 7,247 workers, followed by Healthcare and Social Assistance (6,537 workers) and Retail Trade at 5,380. In Wahkiakum County, the largest sector is Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, employing 174 workers. The next largest sectors are Public Administration (107 workers), Utilities (105 workers) and Retail Trade (97 workers).

Employment has increased across the Southwest region overall by 2.8% in 2023 and is expected to continue to grow. As of 2023 Q2, the SW WDA had over 232,207 individuals employed in the region. The adjusted unemployment rate for the three-county region is 4.1% as of October 2023, which is .07% lower than October 2022, when the region was at 4.8%. The regional unemployment rate is higher than the national rate of 3.7%.⁷ Most sectors are continuing to add jobs, while other industries such as Manufacturing are experiencing a significant need to replace retiring workers through training methods such as an upskill and backfill approach.

Although the region is expected to increase employment opportunities, rural areas such as Wahkiakum will likely experience a declining number of jobs and a continued decrease in the number of individuals who are employed. Last year the county experienced an employment decline of 4.4%. The unemployment rate for

⁷ JobsEQ, Demographics Report, Chumura Economics 11 December, 2023

Wahkiakum County was 6.3% as of October 2023. One year earlier, in October 2022, the unemployment rate in Wahkiakum County was 6.7%.

Focusing on alternative energy, virtual employment opportunities, and additional training options outside of the region’s traditional sectors could bring additional job growth and employment opportunities to the individuals living in Wahkiakum County. There is also the opportunity for WSW to partner closely with local employers to address high turnover rates and customized training options to promote positive company culture, growth and development.

Industry Snapshot

Over the next ten years (2023 – 2033), employment in the Southwest Washington WDA is projected to expand by 35,448 jobs. The fastest growing sector in the region is expected to be Healthcare and Social Assistance with a +2.2% year-over-year rate of growth. The strongest forecast by number of jobs over this period is expected for Healthcare and Social Assistance (+9,115 jobs), Construction (+3,096), and Manufacturing (+2,176). The largest sector in the Southwest Washington WDA is Healthcare and Social Assistance, employing 37,369 workers. The next largest sectors in the region are Retail Trade (25,613 workers) and Construction (22,751). High location quotients (LQs) indicate sectors in which a region has high concentrations of employment compared to the national average. The sectors with the largest LQs in the region are Utilities (LQ = 1.72), Construction (1.60), and Manufacturing (1.15).

Employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Sectors in the Southwest Washington WDA with the highest average wages per worker are Utilities (\$128,211), Management of Companies and Enterprises (\$110,195), and Finance and Insurance (\$105,917). Regional sectors with the best job growth (or most moderate job losses) over the last five years are Construction (+5,120 jobs), Health Care and Social Assistance (+4,188), and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (+2,536).

Wage Trends and Cost of Living

The average worker in the Southwest Washington WDA earned annual wages of \$65,819 as of June 2023. Average annual wages per worker increased by 4.2% in the region over the last year. For comparison purposes, annual average wages were \$70,318 in the nation as of June 2023. Although wages are on the rise, the cost of living throughout the region remains behind what could be considered truly self-sufficient for individuals and families. The Cost of Living Index estimates the relative price levels for consumer goods and services. When applied to wages and salaries, the result is a measure of relative purchasing power. The cost of living is 18.2% higher in Southwest Washington WDA than the U.S. average.

Cost of Living			
	Annual Average Salary	Cost of Living Index (Base US)	US Purchasing Power
SW Washington WDA	\$65,819	118.2	\$55,678

Washington State	\$84,569	119.5	\$70,745
USA	\$70,318	100.0	\$70,318

Source: [JobsEQ®](#). Data as of 2023Q2. The Cost of Living Index is developed by Chmura Economics & Analytics and is updated quarterly.

According to the [National Low Income Housing Coalition](#) (NLIHC), Washington State has the fifth highest wage required to obtain housing across the nation, with an hourly wage of \$36.33 per hour to rent a two-bedroom unit. In another analysis, the NLIHC reported that in no state in the United States can a minimum-wage worker afford a one-bedroom rental unit at Fair Market Rent, working a standard 40-hour work week, without paying more than 30% of their income. In Southwest Washington, Fair Market Rent on a one-bedroom apartment is around \$1,577 a month. An individual in Washington would need to work 75 hours at our state’s 2024 minimum wage, \$16.28 an hour, to afford a one-bedroom unit. With over 35% of households renting in our area, addressing the wage gap between minimum and self-sufficient wages is critical. WSW is committed to working with local employers to grow high-wage, high-demand occupations that promote family independence and assist in decreasing the number of families experiencing poverty and homelessness in our community that directly impacts their ability to gain or maintain access to a job and stable employment.

Occupation Snapshot

The largest major occupation group in the Southwest Washington WDA is Office and Administrative Support Occupations, employing 26,033 workers. The next-largest occupation groups in the region are Sales and Related Occupations (20,841 workers) and Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (20,221). High location quotients (LQs) indicate occupation groups in which a region has high concentrations of employment compared to the national average. The major groups with the largest LQs in the region are Construction and Extraction Occupations (1.50), and Healthcare Support Occupations (1.29), and Library Occupations (1.15), and Architecture and Engineering Occupations (1.11)

Occupation groups in the Southwest Washington WDA with the highest average wages per worker are Management Occupations (\$124,100), Legal Occupations (\$115,700), and Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations (\$112,700). The unemployment rate in the region varied among the major groups from 1.9% among Healthcare Practitioners & Technical Occupations to 9.8% among Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations.

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

1. American Community Survey 2014-2018, unless noted otherwise
2. Median values for certain aggregate regions (such as MSAs) may be estimated as the weighted averages of the median values from the composing counties.
3. Disconnected Youth are 16-19 year olds who are (1) not in school, (2) not high school graduates, and (3) either unemployed or not in the labor force.
4. Census 2018, annual average growth rate since 2008

Industry Clusters

A cluster is a geographic concentration of interrelated industries or occupations. If a regional cluster has a location quotient of 1.2 or greater, the region is considered to possess a *competitive advantage* in that cluster.

The industry cluster in the Southwest Washington WDA with the highest relative concentration is Wood/Paper with a location quotient of 3.15. This cluster employs 5,786 workers in the region with an average wage of \$85,277. Employment in the Wood/Paper cluster is projected to contract in the region by about 0.23% per year over the next 10 years.

Regional Skill Demand

JobsEQ offers us some insight into the top hard skills, soft skills, and certifications requested through online job postings. In Southwest Washington, the top skills requested through online job postings are:

Hard Skills

All Industries & Occupations	CWWC Industries
1. Microsoft Office (MS Word, Outlook, & Excel)	1. Microsoft Office (MS Word, Outlook, & Excel)
2. Keyboarding/Typing	2. Nursing
3. Bi-Lingual (English/Spanish)	3. Epic Systems
4. Customer Relationship Management (CRM)	4. Keyboarding/Typing
5. Plumbing	5. Plumbing

Soft Skills:

All Industries & Occupations	CWWC Industries
1. Communication (verbal & written)	1. Communication (verbal & written)
2. Cooperative/Team Player	2. Cooperative/Team Player
3. Customer Service	3. Customer Service
4. Organization & detail oriented	4. Organization & detail oriented
5. Problem solving	5. Problem solving

Certifications

All Industries & Occupations	CWWC Industries
1. Driver's license	1. Basic Life Support (BLS)
2. Basic Life Support (BLS)	2. Registered Nurse (RN)
3. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	3. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)
4. Registered Nurse (RN)	4. Driver's License
5. Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)	5. Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)

This data only partially tells the story of skill needs in our region, as many jobs never make an online job board. Anecdotally, WSW most often hears companies express a great need for applicants and employees to possess stronger essential work skills (soft skills). In 2019 WSW and the Employment Security Dept (ESD) partnered to pilot an effort called Recruit, Train, Place. This pilot overlapped with Integrated Service Delivery efforts in the WorkSource centers and provided capacity for a Workshop team across the programs and initiatives. This Workshop team worked closely with eight employer representatives from our high-growth and in-demand sectors in the development of a shared Essential Skills curriculum. This curriculum was utilized to craft six new workshops that were employer-vetted: Introduction to Essential Skills, Work Ethic, Customer Service, Teamwork, Leadership, and Culture. Since 2019, the Essential Skills workshops are continuously assessed by

employer partners and updated as needed. New courses are added regularly to address the changing needs of businesses and workers. The CWWC also took the same approach with our Construction Industry Panel and local building trades apprenticeship programs to develop a Skilled Trades Workshop that is designed to teach apprenticeship applicants the secret sauce of exploring, applying, interviewing, and starting an apprenticeship program in construction. The three-part Skilled Trades Workshop takes place monthly and is open to the public with many referrals from our apprenticeship program partners. Our initial pilot of the program prioritized low-ranked apprentices who had yet to be called to work. Post-workshop, these applicants were able to re-interview, score higher, and were more quickly called to work to begin their apprenticeship program.

The top skills required by employers in our region, whether skills we can analyze through data or the skills we learn about from our industry engagement, point to a larger issue around job quality. WSW believes in the people we serve, and we know that given the right employment conditions, our customers can thrive at work. Our priority populations are disproportionately subject to low wages and poor working conditions. When people cannot support themselves and their families because they do not have access to a good job, it perpetuates these economic disparities. This is why WSW has chosen to focus our efforts on supporting employers who offer quality jobs, as well as supporting employers who want to make their jobs better through our [Quality Jobs Framework](#). Our community (including employers, community-based organizations, economic developers, public agencies, and workers) has agreed that the following six standards, are most important to residents of Southwest Washington:

1. Self-sufficiency wages
2. Safe working conditions/worker engagement
3. Predictable hours
4. Comprehensive benefits
5. Accessible hiring & onboarding practices
6. Training & advancement opportunities

The most critical supports identified that our customers need to obtain quality jobs are:

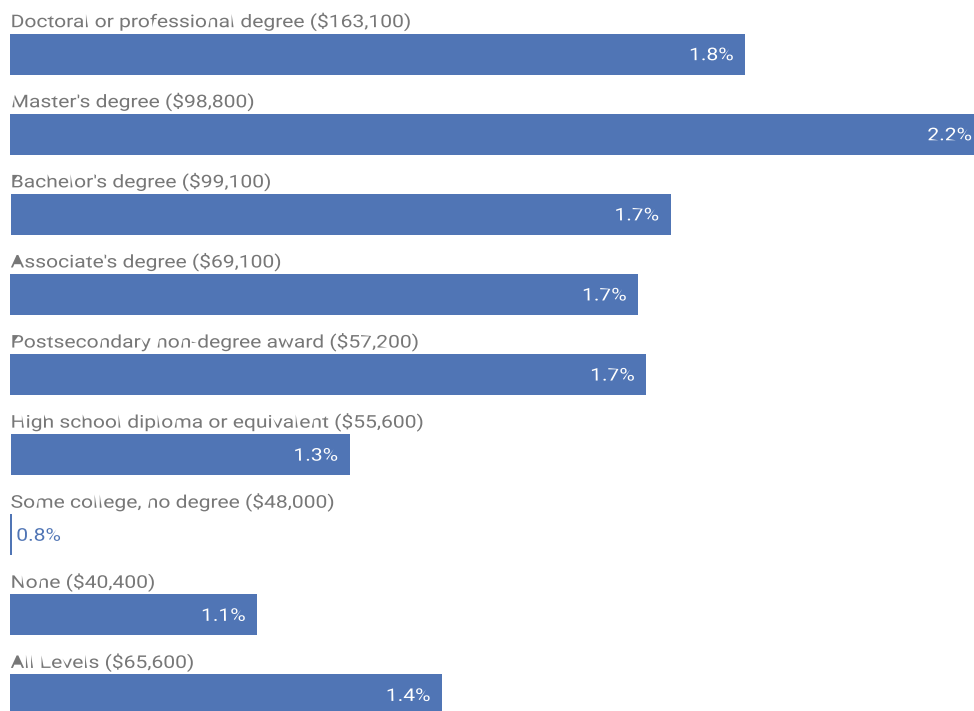
1. Self-advocacy skills; customers need more assistance to navigate and understand safety net programs (like unemployment insurance) so they can have their basic needs met and focus on their futures.
2. Basic needs like transportation, especially in rural communities, safe housing, dependable childcare, mental health support, access to technology and internet; when basic needs are not met, people are not able to take advantage of our services that will lead them to quality jobs.
3. Essential employability skills

In the coming years, WSW will continue to help employers improve job quality, and job seekers obtain the support they need to be successful in those jobs so that we can bring our two customers together.

