



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



WSW secures more than \$2.25 million to aid workers impacted by COVID-19

WSW has been awarded funds from three U. S. Department of Labor Dislocated Worker grants to support job search, training and re-employment services for workers in Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties.

The funds will be invested in WorkSource, Next and Goodwill of the Olympic and Rainier Region, which operates in Cowlitz County, to provide individuals laid off from work due to COVID-19 with job search, training and support services such as food assistance and connections to housing resources. Training and employment placement will focus on helping individuals obtain stable, living-wage employment in the region's high-growth and in-demand sectors of technology, manufacturing and healthcare.

WSW will also invest funds in Disaster Relief Employment support for the Boys and Girls Club, Clark County Food Bank, Goodwill of the Olympic and Rainier Region, Ethnic Support Council, Council for the Homeless and Bridgeview Resource Center. This funding is intended to enable these organizations to temporarily expand capacity to serve laid-off workers.

The third grant will provide those affected by opioid use and addiction with employment and training services and mentoring.

"With more than 21,000 Southwest Washington residents filing continuing unemployment claims, the need in our community is great," said Kevin Perkey CEO of Workforce Southwest Washington. "We're investing in short-term job-readiness training to get laid-off workers back to

work quickly and longer-term training to help people get the skills they need to secure good-paying jobs as the economy recovers.”

The [local WorkSource centers](#) in Vancouver and Kelso are providing job and employment assistance virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic and can be reached by phone, email and video conference.

The \$2,256,173 in grants will provide services from September 2020 through March 2022.

WSUV partnership to expand business talent pool & boost student career development



WSW has awarded [Washington State University Vancouver](#) (WSUV) \$150,000 over three years to support a new Employment Engagement Coordinator on campus and to enable students to gain work experience while in college.

While helping students access workforce opportunities and resources, the arrangement also ensures that WSW’s business and industry partners have qualified, home-grown talent ready to fill the region’s in-demand occupations and grow the regional economy.

[Read more](#)



WSW + Career Karma to provide underrepresented populations access to tech careers

We are partnering with [Career Karma](#) to train and place women, people of color and other traditionally underrepresented populations in tech jobs.

The Career Karma app connects people to the tech industry by matching them with coding bootcamps, ultimately leading to high-paying jobs. During the [21-day challenge](#) prospective participants engage in activities that lead them to apply, interviewing and being accepted into a coding bootcamp. With mentoring, participants build a professional network and social capital.

[Read more](#)



Patient engagement improvements made, but healthcare workforce challenges remain

COVID-19 has disrupted the practice and delivery of healthcare prompting unprecedented improvements related to the health and safety of workers and patients. While these advances are worth celebrating, there are evolving workforce challenges and barriers to overcome in education, training, recruiting and retaining our healthcare workforce.

In SW Washington, advancements around patient engagement and long-term care have focused on technology platforms offering connectivity between caregivers and patients. Virtual care management, once an anomaly, is now mainstream due to COVID-19 and is here to stay, offering both a “bricks and mortar” location and a virtual relationship.

Through these innovative processes and procedures, healthcare businesses are continuing to reopen and operate at or near full capacity. However, challenges for our healthcare workforce remain. There is a significant disparity of impact on diverse frontline workers when compared to white employees. Healthcare recruiting faces hurdles around safety, fear of exposure to COVID-19, and potentially fewer candidates applying for jobs in the industry. Our higher education institutions must continue to evolve around simulation versus hands-on experience and meeting sometimes conflicting state licensing and certification requirements.

[Read more](#)

Community Foundation Grant provides support services for residents of South Kelso and Longview's Highlands neighborhoods

In August, WSW obtained a \$25,000 grant from the Mason E. Nolan Community Fund through the Community Foundation for Southwest Washington to provide vital support services such as childcare, transportation and housing assistance to individuals as they pursue education, training and employment. This is the second \$25,000 grant the Community Foundation has provided for services to these neighborhoods.

The Community Foundation grants are in addition to the \$1.6 million WSW has been investing in the neighborhoods since October 2019 when it secured the Governor’s federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Statewide Activities funds.

[Read more](#)

Small Business Relief Grant for Clark County

Mercy Corps Northwest, in partnership with Clark County and the City of Vancouver, has launched a grant program to support small businesses with 5 or fewer employees that have been hard-hit by the impacts of COVID-19.

Grants amounts will be \$2,500 to \$10,000.

Applications are due by **September 25 at midnight PST.**

WASHINGTON-BASED BUSINESSES

Small Business Relief Grant

Clark County & City of Vancouver

OPENING TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 8



[View details here](#)

REVOLVING LOAN FUND

In an effort to help local businesses during this time, the City of Longview Revolving Loan Fund has made some temporary changes to its loan plan:

- No loan fees**
No application or administrative fees
- Low interest rate**
Favorable interest rates
- Payment deferral**
Up to 6-month deferral of loan principal and interest

The Revolving Loan Fund recently received a \$540,000 recapitalization of the program and has funds to lend.

The purpose of the Revolving Loan Fund is to create new jobs, strengthen the city's and region's economy, encourage revitalization and development.
If your business needs additional funds and has been turned down by an institutional lender, please contact:
Bill Fashing | Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments
360.355.0344 or bfashing@cwco.gov

Revolving Loan Fund - Longview

The Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments (CWCOG), in partnership with the City of Longview, has received CARES Act funding to supplement the existing Longview Revolving Loan Fund. An additional \$540,000 is available for small business loans within the City of Longview and surrounding areas. Loans are for new and existing firms desiring to initiate or expand operations within or near the Longview city limits.

[View application + program guidelines](#)

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.

Thanks for reading.

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