

## Press Release

**For Immediate Release:**

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# Workforce Council awards contracts for Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum County employment services

Wrapping up a months-long competitive bidding process, the Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council (SWWDC) Board of Directors recently announced the selection of Workforce Investment Act adult and dislocated worker service providers for Clark and Cowlitz Counties WorkSource centers.

The board approved a review committee's recommendation for provider contracts for WorkSource One Stop Centers and Adult and Dislocated Worker Program services in Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum counties. The board awarded the Clark County contract to Arbor Education and Training which partners with the Washington State Employment Security Department to operate the Clark County WorkSource One Stop Center located at 5411 E. Mill Plain in Vancouver. The board awarded the Cowlitz and Wahkiakum County contracts to a partnership consisting of Lower Columbia Community Action Council and the Washington State Employment Security Department which operates the Cowlitz/Wahkiakum WorkSource Center located at 305 S. Pacific Avenue in Kelso.

“These programs keep our economy strong by keeping the workforce strong. SWWDC and our partners educate, train and link job seekers with employers needing skilled

employees. Thanks to the hard work of our service providers, as well as collaborative, regional public-private partnerships, the workforce development system has moved from a traditional social service program with economic benefits to an economic development program with social benefits,” said Lisa Nisenfeld, SWWDC Executive Director. “Arbor Education and Training, Employment Security, Lower Columbia CAP and Employment Security have excellent track records in providing these services.” Arbor E&T, Employment Security and CAP are the current providers in their respective centers.

WorkSource One-Stop Centers offer comprehensive services for job seekers, including job referrals and placement, resume assistance, career counseling, software, equipment and supplies, workshops, and training and retraining information, to name a few. The centers also provide services to employers seeking skilled employees or that may need training for existing employees. About 30% of the resources in each WorkSource center is provided through these contracts under the Workforce Investment Act. Various Employment Security programs comprise 70% of the WorkSource resources.

Over the last five years, the number of individuals enrolled in the Workforce Investment Act programs who have been placed in jobs increased 127 percent. The number of people who completed formal skills training increased by more than 73 percent. Most notably, the workforce development programs made these gains at the same time that significant numbers of people with disabilities, ex-offenders, and other hard-to-serve individuals enrolled in the programs. The programs also work closely with local economic development agencies to ensure that WorkSource is positioned to fill the jobs generated through regional job creation strategies.

In Cowlitz and Wahkiakum Counties, WorkSource serves an average of 20,000 individual job seekers annually. During the past year, the agency served 396 employers.

In Clark County, WorkSource Vancouver served 40,785 individual job seekers and 581 employers during the last program year.

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*The Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council (SWWDC) provides leadership and resources to increase economic development with a trained and productive workforce in Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum Counties.*

*Led by a diverse board of representatives from business, labor, community-based organizations and government agencies, the SWWDC responds to the unique needs of our greater community.*