Education Levels

Expected growth rates for occupations vary by the education and training required. While all employment in the SW WA region is projected to grow 1.4% over the next 10 years, occupations typically requiring a postgraduate degree are expected to grow 1.8% per year, those requiring a bachelor's degree are forecast to grow 1.7% per year, and occupations typically needing a two-year degree or certificate are expected to grow 1.7% per year. Identifying and mapping out career ladders and career pathway opportunities for job seekers will be critical to engaging individuals in services and in being prepared for what industry requires.

Annual Average Projected Job Growth by Education Levels



Source: JobsEQ®
Data as of 2023Q2

Dollar amounts in the table above represent average wages by education level.

Training Program Availability

The Washington State [Talent and Prosperity for All Strategic Plan](#) places a strong emphasis on upskilling and backfilling local talent to meet the requirements of high-wage occupations and to grow and provide opportunities for the future workforce. Detailed in Section III, WSW will pursue a variety of robust training strategies to identify employer-defined skills gaps, develop appropriate education and training programs with partners, and build pathways to high-skill, high-wage jobs for local workers. Specific approaches will include but not be limited to regional employer convenings, our continued partnership on the CWWC and the CWWC sector-specific subgroups, referral and streamlined connections to existing area training institutions and community colleges, learning and engaging with other WDAs across the state for best practices, accessing and promoting virtual and mobile training options, and expanding pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship partnerships and opportunities throughout the region.

WSW invests and works alongside local providers to provide the following training opportunities for job seekers: 1) On-the-Job training (OJT), 2) Incumbent Worker training, 3) Entrepreneur training, 4) Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), 5) Paid/Unpaid Work Experiences, 6) Paid/Unpaid Internships, 7) Accelerated training, 8) Customized Cohort training, 9) Transitional Job training, and 10) Pre-Apprenticeship, Apprenticeship or Non-Registered Apprenticeship, and other customized training or pilots deemed appropriate or necessary for employers. These are described in detail in Section III below. WSW partners closely with our local community colleges (Clark College and Lower Columbia College) as well as with our four-year institution (Washington State University Vancouver) and other training providers to ensure that job seekers have access to the training and education required for the positions they are pursuing and the needs of regional employers. It is our goal that by partnering closely with education and training providers, we can provide all job seekers with transferable skills that will allow them to adapt quickly to economic downturns and find readily available employment in sectors they may not have originally considered but because of their training, they are now competitive to pursue.

Regional Sector Strategies

Workforce Southwest Washington has been engaged in a bi-state, six-county workforce collaborative for more than 17 years. The [Columbia-Willamette Workforce Collaborative](#) (CWWC) was formed to address regional industry needs and has matured to include cross-team planning, common grant applications that address regional needs, and shared Board responsibility. The CWWC includes three local workforce development boards: Worksystems, representing Multnomah and Washington counties in Oregon; Clackamas Workforce Partnership (CWP), representing Clackamas County, Oregon; and Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW) representing Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum counties in Washington.

The CWWC manages its work by creating two descending levels of authority. The first level consists of the CEOs of the three workforce boards. This group is responsible for implementing their vision, and the visions of each region's board of directors, and providing oversight of the staff. The second level is made up of staff teams, which consist of one staff member from each of the three workforce boards per target industry. This team is responsible for business engagement, sector strategies, and delivering on the workforce goals as identified by industry. Currently, the CWWC has sector teams focused on advanced manufacturing with a spotlight on semiconductors, healthcare and social assistance with spotlights on behavioral healthcare, early learning/childcare, and construction with a spotlight on clean energy.

Regional strategies are critical to Southwest Washington due to our proximity to and dependence on the Portland Metro area. Approximately 54,900 SW Washington residents work in Oregon, while approximately 13,200 Oregon residents are employed in Southwest Washington.

Due to this fluid, cross-border employment environment, there is a need for streamlined workforce development activities for employers and job seekers alike. We have successfully engaged businesses in

strategic planning and projects and recognize there is more to be done, especially concerning talent development. We are in the early stages of expanding our partnership to include job seeker program-specific staff members from all three CWWC workforce boards to form a similar relationship and partnership as the CWWC's business engagement staff. The CWWC program staff will work together to ensure procurements, programs, subcontracts, and grant applications are aligned in the bi-state, six-county region.

The CWWC uses a five-phase approach to determine which industries are most critical for workforce investments: Investigate, Analyze, Convene, Act, and Evaluate. Once an industry is deemed appropriate for our efforts, we begin the Convene phase. Armed with an up-to-date workforce analysis, the CWWC holds regional industry panels to kick off the formal employer engagement process. All industry panel forums are relevant, with a clear agenda and tangible solutions offered for the business leaders in attendance. Our panels position the CWWC as conveners and the preferred vehicle for customizable solutions for current and projected workforce issues and goals.

All target sector panels are industry-driven and chaired by employers, an industry panel brings together local leaders in business, labor, education, community-based organizations, workforce development, and economic development.

Industry panels are tasked with informing the build-out of a strategic workforce plan. Panel members advise and approve strategies, goals, and time horizons for all considered initiatives. Industry panel success is measured by how it meets success metrics and goals that are created by industry in each strategic workforce plan. As an example, in our current [Healthcare Workforce Plan](#), goal 2 is to recruit healthcare professionals and one of the ways this will be achieved is by developing and expanding registered apprenticeships. Our region's major healthcare provider is now using at least four new registered apprenticeship programs for medical assistants, surgical technicians, sterile processing, and pharmacy techs.

Target sector strategic workforce plans can be found here: [Healthcare Workforce Plan](#), [Construction Workforce Plan](#). Advanced Manufacturing shifted its approach to sector strategies in 2023. The CWWC is now following the [Next Generation Sector Partnership](#) model to overcome issues and embrace opportunities in the industry in our region. This industry-led, community-supported partnership strengthens the regional economy and connects people to quality jobs. Supported by Next Gen's staff, the CWWC is committed to:

- Fostering authentic and sustained industry leadership
- Coordinating across public partners in education, workforce and economic development
- Harnessing the capacity of multiple public and private partners

Partners include industry leaders, community organizations, chambers of commerce, economic development councils, K-12, community colleges and universities. The holistic approach supports a regional manufacturing industry sustainable into the future.

The CWWC selected the following industries as priorities for our region because they offer significant economic relevance based on labor market information, our local infrastructure, and opportunity. All present

significant growth projections, above-average wages, career pathways, and location quotients greater than 1.2.

1. Advanced Manufacturing with a spotlight on Semiconductor Manufacturing
2. Construction with a spotlight on Clean Energy
3. Healthcare & Social Assistance with a spotlight on Behavioral Health & Early Childhood Education

Additionally, target occupations in these sectors were selected based on:

- Two or fewer years of postsecondary education
- Anticipated growth over the next 10 years (2022-2032)
- 200+ jobs in the region (2022)
- Occupational median wage at or above \$21 per hour

Overview of:

Advanced Manufacturing with a Spotlight on Semiconductor Manufacturing

In 2020 the manufacturing sector partnership paused to evaluate how we wanted to partner with industry. We understood how fast the industry is changing and that the pace of change presents unprecedented challenges and opportunities. These include(d) issues that no one company, or workforce board, can adequately tackle alone. We sought manufacturing industry leaders throughout the region to help us:

- Identify common opportunities faced in the manufacturing industry;
- Establish a collaborative business-focused agenda to help address them; and
- Galvanize the support of state and community agencies and organizations for our business-led agenda.

To do this work, we followed the nationally recognized model of [Next Generation Sector Partnerships](#). This model brings together executive-level business leaders from a single industry in the same region to collaborate in making their industry more competitive, confront shared issues, and learn best practices through business-to-business connections. CWWC hired Next Gen coaches to support our staff with this task.

Since early 2023, we have been working closely with the coaches to 1) outreach and develop a core-convening team made up of our regional chambers, economic development partners, higher education, and ports, 2) define partner roles and develop an invite list, and 3) assist in a professional facilitated launch of the partnership.

The launch was held on October 13, 2023, at a local manufacturer. Executives representing various manufacturing companies from across the Columbia-Willamette region engaged and were instrumental in making this effort a success and bringing issues to light that are important to this conversation. Leaders from state and community organizations (including workforce development, economic development, higher education, chambers of commerce, and others) were also present in “listen-only mode” to better understand how they can help with support and resources. They will be critical partners as we act on the priorities the industry defines.

The Next Gen Sector Strategies Model was used as the facilitation framework for the launch meeting. Businesses spent the first portion of the meeting considering what is driving opportunities and growth in manufacturing in the region. Broad themes were used to capture business insights as summarized below.

- **Key Drivers of Growth:** Business connections/partnerships; North American – multi-channel sourcing; an ecosystem of manufacturing employers making the region a recognized hub; stronger connections/partnerships/understanding with state and community agencies; supply chain smoothing; improved local business contracting; hyperscale data centers; growing industries from tax incentives; Inflation Reduction Act incentives; societal trend toward “local grown/local produced.”
- **Growing & New Markets:** Post pandemic supply chain crisis is reversing the 30-year trend of outsourcing with insourcing; international expansion – access to markets overseas; off-shore renewables; energy transition – utility capacity and reverse power flow, and, EV infrastructure (residential and commercial – chargers and battery plants); emerging UAV/UGV/UMS cluster; new products to access macroeconomic and market drivers (i.e., defense, aerospace, ER); global business sales and delivery aid.
- **New Technology & Process Improvements:** Developing and improving processes and operating systems to support growth, automation in the workplace, embracing the transition to digital and AI, making technology investments, artificial intelligence/automated processes – impacts on staffing, new sources of energy/electricity and related products.

The remainder of the meeting focused on considering the conditions needed to optimize opportunities and ensure growth for manufacturing in the region. Specifically, businesses were asked to identify what requirements need to be in place to support/unlock potential growth.

