



workforce
SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

MARCH 2023



Executive Directors from Worksystems, Workforce Southwest Washington and Clackamas Workforce Partnership present at the State of the Workforce Breakfast

2022 - 2023 State of the Workforce Report

Since the last State of the Workforce Report [was released in 2018](#), the Portland-Southwest Washington region has seen significant changes. The COVID-19 pandemic brought on historically high unemployment, unsustainable demands on social services and taxed community resources. Unprecedented inflation that outpaced personal income growth further added to the financial burden on area workers and their families.



The [Columbia-Willamette Workforce Collaborative](#) (CWWC) — comprised of [Clackamas Workforce Partnership](#), [Workforce Southwest Washington](#) and [Worksystems](#) — is working together to bridge the gaps between workforce supply and industry demand and align resources to prepare job seekers to succeed in today's labor market. Using the data available in the [2022-2023 State of the Workforce Report](#), CWWC will work with regional partners and leaders to shape policy, consider investments, and implement strategies to improve the quality and health of the workforce.

The 2022-2023 State of the Workforce Report comprehensively covers the effects of COVID-19 on the economy, regional demographics, skills supply, demand for workers, and socioeconomic challenges facing the workforce. The report also provides thorough data on the region's population, race and ethnicity, income, labor force, education, socio-economic wellbeing, commuting, and jobs and industry.

[Read more](#)



Quality Job Guides available to help businesses improve job quality

We are excited to announce the launch of the Quality Jobs Guides!

The guides provide Southwest Washington businesses and partner organizations with tools and strategies to implement and track Quality Job strategies. There are six guides, covering Self-sufficiency Wages, Comprehensive Benefits, Safe Worker Conditions/Worker Engagement, Predictable Hours, Accessible Hiring and Onboarding, and Training and Advancement Opportunities.

The guides include in-depth information on Quality Jobs standards, practical guidance on implementing strategies, a fillable worksheet to help guide businesses and additional resources to help your business improve job quality to attract and retain talent.

We encourage businesses to reach out to the [WSW Business Services team](#) for help implementing Quality Jobs standards in your business or for additional resources.

[Learn more](#)



Workforce data attests to wage, employment disparities for Black workers in Southwest Washington

Historically, Black workers in the United States face inequities in pay, employment and advancement opportunities. The trend continues today, with wage and employment disparities compounded by the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the workforce continues to recover from record-high unemployment, unemployment remains high and wages remain low for Black workers in Southwest Washington.

WSW strives to improve the economic outlook for Black workers in Southwest Washington by providing funds for holistic career services and trainings. WSW invests in WorkSource and Next to provide adult and youth job seekers with career training, support services and job search assistance.

[Read more](#)



Training and advancement opportunities offer skill, wage growth for women

In the Portland-Southwest Washington region, women make 81.2% of what men make. Annually, this accounts for an earning disparity of \$11,740 between men and women. Despite [representing 58.4% of the U.S. workforce](#), women hold only 35% of senior leadership positions. Undoubtedly, opportunities for career advancement for women have dramatically increased. However, women's wages and vertical mobility in the workplace reveals issues that cannot be ignored.

[Read more](#)

Upcoming Requests for Proposals

Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW) is seeking proposals for the delivery of services across Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties.

Procurement is upcoming for several contracts, including:

- **Request for Quote for Financial Audit Services** – *open now*
- **Wahkiakum Outreach** – *releasing March 15*
- **One-Stop Operator** – *releasing March 20*
- **SummerWorks** – *releasing March 27*
- **WIOA In-School Youth** – *releasing March 29*

Timelines are subject to change.

Requests for Proposals will be released on [WSW's Funding Opportunities webpage](#) later this month, please check back in mid-March.

Host an intern this summer with the Future Leaders Project

The Future Leaders Project (FLP) is an initiative of Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW), [Columbia River Economic Development Council \(CREDC\)](#) and [Washington State University Vancouver \(WSU Vancouver\)](#) that helps cultivate diverse leaders for our growing community. FLP places students from historically underrepresented communities and first-generation college students into employer-sponsored summer internships, providing growth and professional development opportunities.

Hosting FLP interns offers your company many benefits, including:

- New ideas and fresh perspective
- Support for projects that employees might not have time to complete
- Proven, cost-effective way to recruit and evaluate potential permanent employees
- Opportunities for staff to gain supervisory skills through mentoring and managing interns
- Effective public relations ambassadors, as interns often help increase the visibility of their host organization on campus and with their peers and family members
- Opportunities to promote community involvement and demonstrate your

organization's commitment to workforce development – an excellent public relations tool!

Businesses interested in hosting interns for summer 2023 should contact Senior Project Manager, Nolan Yaws-Gonzalez at nyaws-gonzalez@workforcesw.org.

Meet the Program Team!



