



Workforce System Response to COVID-19 Clark, Cowlitz & Wahkiakum Counties June 18, 2020

As recovery and reopening continue, we must all remain vigilant (at home and at work) by continuing safe distancing, hand washing and wearing masks or we risk a larger outbreak.

We remain committed to supporting you and your organization and hope to hear from you if we can assist.

Kevin Perkey
Chief Executive Officer

Responding to Business Needs

Manufacturing is a key sector driving growth and employment in Southwest Washington. On June 11, in partnership with the Columbia River Economic Development Council (CREDC), the Cowlitz Economic Development Council (CEDC), and Impact Washington, we held an informative convening, assembling manufacturing businesses and community stakeholders from throughout the region.

Impact Washington shared information about [managing COVID-19 risks for employees and a free COVID-19 risk assessment](#) they provide.

Current disruptions were discussed and opportunities for strategic investment were identified. Some highlights from the meeting:

- At the top of job growth projections for manufacturing are positions such as maintenance mechanics, supervisors, welders and machinists. Manufacturers in the conversation agreed we should continue investing in training programs to produce these types of candidates, as they continue to project needs for skilled tradespeople.
- There was consensus around the need to develop programs to teach basic manufacturing skills: use of hand tools, small electrical tools, mechanical drawings and blueprint reading, basic wiring and instrumentation, manufacturing terminology, and safety.
- Companies on the call are interested in a broad candidate pool that can enter the workforce in many types of manufacturing positions and let their career path develop organically as they discover their own interests and strengths. These types of jobs

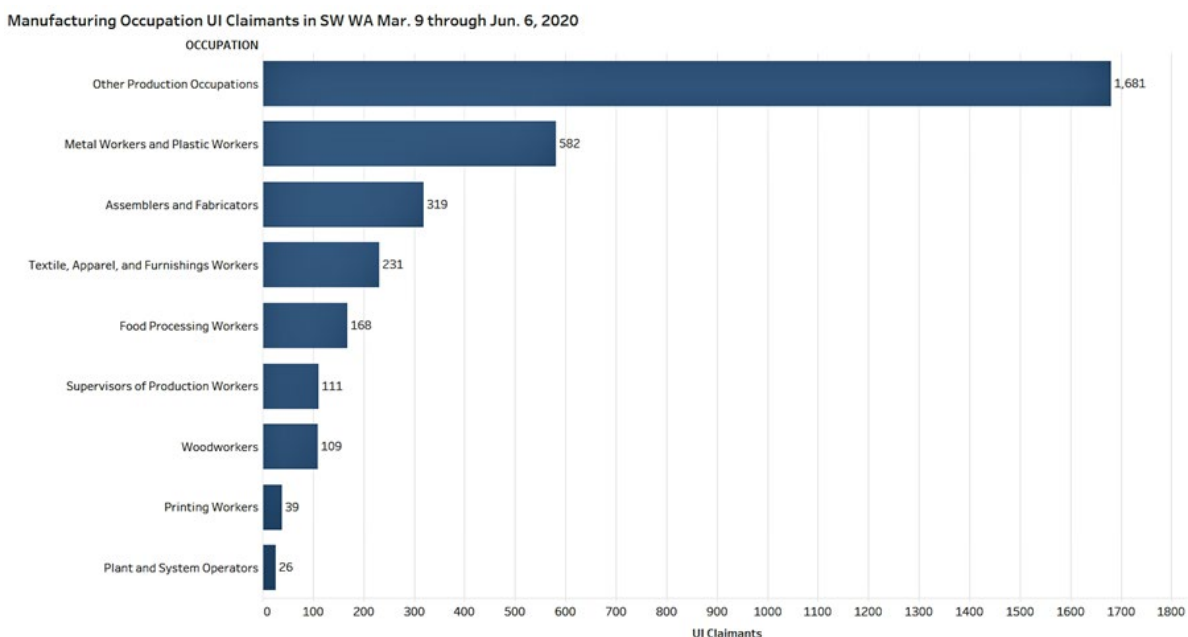
tend to be difficult to fill with candidates who are truly “entry-level.” Additionally, it allows for more job opportunities upon completion because skills learned are needed throughout the industry for many types of jobs. Employers also felt it would be important to host site tours as part of the program to highlight the various types of manufacturing environments. It’s likely these tours will be virtual in the near term.

- This type of an industry-driven, short-term basic skills program could serve as a springboard for young people in our region to enter an industry that offers earnings that are 19 percent higher in our region than the nation; median wages are \$21.68 compared to \$16.80 across all other industries, according to a [2018 Manufacturing Labor Market Report](#) produced by WSW and its Columbia-Willamette Workforce Collaborative partners. In Washington, 36 percent of manufacturing workers earn at least \$40 per hour compared to 21 percent of workers across all other industries.
- Age remains a major concern for manufacturing. Nearly one-fourth of the sector’s workforce is 55 or older and set to retire in the next decade — leaving thousands of jobs available. At the same time, only about five percent of the sector’s workforce is below age 24, compared to twelve percent across all industries. The lack of young workers entering the sector persists as an issue following the Great Recession.