Four primary themes emerged:

- Talent: Development and Retention;
- Image: Marketing and Promotion of Manufacturing/Manufacturers in the region;
- Advocacy: Influence and Access for Manufacturing; and,
- Connection: Business to Business Network-building.

Part of the outcomes and next steps included individuals who personally signed up to commit to a next round of action planning to each topic area, with the expectation that the Partnership will pursue the priority areas where there is high interest and commitment with active collaboration. Areas with lower interest may be “parked” and revisited over time as regional and industry needs change.

Since early November, the four dedicated industry-led action teams have been diligently working on their 30-60-90-day goals. Results of the follow-up focused conversations will be synthesized into a short-term action plan. The Plan and activities will be presented and discussed at the quarterly partnership meeting in early 2024.

Construction with a Spotlight on Clean Energy

The Construction team spent much of 2020 convening employers and drafting the [Construction Workforce Plan](#) that was launched in July 2021 and will sunset in 2023. The plan focuses on bringing youth into the industry, advancing equity and diversity in the workforce, improving the retention of existing workers, and connecting career changers to jobs, training, and apprenticeship. To date, most of the work done with the plan

has been with youth, as this is where employers see the most need. According to the CWWC's most recent labor market analysis, more than one-fifth of our construction workforce is at or near retirement age and young people are not entering the construction trades at the rate needed to support this demand or to support the overall growth of the industry.

Our region is experiencing major investments in capital projects currently and for the foreseeable future. It is largely unknown at this time exactly what demand these investments will create, but over 18,000 jobs for the I-5 bridge replacement alone. WSW's CEO and Director of Business Services sit on several [Interstate Bridge Replacement Program \(IBR\)](#) advisory boards including the Equity Advisory, Community Advisory, and Community Benefits Advisory. It has been important to represent the CWWC on these advisories to ensure the local workforce is front and center and has the opportunity to access these generational wealth-building careers on the project. In mid-2023, the CWWC was contracted by the IBR to conduct a workforce analysis of our bi-state, six-county region. With the current construction plan coming to an end, the CWWC has focused efforts on the workforce analysis and its findings will be used to reconvene the construction industry in 2024 to coalesce around the analysis' recommendations and set new goals for our region.

WSW plans to enter a new partnership in early 2024 with the [Southwest Washington Contractors Association](#) to co-invest in a shared staff member to lead construction industry efforts on behalf of both organizations and our shared goals around workforce development. One of WSW's primary goals related to construction in 2024 and beyond, is to assess, select, and stand up at least one registered apprenticeship preparatory program. Southwest Washington has several apprenticeship prep programs inside of our K-12 systems, but we lack apprenticeship prep opportunities for opportunity youth and adults. Apprenticeship prep is one of the only models proven to create real inroads and access to construction trades for women and people of color and other groups who are underrepresented in the construction trades.

WSW is also in early conversations with [Dozer Day](#) to potentially form a new partnership and offer opportunities for high school students and opportunity youth to participate in a construction trades hiring event the day prior to Dozer Day. In 2023 Dozer Day attracted over 100,000 attendees to participate in hands-on construction trades and operations.

Healthcare with a Spotlight on Behavioral Health & Early Childhood Education

In our ever-evolving regional healthcare landscape, ensuring a resilient and diverse workforce is crucial. Our regional [2022-2024 Healthcare Plan](#) outlines a comprehensive approach to recruit new healthcare workforce, retain staff and cultivate an environment of diversity and inclusion. Collaborative efforts that integrate childcare benefits along with supporting the healthcare and behavioral health workforce create a holistic approach that prioritizes both the professional and personal needs of healthcare workers.

The CWWC will continue to focus on promoting healthcare career opportunities that align with quality job standards and elevating employers who offer quality jobs. By working with regional health systems, local clinics, acute care/specialty clinics, behavioral health organizations and long-term/home care communities throughout the six-county region, our work highlights opportunities in healthcare careers and upskilling those currently employed to higher wage positions.

- **Recruitment:** The long-term impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the healthcare workforce continues to have a direct impact on recruiting emerging talent and retaining staff. Instead of directly competing against other organizations, we have moved to more of a collaboration (while we still compete, let us collaborate to build the entire regional workforce).
 - Apprenticeships: As a result, employers are embracing Registered Apprenticeships to build both a talent pipeline and as a retention program. The [Health Care Apprenticeship Consortium](#) has built several new programs directly targeting in-demand pathways. For example:
 - The Medical Assistant (MA) Registered Apprenticeship program has had a direct impact on retaining staff interested in moving ahead in their career. PeaceHealth has participated in this apprenticeship for three years and in 2023, had 62 staff in the program.
 - Behavioral Health Apprenticeships: Over the past few years, there has been a significant increase in the need for behavioral health programs to ensure those in need have access to services. These programs build a pathway of skilled and diverse candidates and stabilize the behavioral health workforce through increased employee motivation and retention. Employers in Southwest Washington are now utilizing both the Behavioral Health Technician and the Substance Use Disorder Professional apprenticeships to address the increased demand for qualified healthcare professionals to ensure there are support services and access to programs for those directly impacted by mental illness and addiction.
 - Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) Training: As Washington State has updated the curriculum for CNA training, a renewed interest for employer participation has emerged. New clinical sites, internal education and training funds supporting advancing entry-level staff as well as front-line leadership opportunities to build retention.
- **Retention:** Regional and WA State workforce development agencies are working together with employers, unions, healthcare workers and emerging talent to identify what is important to them in terms of working for an employer of choice and what retention means to them.
 - Long Term Care Tool Kit
 - Legislative/policy changes that will directly impact the healthcare workforce
- **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion:** Building trust within our local communities outside the global minority takes time and effort. To move this work forward, the CWWC Healthcare team is
 - Building metrics into our funding initiatives
 - Introducing diverse community partners to our regional healthcare collaborative to identify areas where a stronger partnership could benefit employers and diverse communities

Regional Childcare Initiative: To affect a holistic change in our regional childcare landscape for the next four years, consideration must be made to address the childcare critical components: state policy changes to support the system financially which in turn supports the childcare workforce (higher wages and retention) and building affordable and attractive employer benefit packages for their staff. While this work must be done on a statewide basis, Workforce Southwest Washington will continue to:

- Build capacity in our region to identify employers who are investing in benefit packages for their staff while supporting efforts through Quality Jobs initiatives and funding
- Work with local employers and training programs to build capacity for education and other support services
- Identify regional employers and community partners and encourage them to participate in regional conversations around policy changes which will raise up our entire region
- **State Policy Changes:** State-level policy alterations play a pivotal role in bolstering the childcare workforce. The plan may advocate for:
 - Subsidies and Funding: Advocating for increased subsidies to childcare providers and financial aid to families can elevate wages for childcare workers, making the profession more attractive.
 - Regulatory Reforms: Streamlining regulations without compromising quality ensures easier entry into the field. Simplifying certification processes or offering alternative pathways could encourage more individuals to join.
 - Investment in Education: Encouraging partnerships between educational institutions and childcare centers, providing scholarships or tuition assistance for childcare-related degrees, and offering continuous professional development opportunities.
 - Support Programs: Establishing mentorship programs, support networks, and mental health resources tailored to the childcare workforce to reduce burnout and increase retention rates.
- **Workforce Development:** A regional robust workforce development plan is crucial for attracting and retaining talent in the childcare sector. This is where WSW's investments may play a part:
 - Training and Education: Offering specialized training, workshops, and certifications to enhance skills in early childhood education, behavior management, and child development.
 - Career Advancement Pathways through our Quality Jobs Initiative: Creating clear pathways for career progression, such as from assistant to lead teacher, along with opportunities for specialization in areas like special needs childcare or bilingual education.
 - Recruitment Strategies: Implementing targeted recruitment campaigns to attract a diverse pool of candidates, emphasizing the value and rewards of working in childcare.
- **Employer Benefit Packages and other direct investments:** Competitive benefit packages can significantly impact recruitment and retention rates within the childcare workforce:
 - Healthcare Benefits: Comprehensive health insurance coverage for employees and their families, including mental health support.
 - Financial Incentives: Bonuses, performance-based incentives, or retirement plans to recognize, and reward dedicated childcare professionals.
 - Work-Life Balance/Predictive Hours: Flexible work schedules, paid time off, and on-site childcare options for employees' children can improve work-life balance.

- Professional Development Support: Offering financial aid or covering costs for continuing education, workshops or conferences.
- Childcare Discounts or Subsidies: Providing discounted or subsidized childcare services for employees' children as part of their employment benefits.

Crafting and implementing such a comprehensive plan requires collaboration among policymakers, childcare providers, educational institutions, and community stakeholders. Continuous evaluation and adaptation are crucial to ensure its effectiveness in meeting the evolving needs of both the workforce and the children they care for.

Growing Occupations

In addition to our priority industries, the CWWC and WSW have identified occupations that meet our criteria for growth, wages, and education that may fall outside of our priority industries. These occupations include:

- Bookkeeping, accounting and auditing clerks
- Maintenance and repair workers, general
- Computer user support specialists
- Computer occupations, all other
- Network and Computer Systems Administrators
- Operations Research Analysts
- Computer and information research scientists

Regional Service Strategies

Workforce Southwest Washington develops, designs and implements innovative training and business solutions to further the economic growth and viability of Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties. We pride ourselves on our strong and strategic private and public partnerships including government, education, business, labor, community organizations and cross-state workforce partnerships.

WSW views workforce development on a continuum where key stakeholders and partners play a key role along each job seeker's employment journey. WSW is uniquely positioned to convene and facilitate partnerships that bring about larger systems understanding, change, and alignment on regional skill gaps, new and shifting legislation (such as WIOA), and other community-wide efforts that impact our community related to employment, quality talent, and a positive business economy where local employers can thrive.

Role of WSW in Regional Strategies:

1. Identify workforce development and workforce system issues, needs and skill gaps.
2. Convene regional partners to cultivate strategies to address the issues, needs and skill gaps of our workforce.
3. Build and grow bi-state and cross-county business solutions partnerships and streamline business solution services.
4. Pursue funding and resources to support local workforce development strategies.

5. Create a business-to-business best practice culture amongst industries where sharing resources, learning from effective programming, and implementing culture change are at the core of business operations.
6. Prioritize equitable service delivery for youth and adult job seekers, especially those from communities who have experienced longstanding inequities and exclusion.
7. Promote bi-state, bi-county youth education, awareness and career exploration opportunities.
8. Develop the regional talent pool with shared job seekers available to all employers.
9. Leverage local and state resources and funding to improve and enhance workforce system services.
10. Integrate sector strategies throughout our organization, including how we request proposals, execute contracts, align teams at our WorkSource centers, and build program strategies within adult and young adult initiatives.

Coordination with Regional Economic Development Organizations

WSW is well coordinated with local and regional economic development organizations. The CWWC is an active partner with [Greater Portland Inc.\(GPI\)](#) and holds a seat on the GPI Board of Directors. In 2022, GPI published its [Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy \(CEDS\)](#). The CEDS set goals to 1) foster upward mobility, 2) support a competitive economy, and 3) build a resilient region. The CWWC is the lead organization on goal area 1, action step D: Advance the Quality Jobs Initiative to design and develop a regional approach to help employers introduce, change and leverage business practices to make living-wage, safe, and family-supporting jobs better and foster positive outcomes for their employees, specifically consulting with and supporting impacted front-line workers. The CWWC was instrumental in developing this goal and is committed to realizing its vision.