Marnie Farness
Director of Programs

As the Director of Programs, **Marnie Farness** provides direction and operational management of services and programs for job seekers in Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum counties. Central to her work, Marnie connects with the community to create human-centered programs.

Marnie's background includes extensive experience in community service where she

focused primarily on business, workforce and economic development.

Marnie has direct experience with delivering career services to job seekers, as she spent many years working at WorkSource Vancouver. In addition, she spent several years working in regulatory compliance. Marnie's current role relies heavily on information and skills learned from most all her previous positions.

Marnie enjoys strengthening communities through strategy and innovation, and realized years ago that that she wanted to blend the business skills she acquired with her people experience, which is exactly what she does at WSW. For Marnie, making a positive impact on her community through the creation and execution of effective programing is a thrill.

Get in touch with Marnie at marniefarness@workforcesw.org or 360.559.5090.



Mando Antonino
Program Manager

As a Program Manager, **Armando "Mando" Antonino** oversees the Thrive program. This program helps residents of Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties move out of poverty through career training and supportive services.

A typical day could include collaborating with community partners, strategizing around outreach and program design or conducting research on a variety of subjects.

Before joining WSW, Mando worked at a strategic communications consulting firm. This role gave Mando opportunity to develop his skills around communications, community engagement, strategic planning and facilitation. While at WSU Vancouver, Mando served as the student government president for two years, advocating for the needs of the student population.

For Mando, the most fulfilling aspect of his job relates to supporting and creating a region where every individual has access to high-quality

employment and every business has access to a highly-skilled workforce. As an individual who has benefited from workforce development initiatives, Mando knows how impactful and life changing the programs and services provided by WSW and our partners can be on our community.

Get in touch with Mando at Aantonino@workforcesw.org or 360.567.3185.



Lyn Love
Program Manager

As a Program Manager, **Lyn Love** oversees WSW's youth initiatives and investments, providing support and oversight to WSW's youth one-stop center, [Next](#).

Before her role with WSW, Lyn worked at Next. She worked with young adults as a Talent Development Specialist and then transitioned to SummerWorks Business Manager.

Her direct experience informs her every thought and helps her understand how to better support Southwest Washington's emerging workforce. Lyn is grateful for the learning and growth that has come from experiencing different sides of the workforce system.

Lyn loves making changes to WSW's programs that increase equity and access to workforce services and make an impact in the lives of the community members we serve.

Get in touch with Lyn at llove@workforcesw.org or 360.559.4500.



Nolan Yaws-Gonzalez
Senior Project Manager

As a Senior Project Manager, **Nolan Yaws-Gonzalez** oversees, supports and stewards workforce investments pertaining to work-based learning, internships and other experiential work and training opportunities geared primarily towards teens, young adults and emerging professionals.

Nolan works with SummerWorks, the Future Leaders Project, the Quality Jobs Initiative and WSW's

System Liaison investments with Clark College, Lower Columbia College, WSU Vancouver and Wahkiakum County Health & Human Services. Prior to joining WSW, Nolan worked in higher education administration at three different universities in the Pacific Northwest, including University of Puget Sound, Seattle University, and, most recently, WSU Vancouver. During his time at WSU Vancouver, Nolan worked directly with students, helping them explore majors and career paths, develop resumes and cover letters, prepare for career fairs and networking events, and complete mock interviews.

Nolan finds his work fulfilling because the programs he works on helps young adults and emerging professionals cultivate new skills and get connected with employers in the region who offer quality jobs and career pathway opportunities.

Get in touch with Nolan at nyaws-gonzalez@workforcesw.org or 360.567.1066.

We're Hiring!

WSW is hiring for a Staff Accountant. This is a part-time position expected to grow into full-time with a strong possibility of long-term career growth. The Staff Accountant is responsible for assisting with the day-to-day financial operations. This newly created entry-level position will assist the CFO and other members of the accounting team with overall accounting support to include work in the areas of Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, Payroll and Budgeting. Read

the job posting and how to apply at

bit.ly/WSWcareers

Learn more & apply



Economic Security for All program benefits local job seekers and businesses

Our communities, and the elected officials who create policies that support them, are in one of the most unique times in recent history.

Even as we move past the pandemic, companies are struggling to find qualified candidates to fill vacant jobs. There are significant openings at local businesses and in critical industries like healthcare, education, manufacturing and food processing.

Likewise, many potential workers are finding it difficult to return to the labor force due to lack of childcare, inflation, the rising cost of housing, and the increase in the overall cost of living.

Additionally, job seekers may not know how to access the many job training, certifications, apprenticeships and other skill-based education and opportunities that prepare them for careers in their area.

Read more



New year brings in wage transparency, higher minimum wage for Washington State

In January 2023, Washington State ushered in two new regulations around wages – to raise the minimum wage and mandate wage transparency on job postings. The new regulations help job seekers and businesses alike, promoting self-sufficiency wages, wage transparency and increased job quality across the region.