WSW has scheduled one-on-one follow-up conversations with each company that expressed interest during the conversation. We will be learning more about specific needed skills and gauging each company’s interest in helping to design curriculum, student/candidate recruitment, ability to offer site tours, and commitment to interviewing and hiring post-training.

Contact Alyssa Joyner, Senior Project Manager for Manufacturing, at ajoyner@workforcesw.org or 503.410.0408.

Labor Market: Spotlight on Manufacturing



**Weekly Initial Unemployment Claims by 3-Digit SOC Occupations
Total of weeks 10 through 22 - March 8 through June 6, 2020**

SOC	Occupational Group	Clark County	Cowlitz County	Wahkiakum County	SW WA	Out of State	State Total	Not Disclosed*
51-1000	Supervisors of Production Workers	89	22	0	111	140	2,154	43
51-2000	Assemblers and Fabricators	245	74	*	319	583	15,424	30
51-3000	Food Processing Workers	115	53	*	168	*	4,093	422
51-4000	Metal Workers and Plastic Workers	436	142	4	582	631	10,991	30
51-5100	Printing Workers	26	13	0	39	*	1,177	71
51-6000	Textile, Apparel, and Furnishings Workers	204	27	0	231	137	4,210	22
51-7000	Woodworkers	81	28	0	109	*	2,205	103
51-8000	Plant and System Operators	14	12	0	26	*	458	60
51-9000	Other Production Occupations	1,195	477	9	1,681	1,602	33,771	45

Source: Washington Employment Security Department/LMEA

* Not disclosed to preserve claimant privacy

Production Occupations in SW Washington 2020 Q1											
SOC	Occupation	Current					1-Year Forecast				
		Empl	Avg Ann Wages ²	Unempl	Unempl Rate	Online Job Ads ³	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
00-0000	Total - All Occupations	221,717	\$53,700	13,937	4.8%	8,141	29,075	10,108	16,342	2,626	1.2%
51-0000	Production Occupations	13,449	\$44,600	1,024	5.3%	363	1,549	519	1,034	-4	0.0%
51-2092	Team Assemblers	1,176	\$36,700	156	8.2%	7	117	46	86	-15	-1.2%
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	1,068	\$71,400	20	1.4%	46	114	35	76	3	0.3%
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	719	\$49,100	57	5.7%	32	89	19	62	7	0.9%
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	849	\$49,300	56	4.4%	18	88	32	68	-13	-1.5%

Source: JobsEQ®

Data as of 2020Q1 unless noted otherwise

1. Data based on a four-quarter moving average unless noted otherwise.

2. Wage data are as of 2019 and represent the average for all Covered Employment

3. Data represent found online ads active within the last thirty days in the selected region; data represents a sampling rather than the complete universe of postings. Ads lacking zip code information but designating a place (city, town, etc.) may be assigned to the zip code with greatest employment in that place for queries in this analytic. Due to alternative county-assignment algorithms, ad counts in this analytic may not match that shown in RTI (nor in the popup window ad list).

Services for Adults + Youth

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, our local workforce system has been providing services and assistance virtually to adults and youth.

Although the physical [WorkSource](#) and [Next](#) centers are not open for in-person visits, staff and services are available online, through email and virtual meetings.

Some of the virtual services available include:

- job search support
- leads to open jobs
- resume writing
- mock interviews
- workshops and classes related to job preparation
- funding for job retraining
- fiscal responsibility
- connections to housing, childcare, transportation, food assistance and other support services

- online training
- information related to filing an initial Unemployment Insurance claim (they cannot file a claim for you, determine your eligibility or assist with already-filed claims)

For more information, visit www.WorkSourceSWWA.com. Young adults ages 16 to 24 can visit www.NextSuccess.org.

Reopening Resources

- For Manufacturers: [COVID-19 Workplace Preparedness Assessment](#) – Impact Washington no-cost assessments to help businesses prepare to return to work.
 - The Assessment follows [Operational Guidelines for Manufacturing Facilities](#) posted to the Governor’s website on May 12, 2020.
- PPE Supplies
 - [AWB PPE Connect](#) – Connects you with manufacturers who supply PPE so you can purchase equipment to safeguard you and your employees.
 - FEMA launched a [PPE exchange dashboard](#) to connect private sector sellers and buyers. **Adobe Connect is needed to open the dashboard*
 - Amazon Business [COVID-19 Supplies](#) helps direct health and safety products, such as face shields, personal protective equipment, digital thermometers, exam gloves, sanitizers and wipes to organizations on the front lines of the pandemic.
- The U.S. Small Business Administration reopened the [Economic Injury Disaster Loan \(EIDL\) and EIDL Advance program portal](#) to all eligible small businesses and nonprofits experiencing economic impacts due to COVID-19.
- World Health Organization's [When and how to use masks](#) videos and infographics.

Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW) funds services that help individuals gain skills to find good-paying jobs or advance in their careers and help companies recruit, train and retain workers. Our investments strengthen the region’s businesses and contribute to a strong economy. Since 2003, we’ve invested more than \$100 million in Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties. Learn more at www.workforcesw.org. WSW is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Washington Relay 711.