WSW is also closely aligned with the two major economic development organizations in its three-county area: The Columbia River Economic Development Council and the Cowlitz Economic Development Council. The WSW CEO is a board member for each of these organizations and their CEOs are Workforce Development Board members. Additionally, the CEO of the Cowlitz Economic Development Council is a long-term member of WSW's Executive Committee. WSW contracts with both organizations to provide streamlined access and workforce intelligence directly to and from businesses. We have created strong teams of staff members who work together to accomplish communication, services, access, and information for business while using the economic development councils as the main contact for business recruitment, relocation and expansion projects. WSW also engages with a wide variety of city and county economic development staff as well as chambers of commerce, all of whom represent specific business interests.

Coordination of Transportation and Other Support Services

In addition to serving out-of-school youth and adults, the Southwest Washington region has seen an increase in immigrant and refugee families. Many of these populations face barriers to transportation. To better serve our community members where they are, WSW is focusing on co-locating WorkSource employment specialists at several partner organizations in Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum counties (i.e., Clark College, Lower Columbia College, Wahkiakum Family Services, Lifeline Connections, Recovery Café, and more). Employment specialists

will provide services on-site at these locations several times each week eliminating the need for clients to travel to the local WorkSource center, which can be time-consuming when using public transportation. This said, it is common for employment specialists to provide bus fare assistance to customers who have transportation needs.

Currently, there is limited coordination between WSW and C-TRAN (Clark County's public transportation agency) and WSW and RiverCities Transit (Kelso and Longview's public transportation agency). More attention should be made to align our local public transit agencies with business and worker needs to ensure there is efficient and widespread transportation access to get individuals to and from work.

Regional Cost Arrangements

The CWWC has been engaged in services to businesses and job seekers for over 17 years. Together, we have successfully competed for more than \$60 million in federal funding to provide training and education services designed to meet specific business needs. Throughout this time, the CWWC has shared costs by dividing the funding based on the federal workforce formula for our areas. When comparing our current allotments of federal workforce funding, our split is 16% for Clackamas, 26% for SW Washington, and 58% for Worksystems. Following these same percentages, we divide common grants and share the costs of mutual activities such as research, facilitation, sector forums and other common efforts as described in our signed Memorandum of Understanding. Further, the three LWDBs provide staff to work on sector strategies.

Regional Performance Negotiation and Evaluation

The CWWC regularly competes for and is awarded federal funding to provide employment and training services throughout the bi-state, six-county region. When submitting proposals, the team establishes common performance outcomes. Over time, we have successfully met our common performance requirements. However, due to the complication of working with two state performance requirements, the CWWC does not negotiate performance as a region and does not commonly report on WIOA performance measures.

Section III: Local Component of Plan

Strategic Vision and Goals

WSW is committed to demonstrating pathways to prosperity for all individuals living in our region. Employers are looking to fill their quality jobs with people possessing more advanced skills, but job seekers often struggle to know which skills are needed and how to gain them. Further, without trained workers and employers offering quality jobs, our area's economic growth is threatened. To address this challenge, WSW envisions a system which individualizes the needs of diverse job seekers and employers. It is a system built on quality service, continuous improvement, human-centered design, and customization when appropriate at the local, state and regional levels.

To accomplish this vision, WSW works with community partners to address high rates of poverty, reduce welfare dependency and enhance productivity in our community by supporting key programs and initiatives that promote economic self-sufficiency, such as [Opioid DWG](#), Career Connect WA, Economic Security for All, and more. These programs facilitate the economic independence of low-income individuals and families through intensive coaching, connection to mentors and motivated peers as well as a variety of training opportunities including financial literacy, basic life coaching, community service and education.

WSW's mission is to lead a regional workforce development system where every individual has access to high-quality employment and every business has access to a highly-skilled workforce. To do this, we focus on three goals: Business growth and recovery; Economic mobility, and Systems change. Additionally, to achieve the best results, WSW believes the following values must be incorporated in all our programs and initiatives: **Equity** – promoting justice, impartiality and fairness within processes, and the distribution of resources; **Diversity** – Collectively interweaving differences and similarities; **Inclusion** – building a multicultural workforce climate where every community member can safely share their voice and be heard; **Innovation** – Introducing new ideas, methods or products to make changes; **Collaboration** – Working jointly with our customers, community and colleagues to achieve our shared goals; **Impact** – Positively influencing and affecting our community.

High-Performing Board Objectives

Workforce Southwest Washington reorganized to meet WIOA's requirements for Board Composition. To that end, the new Board consists of 30 members: sixteen from business, six from labor and workforce organizations, three from education, including adult basic education representatives, two from economic development, and three representing government agencies.

Our private sector members, primarily C-level or individuals with significant hiring or training responsibility, represent a cross-section of businesses in our community including manufacturing, healthcare, information technology, legal services, and construction/infrastructure. We recognize that there is richness in a diverse board and we seek to maintain this diversity.

WSW was formed in 2002 in response to the changing needs of SW Washington. At that time, Workforce Southwest Washington replaced the Private Industry Council (PIC) as the local provider of workforce services. At the same time, the organization became a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation. Many of the members of the PIC remained with the organization through the transition. Four of the current Board members have been serving in their roles for more than ten years. Our Board recognizes the benefits of longevity in the membership but also that changing workforce opportunities, industries, and demographics make rotation on the board a desirable and beneficial outcome.

WSW functions with a strong committee structure. The Executive Committee serves as the Board of Directors for the nonprofit and has authority to oversee the Chief Executive Officer. The Executive Committee also considers budget, strategic planning, and policy before recommending these items to the full Board. Other standing committees include Finance, Business Growth & Development, Economic Mobility, and Governance. Over the last three years, these committees have gained in stature and responsibility and are now critical to the function of the Board.

WSW also has an Executive Board of County Commissioners (EBOCC) made up of one representative from each of the three represented counties: Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum. The EBOCC meets quarterly to review strategic accomplishments, budgets, board composition, policy changes and other pertinent subjects. While not required to attend Board meetings, the commissioners are highly engaged and frequently participate in Board activities.

Board Members serve three-year terms, which are staggered among the members to ensure stability. As new members are seated, WSW's CEO conducts an orientation including examination of the bylaws, budget, current initiatives, and processes and policies through which the organization functions. The Board meets quarterly and has an annual retreat to consider strategic planning and work planning for the year.

Regional Alignment

Under WIOA, partnership is a core component that provides the guidance and balance necessary to develop a high-functioning workforce system. Local workforce boards such as WSW were uniquely positioned to lead the efforts of convening and facilitating collaboration between partners. This includes creating a common understanding of services, agency barriers, and challenges as well as diversified interests in "true" alignment. The legislation requires that economic development, education, government, local community organizations and industry collaborate to ensure that education and training programs offered meet the needs of regional employers and that our system resources are interwoven, streamlined and effective. Many local area partners have begun conversations to redesign front-end service delivery to job seekers and business services to employers. WSW intends to sign Principle of Collaboration agreements with DSHS, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, ESD, and the ABE organizations. These agreements will guide our partnership throughout the life of this plan. A Data Sharing Agreement has been established with the Department of Social and Health Services that has created new outreach opportunities with individuals who are receiving SNAP or TANF within SW Washington.

To develop and strengthen local partnerships, WSW has created two series of ongoing convenings with key partners supporting youth and individuals experiencing poverty. The Youth Connect conversations bring together providers who support Youth within Clark County to interact around cross-referrals, collaborations, and working together to assist and protect youth and build up Clark County's future workforce. Future efforts will expand the Youth Connect conversation to Cowlitz County. The other ongoing convenings titled "Thrive partners" bring together organizations within Cowlitz and Wahkiakum to support individuals experiencing poverty and share relevant workforce-related updates.

WIOA Priority Populations

The WIOA legislation identifies 14 target populations with barriers to employment. Many of these populations face co-occurring barriers and require multiple services to reach their full potential and to become job and employment-ready. WSW works with partners to ensure current services address the significant challenges of these populations and move families out of poverty by promoting placements into living-wage jobs that will lead to self-sufficiency and a thriving local economy. The 14 populations designated in WIOA are as follows:

- Displaced homemakers
- Low-income individuals
- Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians
- Individuals with disabilities
- Older individuals
- Ex-offenders and Criminal Justice-Involved Individuals
- Homeless individuals
- Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care systems
- Individuals who are English language learners, low levels of literacy or facing substantial cultural barriers
- Eligible migrant and seasonal farm workers
- Individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under Part A of the Title IV of the Social Security Act
- Single parents (including pregnant women)
- Long-term unemployed (out of work for 27 weeks or longer)
- Veterans
- "Other Groups" designated by the Governor: Black, Asian, Compact of Free Association (COFA) nations, and Pacific Islander communities; Latinos; LGBTQ communities; and expectant persons

Expanding Access

The Southwest Washington region has seen a significant increase in the number of Hispanic, Russian, Ukrainian, and Afghan immigrant and refugee families, and unemployed youth over the last few years. Many of these populations also face barriers to transportation, limited work experience, housing instability and limited understanding of the current labor market and where jobs exist. To serve these populations, WSW has invested in two guest services staff at WorkSource who can offer support in the Resource Room. Additionally, the WorkSource WIOA Title 1-B and Special Programs providers are focusing on supporting job seekers whose first language is Russian/Ukrainian. These staff members support customers in person at the weekly Training and Employment Orientation, telephone inquiries, and in person for deskside coaching. Staff members are

connecting with local partners, media outlets, and other outreach opportunities. Staff dedicated to the resource room in the WorkSource centers and Next will be determined by available funding, but we are committed to prioritizing support for customers who come into the centers. This focus will allow for more effective triage, referrals, deskside support to address barriers that can hinder success (e.g., technology, language, and other needs).

WSW is also reducing barriers to engagement of priority populations by developing affiliated sites with partnering organizations that are serving people in these categories. By establishing affiliated sites, barriers such as transportation, cold referrals, and unknown environments can be reduced, creating a smoother experience connecting priority populations to local resources.

Opioid Use Disorder – Prioritizing outreach to justice-involved individuals and those impacted by Opioid Use Disorder is a WSW focus. We are partnering with local agencies, including the Clark County Jail and nonprofits in both Clark and Cowlitz counties, serving people in these categories. WSW is leveraging the outreach efforts of these agencies, and connecting WorkSource and Next employment specialists to provide wrap-around services to those who are ready to seek employment. Services include peer counseling, training and education support, career coaching, supportive services, work experience and on-the-job training opportunities, and more. We believe doing this is an important component to reducing recidivism, homelessness, and other detrimental impacts.

Immigrant and Refugee Populations – The immigrant and refugee population is another group in need of support and services. For example, DSHS data shows that Washington State saw 23,000 Ukrainian immigrants between January 2022 and December 2023 who also received cash, food, and/or medical assistance from DSHS. Of this number, approximately 18% were in Clark/Cowlitz/Wahkiakum counties. Many individuals from this population are on a spectrum of skill and education levels from low to higher, and many possess skills and an education level that made securing work in their former country of residence doable. However, because foreign credentials and certificates are often not recognized in the U.S., and language and other barriers exist, additional support and services are typically required to help job seekers secure and attain employment. Considering the shortage of workers, steps must be taken to include these individuals in our employment pipeline.

At-Risk Youth – WSW is working on tailored outreach and support strategies that will connect Opportunity Youth to training and employment services through partners with existing connections to these diverse populations. Multiple community partners will provide outreach to access a broad and diverse candidate pool for Next and workforce system services.

As a key component of this collaboration strategy, WSW is implementing an innovative co-location initiative to ensure greater outreach and support accessibility for Opportunity Youth. By stationing Next center staff at partner organizations' sites, WSW ensures that youth can seamlessly access WIOA Title 1 Youth programming and other collaborative services at multiple locations closest to them. WSW has also started investing in a

dedicated Outreach Specialist position at Next. This specialist plays a pivotal role in connecting youth in various communities, building bridges to access WIOA Title 1 Youth programming. Both strategies not only streamline access to resources but also cultivate a supportive network, amplifying the overall impact of our youth initiatives

In addition to strategic partnerships, co-location efforts, and dedicated outreach staff, WSW will enhance youth outreach by continuing to utilize social media platforms. These digital channels can serve as powerful tools for engaging with youth. They also allow WSW to extend its reach, providing another accessible channel for youth to stay informed about programs and opportunities.

Customers with Disabilities – WSW is committed to ensuring that universal access is available throughout the system for all persons interested in participating in programs, projects and activities contracted through WSW, including persons with disabilities. The WorkSource system in SW Washington has a wide variety of tools and accommodations designed to make all its features accessible to those with disabilities. WorkSource makes every effort to provide reasonable accommodations to all programs, policies and procedures to accommodate known physical, mental or sensory disabilities.

Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) prohibits discrimination against people who apply to, participate in, work for, or come into contact with programs and activities of the workforce development system. Section 188 prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or political affiliation or beliefs. However, new guidance expands these protections further, requiring that American Job Centers be fully accessible and offer necessary accommodations to provide job seekers with disabilities effective and meaningful participation in the use of skills training and career pathways. WSW is responsible for ensuring compliance with the U.S. Department of Labor nondiscrimination requirements of WIOA Equal Opportunity Policies in Section 188 of WIOA.

Universal Access

WorkSource staff is expected to demonstrate efforts to provide universal access by:

- Providing outreach to all populations of eligible participants
- Provide meaningful support for individuals with limited English proficiency
- Offer information about services and activities to all eligible participants and
- Provide accessibility in the physical space, by communication services, and through auxiliary aids and services.

Economic Security for All (EcSA) – Thrive

Launched in 2020 in the Highlands and South Kelso neighborhoods of Longview, WA in Cowlitz County, the goal of Thrive is to help lift individuals and their families out of poverty while providing them with support services while they do so. The program focused on the two neighborhoods based on wage and employment data. Upon seeing the effects of the pandemic in late 2020, WSW decided to expand the investment strategy and have a regional approach across all of Southwest Washington. Now, and into the future, Thrive provides a

variety of funding resources to enhance and align existing workforce programs in local workforce systems across the region. At its core, Thrive is a poverty reduction program that coordinates existing services to help low-income Washingtonians reach self-sufficiency. With an increased focus on employer engagement moving forward, WSW and other Local Workforce Development Boards across the State are also connecting job seekers to fill the quality jobs located in the region.

Access to Services

A requirement of all WSW Comprehensive, Affiliate, Specialized, and Connection sites is accessibility. A staple of accessibility is mobility and wireless connections. WSW currently utilizes an Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) for space utilization at each site. This allows for direct communication and support regarding setup and maintenance of wireless access and services in WorkSource and One-Stop locations. Currently, the Southwest Washington region has wireless internet access in all centers and spaces where customers can bring their own equipment, utilize WorkSource equipment, or utilize their mobile devices to connect. It is our goal to meet customers where they are and continue to reach out to all communities within our service area. Much of our effort will be targeted at reaching rural or remote areas for service delivery. Where wireless access is available, our workforce system can utilize online platforms such as [Career Edge](#), offering a large database of virtual training and workshops for job seekers. In addition, current One-Stop partners are providing virtual workshop options as well as in-person. WSW is also having discussions with local colleges about mobile training units that would allow training to expand beyond the walls of the college into the community to reach those who are currently underserved.

In addition, WorkSource staff are co-locating, seeking to co-locate, or enhancing partnership opportunities with various partner agencies throughout the community. The agencies include those that serve youth, immigrants and refugees, individuals recovering from substance use disorders, justice involvement, homelessness, and other needs. The purpose of co-locating is to meet folks where they are, and to minimize the undue hardship of traveling to WorkSource.

One-Stop System

All customers in Southwest Washington will have access to the following services. Services will be available to customers in both a self-serve option and/or a staff-assisted option. Access may require determination of eligibility, which is provided at our local One-Stops (WorkSource centers) and youth provider locations.

WSW's model puts the job seeker in the driver's seat and allows them the opportunity to understand all services and choose the option that will work best for them. Customers are actively engaged in service determinations, and service providers utilize the strengths that each customer brings to their employment journey. Customers are also frequently asked to review service experiences and inform how customer experiences can be improved.

Exploration Services

At the core of all WorkSource onsite services are the staff members responsible for welcoming and greeting customers. Customers are greeted right away, their needs identified, and they are then connected to relevant

and appropriate additional screening and services within the center. To increase effectiveness, staff are trained, so they can ask the right questions to ensure services delivered add value and exceed customer expectations. Our overarching goal is that wait times are minimized by responsive and knowledgeable front-end staff.

Resource room services will be available to all WorkSource job seekers. Exploration staff will serve as floaters through the resource room to provide additional assistance on resume or cover letter development as well as to offer connection to additional WorkSource services. Customers are also able to attend orientations and workshops available within the center and with core WIOA and additional partners in the community.

Career Services

After exploration services, customers may choose self-service options or they may also choose to work directly with a job coach or program specialist. If they choose additional support, they will be exposed to additional career service options. Initially, customers will receive a variety of services, including but not limited to the following:

- Determination of eligibility to receive Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker program services and additional services (beyond WIOA Basic Career Services)
- Outreach, intake and orientation to the information and other services available through the WorkSource system (including referral to and coordination of activities with other programs and services within the one-stop delivery system and serving as a WorkSource Navigator)
- Initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs
- Employment statistics information relating to local, regional and national labor market areas, including job vacancy listings, information on job skills necessary for these positions, and information relating to local in-demand occupations and the earning and skill requirements for these occupations
- Performance history and program cost of eligible providers of training services
- Job search and placement assistance, and where appropriate, career counseling
- Consumer information regarding local performance, supportive services and how to file unemployment insurance claims
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance
- Follow-up and retention services, including counseling regarding the workplace, for participants in WIOA activities who are placed in unsubsidized employment, for no fewer than 12 months after the first day of employment as appropriate
- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of skill levels and service needs, such as diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools; and in-depth interviewing and an in-depth evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals
- Development of an individual employment plan to identify employment goals, achievement objectives, and an appropriate combination of services for the customer to achieve the employment goals
- Employment guidance and counseling provided in a group setting
- Individual counseling and career planning
- Case management for participants seeking WIOA training services

- Short-term pre-vocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct, to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training
- Connection to business internships
- Job retention and wage progression services after placement
- Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance (guidance, not financial assistance unless prior approval is received by WSW)

Customers' assessments and initial intake responses will be available to all partners and will be streamlined to reduce multiple requests for the same information. Initial interviews with customers will determine their immediate needs, resource connections, barriers to employment, ability to access services, work and job history, and career interests. Additional screening will be utilized for those pursuing training through specific grants or programs to ensure eligibility is met as well as to assess if there are credits for prior learning that can be assigned. Career planning services will be available for participants, including career exploration, interest and skill assessments, and the provision of occupational and training information that informs current trends in the local job market. Partners will be utilized where possible to provide wrap-around comprehensive support and follow-up.

WorkSource employment specialists will be knowledgeable in the priority sectors and occupations to understand the various career opportunities and what is needed to pursue them. Additionally, employment specialists will have an awareness of community partners to connect job seekers to meet the needs they have outside the purview of what is offered within the workforce system. Examples of this might include housing, food, healthcare, childcare, and more.

Training Services

Training services are critical to the employment success of many customers. At WSW, training services are considered a unit or functional team that consists of a combination of staff from the WorkSource center with expertise in financial aid service navigation, individual employment plan application, and other services that serve as onramps to training. At any point, a customer may be referred to and enrolled in training services if they meet eligibility. Individuals seeking training to obtain or retain employment will receive assistance with locating and determining the best training program for them, online training and tools, individual training accounts, customized employment plans, and support services. WSW prioritizes training from providers on the Washington State Education and Training [Board's Career Bridge](#) website but can work with providers not on this list on a case-by-case basis, based on the availability of other training programs and the client's needs.

Development of a customized employment plan will be developed with all customers accessing Training Services. The plan is utilized to inform training needs and to confirm customers have the skills necessary to complete training or to pursue employment in the given career pathway. Once customers determine they are interested in training and have applied, their applications are reviewed by the scholarship committee comprised of multiple WorkSource team members from a variety of partner agencies to determine the appropriateness of the training. Training services available include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The provision of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for classroom occupational skills training, including training for non-traditional employment such as apprenticeship;
- Short-term occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment;
- On-the-job training (up to 50% reimbursement to employer of employee wages during training period);
- Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs;
- Training programs operated by the private sector in informal apprenticeship/pre-apprenticeship capacity;
- Programs including skill upgrading and retraining;
- Entrepreneurial training;
- Adult education and literacy activities provided in combination with other training services; and
- Customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training.

Triage and Follow Up Services

Once customers complete training services, the goal is to place them in employment or additional educational programs requiring advanced degrees if it aligns with their Employment and Career Pathway Plan. Once placement occurs, customers will be provided follow-up services to determine if they are currently in employment or engaged in additional educational training and if additional support services are needed.

Youth-Specific Services

WSW's Youth investments serve youth ages 16 to 24 and blend educational achievement with development, training activities, and employment opportunities. The region's youth providers partner with WorkSource service providers when overlap in service ages occurs with youth ages 18 to 24 and when transition to adult services is deemed appropriate. Services are available for predominantly Out-of-School youth. Each youth participant receiving program services receives an initial comprehensive assessment known as the Individual Service Strategy (ISS). The ISS determines the basic skills level, educational completion level, career and occupational interest and the support service needs of the participant. Services are led by the youth, and the ISS is reviewed regularly to reassess and determine career pathways goals and progress. All youth providers promote access for participants to the 14 required WIOA youth elements listed below:

- Tutoring, Study Skills Training
- Alternative Secondary School Offerings
- Paid and Unpaid Work Experiences
- Occupational Skills Training
- Education Offered Concurrently with Workforce Preparation Activities
- Leadership Development Opportunities
- Supportive Services
- Adult Mentoring
- Follow Up Services
- Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling
- Financial Literacy Education

- Entrepreneurial Skills Training
- Services that Provide Labor Market and Employment Information
- Transitional Activities to Post-Secondary Education and Training

Many services listed above can be provided on a group and individual basis as needed. Paid and unpaid work experiences are provided throughout the year on an ongoing basis. WEXs are focused on high-growth, high-demand industries where possible, and all include a training plan to ensure youth receive both academic and occupational benefits of participating in the program. Youth providers also facilitate several cohort training modules in healthcare, manufacturing, technology, and construction to foster group learning environments and promote positive teambuilding.

Several community partnerships, such as Rivermark Credit Union, have been leveraged to teach youth about financial management and self-sufficiency. Other community partners, such as the Pax Learning Center, offer expert GED and high school diploma tutoring. WSW invests in a GED testing center at Next and is looking to expand the testing center to offer other credential testing moving forward.

SummerWorks Summer Youth Employment Program

Through investing in the SummerWorks summer youth employment program, WSW aims to connect opportunity youth who reside in Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties with local businesses for paid summer jobs. At its core, the SummerWorks program is comprised of three key elements: work-readiness workshops, career exploration activities, and paid 100-hour work-based learning experiences. Through engaging young adults in these activities, and providing ongoing guidance and holistic support, SummerWorks helps cultivate lifelong work skills and competencies, encourages exploration of career pathways and post-secondary education, and provides an on-ramp to employment.

SummerWorks simplifies the hiring process for local businesses and serves as the employer of record. The program provides businesses with an on-ramp to hiring young adults and a unique opportunity to invest in their future workforce. Young adults assist with a diverse array of tasks and project-based assignments, learning about different industries and gaining key skills to become the next generation of talent for businesses in the region.

Future Leaders Project (FLP)

The Future Leaders Project (FLP) is an initiative of WSW, Columbia River Economic Development Council (CREDC), and Washington State University Vancouver (WSU Vancouver) that aims to cultivate diverse leaders for our growing community. FLP places WSU Vancouver students from communities who have experienced longstanding inequities and exclusion and first-generation college students in employer-sponsored summer internships, providing growth, networking, and professional development opportunities.

Members of the FLP Team serve as talent recruiting partners, helping simplify the recruitment process for both students and employers. Each FLP internship is at least 200 hours long and provides each intern with the opportunity to gain hands-on experience, develop social capital, and have access to leadership and

professional development opportunities they might not otherwise have the chance to participate in. Additionally, the FLP Team coordinates and promotes several networking and professional development opportunities throughout the year to foster additional connections between FLP Interns and employer partners.

Staff Training and Supports

WSW has worked in conjunction with the State of Washington Department of Vocational Rehabilitation's Department of Services for the Blind staff to ensure WorkSource staff are fully trained and supported in serving clients with known disabilities. We believe that additional partnerships under WIOA will enhance these services and trainings, making WorkSource more accessible and welcoming.

Currently, our Equal Opportunity Officer provides regularly scheduled Equal Opportunity Trainings and ensures compliance with all nondiscrimination efforts. WSW requires the WorkSource system to continuously notify customers and staff of their equal opportunity and nondiscrimination rights.

Continuous Improvement

Vital to our system's success is the ability to continually glean feedback from community partners, employers and job seekers. With the guiding principles to be flexible, proactive, efficient and accountable, WSW surveys employers and job seekers regularly to make sure training programs align with industry need and that job seekers receive the services they deserve when attending workshops, participating in job coaching, or attending a WorkSource event. As partner relationships continue to develop, WSW will actively inquire about feedback from partners and will engage them in the process to understand where improvement can occur. This could include surveys, a facilitated meeting or forum, or other means of collecting feedback to improve processes as well as the utilization of integrated survey delivery to gain feedback. Under ISD, workforce system staff are empowered and encouraged to continually improve and enrich service delivery and identify gaps and strategies to address them. Much of this process is based on the premise that staff members assist each other where possible to streamline the customer experience. Change is a critical process of any system improvement, and we are dedicated to making sure we provide mid-course corrections and adapt to new demands and challenges. WSW, along with our partners, will continue to measure and respond to customer needs and will create processes to ensure feedback is collected and addressed appropriately as we work towards the highest standard of service.

Education Coordination

Through partnerships with secondary and post-secondary programs throughout the area, WSW is engaged in curriculum development, teacher training, 21st Century skill development and work-based learning opportunities. Future efforts will be spent coordinating the enrollment process so that eligible participants interested in pursuing secondary and post-secondary programs from the Washington College Grant can do so.

Career Pathways and Credentials

WSW commits to the following to improve and promote Career Pathways:

- ***Coordinate Education with Employers:*** Assess current efforts to build career pathways and streamline outreach, recruitment and intake procedures to improve coordination and expand programs that are proven to be successful and in demand by industry. This includes engaging partners and stakeholders to analyze and better understand employer needs and projected job openings and job replacement efforts within multiple sectors.
- ***Utilize Data to Inform System Practices:*** Collect data from current workforce system and pilot projects to determine what is working and areas of improvement, to create regional indicators of the talent market. Work with employers to understand the high-performing staff benchmarks that could be built into existing and new training programs at colleges or other training institutions. This would be known to employers as the creation of a regionally vetted talent pool.
- ***Continually Improve Workforce Services:*** Analyze funding streams across the board with WIOA and non-WIOA partners to understand where inflexible funding streams are causing the most barriers to “true” partnership and an improvement of the workforce system. Utilize the information to create service flexibility to help ensure responsiveness to the needs of workers and employers equally in paying and assisting with career pathways development. This response includes the impact of the addition of new programs as well.

Employer Engagement

Employer engagement is a primary focal point of WSW. WSW’s business services team focuses almost exclusively on building strategic relationships with companies in our target industries. The WSW team is focused on long-term workforce strategy development, program design based on industry needs, and supporting employers as they work to improve job quality. The WorkSource business services team provides direct services to employers in our target industries and others. The WorkSource team helps employers recruit, screen, and refer candidates and hosts hiring events. The two teams work together to connect companies as needed. WSW sees an elevated need to promote a business-driven talent delivery system where talent development is driven by the demand and focused on industries offering the greatest opportunities for workers to earn family-sustaining wages and advance in their careers. WorkSource’s primary role in business engagement is to serve as our region’s talent development and delivery system. Talent is the greatest need of businesses in our region.

WSW’s business services team prioritizes their time and resources not only for target industry employers but also for small and micro businesses and businesses owned or operated by women and people of color. We are forming relationships with organizations like Fourth Plain Forward, NAACP of Vancouver, and the Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce. We intend to fund business engagement via organizations such as these to reach more businesses that we aim to prioritize for funding and service delivery.

WSW is prioritizing its investments to advance workforce equity, ensuring its work and the work of the public workforce system focuses on equitable support of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian and other People of Color and communities who have been excluded, and is inclusive of all companies that express and demonstrate commitment to provide quality jobs. The Quality Jobs Initiative was developed with belief in the value of work

and the shared benefits afforded to workers, businesses, and our communities through good, high-quality jobs. Through partnership and intentionality, we can increase the number of quality jobs and improve the regional economy for all. This is a business imperative. Good, high-quality jobs —ones with competitive wages and benefits, predictable hours, necessary training, and opportunities for advancement— are good for business. WSW will invest in training with companies that share its commitment to making local jobs better for people. Our goals for training for incumbent workers are:

1. Companies offer clear pathways to promotion/advancement for all workers
2. Employees receive paid training and professional development support for individual growth within their job
3. Management deploys tools and resources to manage, mentor and evaluate their employees effectively

In addition to the usual requirements employers must meet to access incumbent worker training dollars, we also require:

- At least 20% of incumbent trainees at each company must be from populations who have been excluded from quality jobs such as Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), immigrants, LGBTQ+, women, veterans, and people with disabilities.
- Occupations to receive training will pay at least the Washington State Minimum Wage and include a comprehensive benefits package that will include, at a minimum, healthcare and paid time off (above and beyond Washington’s required sick and family leave).
- Training will result in a pay increase to or above the MIT Living Wage Calculator for a family of one in the county where the employer is located.

Additionally, WSW’s On-the-Job Training (OJT) dollars are also reserved for employers who are committed to increasing a trainee's wages to or above the MIT Living Wage Calculator for a family of one in the county where the employer is located by the end of the training period, and they must also offer at a minimum, healthcare and paid time off (above and beyond Washington’s required sick and family leave).

In the coming years, WSW plans to continue iterating these requirements to continue to incentivize local employers to implement additional job quality improvements.

Rapid Response

Rapid Response is a pro-active, business-focused, and flexible strategy designed for two major purposes. First, to help growing companies access the resources they need to continue to be successful, including helping meet existing and future talent needs. Second, to respond to announcements of layoffs and plant closings by quickly coordinating services and providing immediate aid to companies and their affected workers to ensure rapid reemployment and to minimize the negative impacts of the layoff. In the Southwest Washington region, this includes, but is not limited to, onsite contact with employers, representatives of the affected workers (including labor organizations), and the local community; providing information on and facilitating access to appropriate short and long-term resources for finding new jobs and/or upgrading skills; assistance with applications for Unemployment Insurance; and job search workshops and other needed

group intervention. WSW and our WorkSource partners customize these services to meet the needs of both the employer and employees regularly. WSW also works with our Regional Collaborative partners on the CWWC to address large employer layoffs and to disperse employment connections throughout the region when appropriate. Each layoff is unique, and services are highly customizable, but regardless of the uniqueness, WSW's focus is rapid re-employment. Making connections to related employment opportunities with comparable (or better) wages is our priority.

Supportive Services

Supportive Services help customers overcome employment barriers. For many customers, success in training programs, education and employment is directly tied to their ability to secure and maintain essential basic needs. These basic needs are filled in the workforce system by the utilization of supportive service dollars. Examples include assistance with local transportation costs, childcare and dependent care costs, housing food. [See WSW Supportive Service Policy](#) for more information. Incentives are resources that can be utilized to support the retention and completion of customers within our local programs. Incentives support customers directly in their ability to secure and maintain essential basic needs while reducing potential opportunity costs. WSW also recognizes that one agency or provider alone cannot eliminate all barriers for the clients we serve. To fully address the needs in our communities to put as many people back to work as possible, supportive services will need to be a collaborative approach pulling from many different resources and funds available at each agency to truly address the barriers those living in our community face.

Cooperative Agreements

Southwest Washington WorkSource centers utilize a modified integrated service delivery model. The expectation is that every customer will be served by one or more programs (depending on eligibility when applicable) and that all needs and barriers to employment will be addressed using all accessible means and the alignment/braiding of resources will be used to seamlessly address the training and employment needs of system customers. Further, service providers work closely with other service providers located in and out of the WorkSource and Next centers. Examples of services gained because of these partnerships include connection to higher education, DVR, GED preparation, housing support, technology skills development, and more.

In 2023, WSW funded two triage providers to serve in the Resource Room at WorkSource in Cowlitz and Clark counties. These providers serve as the first-line service providers for customers when they initially come into the Center. The triage staff identifies what the customers' initial needs are, and directs them to the appropriate staff members, opportunities, and providers to be served. Further, in the spirit of incorporating a modified ISD model, co-enrollment occurs for all Wagner-Peyser and WIOA Adult customers when there is an identifiable benefit to the customer. All internal WorkSource partners use the state MIS to streamline intake and case management. The state is in the process of developing a new MIS, it will become simpler to provide wrap-around services and case management. Hopefully, as part of this improvement, additional data-sharing agreements will be obtained from required partners.

WSW and local partners have agreed to work collaboratively at WorkSource centers, affiliate sites and connection sites in Southwest Washington. Currently, partners are developing internal processes for coordinated outreach to go outside the center to where people needing quality employment are. The goal is to limit duplication, increase efficiency and effectiveness, incorporate strategic planning and efforts for outreach, and maximize results. With multiple partners working together on outreach, more community members can be reached.

Procurement

WSW's [Procurement Policy #1003](#) is aligned with WIOA requirements. The policy guides our competitive procurement and bidding processes. Specifically, the policy addresses federal state laws and regulations, WSW's local authority to award, withdraw or assign contracts, and WSW's commitment to maintain a consistent, fair and supportive procurement process for all bidders. All bids for the One Stop Operator, Adult, Dislocated, and Youth services are reviewed internally to make sure they meet the minimum requirements of submission. Bids meeting minimum requirements are then reviewed by a subcommittee comprised of members of the WSW Board, staff, and community. Applications are scored individually and decided upon by the group for recommendation to the Executive Committee and then to the full board. WSW's methods of procurement for specific goods, not services, vary by the size, type and cost of purchase. At a minimum, all purchases will be reviewed internally and, depending on the scope of cost/price, by the Executive Committee or the board for cost reasonableness.

Section IV: Performance Accountability

Performance Accountability Plan

As one of our guiding principles, accountability is something WSW weighs heavily. WSW has a history of maintaining high performance. Through providing high standards of service, our WorkSource centers and Next locations exceed positive placements and outcomes for the job seekers we serve. Our overarching systemic goal is individuals returning to work and employers finding the right workers to grow their businesses. WSW works with our regional providers to make sure that all service components are aligned with federal, state and local performance requirements. WSW targets for common measures are redefined annually with the Department of Labor, the Workforce Education and Training Coordinating Board, and the WSW Board. All WSW providers are held accountable for achieving all measures and targets. The current WIOA performance indicators are listed below. In addition to these indicators, WSW benefits from customer-experience data, demographic data, partner data, employer data and key economic growth and trend data that speak to the challenges, gaps and opportunities throughout the region.

PERFORMANCE METRICS – ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER	
2nd Quarter Employment <i>“Unsubsidized Employment”</i>	Percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter (Q2) after exit from the program
4th Quarter Employment <i>“Employment Retention Rate”</i>	Percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter (Q4) after exit from the program
Median Earnings	Median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter (Q2) after exit from the program.
Recognized Post-Secondary Credential Rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants obtaining a post-secondary credential during participation or within 1 year of exit; <u>OR</u> • Obtaining a secondary school diploma/equivalent during participation or within 1 year of exit from the program <u>AND</u> is enrolled in an education or training program leading to a recognized post-secondary credential that will be earned within 1 year after exit from the program.
Measurable Skills Gained	Percentage of program participants who, during the program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized post-secondary credential or employment and who achieve measurable skill gains toward such as a credential or employment. Measured in real time.
PERFORMANCE METRICS – YOUTH	

Placed in Employment/Education/Training (Q2)	Percentage of program participants who are placed in employment, education or training during the second quarter (Q2) after exit from the program
Placed in Employment/Education/Training (Q4)	Percentage of program participants who are in placed in employment, education or training during the fourth quarter (Q4) after exit from the program
Median Earnings	Median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter (Q2) after exit from the program.
Recognized Post-Secondary Credential Rate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants obtaining a post-secondary credential during participation or within 1 year of exit; <u>OR</u> 2. Obtaining a secondary school diploma/equivalent during participation or within 1 year of exit from the program <u>AND</u> is enrolled in an education or training program leading to a recognized post-secondary credential that will be earned within 1 year after exit from the program.
Measurable Skills Gained	Percentage of program participants, who during the program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized post-secondary credential or employment and who achieve measurable skill gains toward such as a credential or employment. Measured in real time.

The WIOA metrics above will be utilized by all six core WIOA programs. Other key partners from the workforce system will not be subject to utilizing the WIOA performance metrics. However, multiple agencies and providers may find the metrics to be helpful determinants in their programming efforts. Capitalizing on co-enrollment of services between WIOA providers and non-WIOA providers can help to paint a more robust picture of customer experience and outcomes. WSW will encourage and develop data sharing agreements where possible with local and state partners to maximize the ability to tell the “workforce story” in the local region and provide shared systemic metrics where possible.

WSW reviews performance targets and actuals with providers on a monthly and quarterly basis during program meetings. Furthermore, dashboards are created to provide a snapshot at a given time to monitor progress towards targets and reveal trends if correction is needed. In addition, the Executive Committee and the Finance Committee of the WSW Board of Directors review quarterly performance metrics and provide system level guidance and oversight to direct improvements and provide systems connections.

Performance Accountability Goals

There are four overarching themes to performance outcomes 1) Employment, 2) Earnings, 3) Skill Development/Acquisition, 4) Satisfaction of Services. These targets are ever evolving and are used to guide conversations, program design, program development and integrated service delivery aspects. Although the themes of performance run through all our WIOA programs, WSW believes in the spirit of WIOA and in the spirit of innovation. This means that we give our providers specific guidance to challenge the process and drive

the vision of the workforce innovation and opportunity act to fully tap into the potential of the legislation and partnerships. We believe that if you focus on good programming with excellent services and a responsive system, the outcomes for the targets above will come. WSW also believes that performance is fluid. When systems experience setbacks, it is an opportunity to learn and grow to do things better moving forward. Another aspect of performance is partnerships. No workforce system partner can do all services on their own. We will achieve more if we work together, have joint ownership over performance, and utilize the expertise of each one of our local staff members to work towards effective customer outcomes.

WSW uses performance accountability to inform local strategic planning and continuous improvement and to oversee WorkSource and WIOA Title I: Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Services.

1. *Local Planning and Continuous Improvement:* On an annual basis, WSW holds a series of local and regional strategic planning sessions to allow our board, partners and employers to guide the direction of activities, goals, and outcomes to pursue in the next few years. A large strategic plan re-draft occurs every three years with modifications occurring annually. A key discussion during strategic planning sessions is performance trends of providers and our system over the past several years. Individual contracts are reviewed by the WSW team and assessed for compliance. This information is shared with the board for planning and for problem-solving related to program activities.
2. *WorkSource and Title I Services:* All WIOA Title I service providers are reviewed for performance on a monthly and quarterly basis. Providers are brought together quarterly to learn best practices and to receive technical assistance on how to strategize performance improvement. In addition, all providers receive onsite technical support as necessary. If providers do not meet performance and have been given technical assistance and little to no improvement occurs, then corrective action is required. When providers meet or exceed performance targets, these events are celebrated and highlighted throughout the system.

Attachments

Attachments A – C

See narrative for content.

Attachment D: Local Area Profile

1. Local One-Stop System

Site	Type of Site (Comprehensive, Affiliate, Specialized or Connection)	Site Operator(s)
WorkSource Vancouver	Comprehensive	Career Path Services
WorkSource Cowlitz/Wahkiakum	Affiliate	Career Path Services
Next	Affiliate	Career Path Services

2. Other Service Delivery Sites

List any other service delivery sites in the local area.

Site	Type of Site	Connected to One-Stop System?

3. WIOA Title I-B Service Providers

Dislocated Worker Program List all current and potential service providers in the area	Indicate service(s) provided by each			WIOA funded?
	Basic	Individualized	Training	
Career Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments regarding the adequacy and quality of Dislocated Worker Services available:

Career Team provides basic and intensive services to Dislocated Workers. They incorporate four objectives to increase their effectiveness and efficiency when providing services to customers: Coordinated partner outreach, internal referrals between employment specialists and business services to fill jobs, co-enrolling with other programs, placements into quality jobs.

Adult Program List all current and potential service providers in the area	Indicate service(s) provided by each			WIOA funded?
	Basic	Individualized	Training	
Career Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments regarding the adequacy and quality of Adult Services available:

Career Team provides basic and intensive services to Adults. They incorporate four objectives to increase their effectiveness and efficiency when providing services to customers: Coordinated partner outreach, internal referrals between employment specialists and business services to fill jobs, co-enrolling with other programs, placements into quality jobs.

Youth Program List all current and potential service providers in the area	Indicate service(s) provided by each			WIOA funded?
	Youth Program Elements	Design Framework Services	Services for youth with disabilities ?	
Career Path Services	☒	☒	☒	☒
Goodwill Olympics and Rainier Region	☒	☒	☒	☒
Partners In Careers	☒	☒	☒	☒
Career Team	☒	☒	☒	☒

Comments regarding the adequacy and quality of Youth Services available:

Career TEAM and Partners in Careers provide access to the WIOA 14 Youth Program Elements, the design framework services, and services for youth with disabilities, all of which are WIOA funded. Each organization plays an integral role in offering diverse opportunities for youth to acquire essential skills and knowledge for career development.

Attachment E: Local Workforce Development Board Membership and Certification

Official Name of Local Board: WSW Board of Directors
Fiscal Agent: Barri Blair, CFO
Contact Name and Title: Miriam Halliday, CEO

Required categories	Name/Title/Organization*	Nominated by
Business majority (greater than 50% of all members)		
1. Business	A.D. Simmons, Owner, Aligned Lifestyle Concierge	Except for the Central Labor Councils, prior to implementation of Board Nomination Procedure in 2016, WSW did not track nominators. Current Board Procedure requires all new Board to be officially nominated and approved by a Governance Committee, then referred to the full Board for confirmation.
2. Business	Tracy Doriot, Managing Partner, Doriot Construction LLC	Greater Vancouver Chamber
3. Business	Adam Blackwell, Co-Founder, Molecular Testing Labs	Greater Vancouver Chamber
4. Business	Brent Freeman, Superintendent, Wahkiakum School District	Wahkiakum Board of County Commissioners
5. Business	Corey Giles, Converting & Warehouse Production Manager, NORPAC	Cowlitz Economic Development Council
6. Business	John Vanderkin, VP Operations, On-Line Support	
7. Business	Suba Jagannathan, Owner, Mirus Toys	Greater Vancouver Chamber
8. Business	Nick Massie, Trainer, Rotschy Inc.	Greater Vancouver Chamber
9. Business	Paige Spratt, Attorney, Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt	
10. Business	Rodney Seales, HR Generalist, WestRock	Cowlitz Economic Development Council
11. Business	Stacey Smith, Principal, ControlTek	Cowlitz Economic Development Council
12. Business	Mark Tishenko, CEO, Edge Networks	Greater Vancouver Chamber
13. Business	Bob Gustainis, District Manager, Walgreens Tacoma-Vancouver	American Paper Converting, Inc.
14. Business	Adrienne Watson, System Director, Clinical Education, PeaceHealth	Cowlitz Economic Development Council

15. Business	Nathan Webster, CEO/Founder, NDUB Brand	Greater Vancouver Chamber
16. Business	To be filled (Clark)	
Workforce (20% of members. Majority must be nominated by organized labor)		
1. Labor	Bill Sauters, Washington State Area Rep, AWPPW	Central Labor Council
2. Labor	Bob Carroll, Business Representative, IBEW Local 48	Central Labor Council
3. Apprenticeship	Mike Bridges, Labor Representative, Cowlitz Wahkiakum Central Labor Council, IBEW #48	Central Labor Council
4. Other workforce	Corie Dow-Kramer, Executive Director, Youth and Family Link	Cowlitz Economic Development Council
5. Other workforce	Ebony Price, Assistant Director of Healthcare, SEIU 49	Greater Vancouver Chamber
6. Other workforce	Jasmine Tolbert, HR Director, YWCA Clark County	Greater Vancouver Chamber
Education & Training		
1. Title II Adult Ed	Matt Seimears, President, Lower Columbia College	
2. Title II Adult Ed	Karin Edwards, President, Clark College	
3. Higher Education	Renny Christopher, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Washington State University Vancouver	
Government		
1. Wagner-Peyser	Tennille Johnson, SW Coastal Regional Director, Employment Security Department (ESD)	
2. Vocational Rehabilitation	Mandy Kipfer, Deputy Regional Administrator – Region 3, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)	
3. Social and Health Services	Monte Constable, Community Service Office Administrator, WA State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)	
4. Economic Development	Ted Sprague, President, Cowlitz Economic Development Council	
5. Economic Development	Jennifer Baker, President, Columbia River Economic Development Council	

* **At this writing**, WSW has one private business seat from Clark County. To recruit candidates, WSW has followed its Board Recruitment Policy which includes announcements via email blast, newsletter, news release and website publication. Under our policy, all potential candidates must be officially nominated. The Governance Committee will review all potential candidates and recommend selections to the Executive Committee and then to the full Board of Directors. See attached documents for evidence of the procedure and compliance.

Attachment F: Local Assurances

2024-2028 Local Integrated Workforce Plan Assurances

	Planning Process and Public Comment	References
☒	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 business, 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)
☒	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)
☒	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
☒	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
☒	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
☒	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
☒	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
☒	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
☒	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
☒	10. The LWDB has policies and procedures for identifying and determining the eligibility of training providers and their programs to receive WIOA	WIOA Sections 107(d)(10), 122(b)(3), and 123; 20 CFR

	Title I-B individual training accounts and to train dislocated workers receiving additional unemployment insurance benefits via the state's Training Benefits Program.	679.720(l-m) and 679.380; WIOA Title I Policy 5611
☒	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.
☒	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
☒	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
☒	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)
☒	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
☒	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
☒	17. The LWDB provides to employers the business services outlined in WorkSource System Policy 1014.	WorkSource System Policy 1014
☒	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
☒	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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	20. The local board 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
n/a <input type="checkbox"/>	21. The local board 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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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 Sections 116(i)(3) and 185(a)(4); 20 USC 1232g; 20 CFR 677.175 and 20 CFR part 603
	Administration of Funds	References
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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; WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G); 20 CFR 680.300-310
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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, dislocated worker, and youth program and the Wagner-Peyser Act funds.	WIOA Sec. 108(b)(15), WIOA Title I Policy 5230; WIOA Title I Policy 5250
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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

☒	29. The local board will not use funds received under WIOA to assist, promote, or deter union organizing.	WIOA Sec. 181(b)(7); 20 CFR 680.830-840
Eligibility		References
☒	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 services 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
☒	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
☒	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
☒	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.	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

Attachment G: Local Workforce Plan Certification

This section of the Local Integrated Workforce Plan serves as the LWDB’s certification that it complies with all required components of Title I-B of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and Wagner-Peyser Act and must be signed by authorized officials.

The Local Workforce Development Board for Southwest Washington certifies that it complies with all required components of Title I-B of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and Wagner-Peyser Act and plan development guidelines adopted by the State Workforce Development Board. The LWDB also assures that funds will be spent in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Wagner-Peyser Act, and their regulations, written U.S. Department of Labor guidance implementing these laws, Office of Management and Budget circulars, and all other applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

Local Chief Elected Official(s)

Date

Local Workforce Development Board Chair

Date

Attachment H: Public Comment

Public Comment

Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW) is committed to engaging partners, community members, contractors and community-based organizations whenever possible. In the months leading up to this plan's release, WSW convened focus groups and surveyed business, partners, community-based organizations and youth providers to learn more about their needs and how COVID had impacted their communities.

For the Local Plan 2024 update, the following process occurred:

- November 2023 – February 2024 – WSW staff revised the local plan content
- March 1, 2024 – Plan open for public comment for 30 days via the WSW website. At the end of the comment period, feedback will be incorporated as necessary.
- April 10, 2024 – Draft Local Plan sent to State Workforce Board and ESD.
- May 15, 2024 – Final, signed local plan submitted to the Workforce Board and ESD.
- June 30, 2024 – Final document posted on the WSW website.

WSW published notification of public comment opportunities in multiple ways:

- Website – the notice was posted on [WSW's website](#) with links to the plan and directions to submit comments to info@workforcesw.org.
- Social Media – announcements were posted on WSW's social media channels with a link to WSW's website.
- Newsletter/E-Blast – announced in the newsletter with directions on how to comment; emailed to community members, community-based organizations, businesses, labor unions, partners, board members and agencies in our database.
- News Release – sent to major newspapers including the Columbian, the Longview Daily News, the Wahkiakum Eagle, the Battle Ground Reflector, the Vancouver Business Journal, The Skanner and other local papers.

Attachment I: Performance Targets PY23

Program	Performance Measure	2023 Proposed Target
WIOA Adult	Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter After Exit	62.0%
WIOA Adult	Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter After Exit	\$7,993
WIOA Adult	Employment Rate 4 th Quarter After Exit	65.4%
WIOA Adult	Credential Attainment Rate 2 nd Quarter After Exit	68.4%
WIOA Adult	Measurable Skill Gains	71.0%
WIOA Dislocated Worker	Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter After Exit	62.4%
WIOA Dislocated Worker	Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter After Exit	\$10,731
WIOA Dislocated Worker	Employment Rate 4 th Quarter After Exit	64.9%
WIOA Dislocated Worker	Credential Attainment Rate 2 nd Quarter After Exit	75.4%
WIOA Dislocated Worker	Measurable Skill Gains	59.3%
WIOA Youth	Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter After Exit	57.2%
WIOA Youth	Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter After Exit	\$3,792
WIOA Youth	Employment Rate 4 th Quarter After Exit	55.4%
WIOA Youth	Credential Attainment Rate 2 nd Quarter After Exit	70.8%
WIOA Youth	Measurable Skill Gains	43.4%



BOARD NOMINATION PROCEDURES

7/1/2015

Procedures:

To seat a suitable Workforce Development Board that meets the requirements of the WIOA, the Executive Committee will follow this process:

- For Terms Ending June 30:
 - Each year in March, the Executive Committee will form a Nomination Committee which will be responsible for nominating suitable members for each open position.
 - The Nomination Committee, in consultation with the Executive Committee, decides whether to ask current members whose terms are expiring to continue in their positions.
 - Members who wish to remain on the Council will be considered by the Nomination Committee to determine their suitability for continued service.
 - To openly recruit for any remaining open seats, the Nomination Committee will **post a request for nominations** on WSW website, via press release, via WSW's newsletter and through personal contacts with organizations such as:
 - Economic Development Councils
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - Labor Councils
 - Current WSW members
 - Elected Officials such as Mayors, City Council Members and School Board Members
 - Non-profit Networks/Support Organizations
 - Professional Associations
 - Nominations will be accepted from any of the above-listed organizations as well as from any other organization and from individuals. Nominations should be received by the last business day of April and must include:
 - A letter of nomination or a completed nomination form, and
 - Nominee's resume.
 - The Nomination Committee will review nominees and arrange personal meetings with WSW's Chief Executive Officer, Chief Local Elected Official or Local Elected Officials, or Executive Committee members. If possible, the nominee may attend a WSW meeting as a public guest.
 - No later than the last business day of May, the Nomination Committee will make recommendations for nomination to the appropriate County Commissioner. The County Commissioner has the right to reject or accept that nominee. If accepted, the County Commissioner will proceed accordingly with a letter to the Governor requesting appointment. If rejected, the nominee will be notified by the CEO.
 - The newly appointed member will be seated at the next regularly scheduled WSW meeting and will begin a three-year term.

- Mid-Term Vacancies:
 - If a business seat becomes vacant mid-term, the Executive Committee will decide if the seat will remain unfilled until the annual process can fill the seat or if they will recommend a nominee from the previously nominated pool or open a nomination process. If they choose to fill the seat with a previously nominated person, they will follow the process listed above beginning at A(d). If they choose to open a process, they will follow the process listed above beginning at A(b).
 - If a non-business seat becomes vacant mid-term, the Executive Committee will immediately seek a new nomination from the appropriate organizations and submit the name(s) of nominee(s) to the appropriate LEO for nomination. The person will be seated at the next regularly scheduled WSW meeting. The nominations will be made from organizations as follows:
- Labor Council nominates Labor representative(s)
- Agency Leads nominate Agency representative
- Some seats are filled based on the position rather than the person, for example, the Community College President, the Economic Development Council President, or the Chamber of Commerce President. In the event that one of these seats is vacant, the position will remain vacant until a new representative is hired and the appointment process can be followed.

Inquiries:

Please contact Miriam Halliday at mhalliday@workforcesw.org or 360-567-3183 with questions.

PROGRAM FUNDING DISCLOSURES

WIOA Title I Adult/DW and One-Stop Operator

WSW's WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker program and One Stop Operator are supported by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. \$2,417,458 (100% of total) is financed by PY23 allocation of Federal funds.

WIOA Title I Youth

WSW's WIOA Youth program is supported by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. \$1,512,885 (100% of total) is financed by PY23 allocation of Federal funds.

SummerWorks

WSW's SummerWorks program is supported by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. \$617,849 (100% of total) is financed by PY23 allocation of Federal funds.

Thrive

WSW's Thrive program is supported by PY23 allocations of \$487,283 (32% of total) U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration federal funding and (68% of total) State funds distributed by Washington State Employment Security Department: \$775,794 State Economic Security for All program funding and \$240,088 Department of Commerce's Community Reinvestment funding.

Careers National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG)

WSW's Careers NDWG program is supported by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. \$331,139 (100% of total) is financed by PY23 allocation of Federal funds.

Quest

WSW's Quest program is supported by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. \$797,661 (100% of total) is financed by PY23 allocation of Federal funds.

Opioid National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG)

WSW's Opioid NDWG program is supported by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. \$408,478 (100% of total) is financed by PY23 allocation of Federal funds.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

WSW's AARPA program is supported by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. \$50,000 (100% of total) is financed by PY23 allocation of Federal funds.

Future Leaders Project

The Future Leaders is supported by PY23 allocations of \$97,195 (51% of total) U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration federal funding and \$93,000 (49% of total) non-federal funding from the J.P. Morgan Chase Foundation.