Effective January 1, 2023, Washington State established \$15.74 as the new minimum wage, up from \$14.19 in 2022. The new wage regulations position Washington as the state with the highest minimum wage in the United States. Washington's neighboring states, Oregon and Idaho trail behind with minimum wages of \$13.50 and \$7.25, respectively.

[Read more](#)

**WORKFORCE SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON
IN THE NEWS**

VANCOUVER · SW WASHINGTON
BUSINESS JOURNAL

Future Leaders Project aims to 'help cultivate diverse leaders

for our growing community'



Mandipa Masike completed a Future Leaders Project internship with Workforce Southwest Washington during the summer of 2021. She now currently works as a bilingual outreach coordinator with YWCA Clark County and helps coordinate the ACT-SO program with NAACP Vancouver.

When Armando “Mando” Antonino first read the description for the Future Leaders Project (FLP) back in 2021 during his junior year at Washington State University Vancouver, he said he immediately felt empowered to apply and got to work creating a resume and cover letter. Antonino was selected to move forward in the FLP process shortly after applying and got an interview at PointNorth as a communications intern.

Antonino said he was able to use campus resources such as a mock interview to help prepare him for his first professional interview. The interview was successful and Antonino began working as a communications intern at PointNorth during the summer of 2021.

“Being a first-generation career professional, I had very little knowledge about professional environments or what career pathways I could explore using my degree and talents,” Antonino said.

The FLP – an initiative of Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW), the [Columbia River Economic Development Council \(CREDC\)](#) and [Washington State University Vancouver \(WSU Vancouver\)](#) – aims to help cultivate diverse leaders for the growing community, according to Nolan Yaws-Gonzalez, senior project manager at WSW.

[Read more](#)



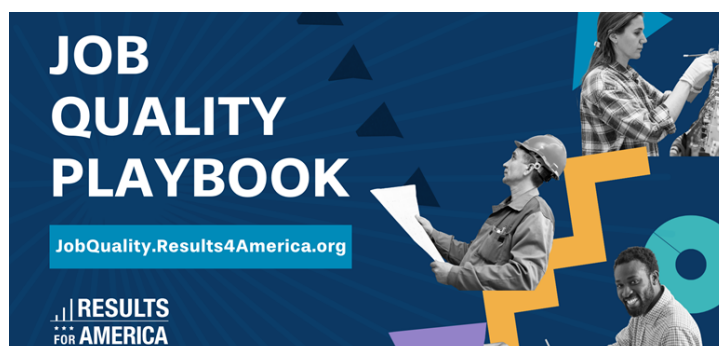
Longview caregivers learn to build trust with dementia patients

During the four-day training, Koelsch staff learned the Humanitude techniques and broke into groups to apply them while interacting with challenging residents at Canterbury Gardens memory care facility in Longview.

Koelsch received a \$22,000 grant from Workforce Southwest Washington to help pay for the training. Koelsch Communities, founded in Kelso in 1958, operates assisted living, senior independent living and memory care facilities in eight states.

Building trust can help residents be open to doing the things they need to do, like taking a shower or getting dressed, Araújo said. If, for example, a resident with dementia is aggressive, caregivers will naturally be more wary of that person, he added. But being relaxed, getting close, making eye contact and speaking in a low tone of voice are all important parts of connecting with someone, he said.

[Read more](#)



Results for America launches Job Quality Playbook

The [Results for America](#) Job Quality Playbook is a guide for workforce and economic development agencies to learn more about why job quality matters, what components make a good job and how to support both employers and workers. The tool guides users through changes to program delivery, business partnership approaches and internal processes to identify and operationalize steps that drive transformation.

Kari Kollander, WSW's Research and Data Analyst, participated in Results for America's Workforce Fellowship along with partners from the [Clackamas Workforce Partnership](#) and [Worksystems](#).

[Explore the Playbook](#)



Clark College Career Fair to connect students to businesses dedicated to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

During the Career Fair 2023, [Clark College](#) is excited to showcase the ways our community employers support their employees through Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) actions, policies, programs and initiatives in the workplace. As part of the registration process this year, employers are required to provide specific examples of their DEI practices. These examples will be shared through our marketing efforts for the Career Fair.

Date: Wednesday, May 17, 2023

Time: 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Location: Clark College - Gaiser Student Center

This event will be a great opportunity to directly connect with Clark College students from all majors, alumni, and job-seeking community members.

[Register now!](#)



**Foster Farms - “A culture that
nobody wants to walk away
from”**

contributed by WorkSource

Foster Farms is nearing its 25th year in operation in Cowlitz County, where it's provided many jobs to the community that it's grown alongside. Foster Farms is dedicated to providing sustainable and quality poultry to their customers nationwide. Our partners at WorkSource had the opportunity to sit down with Production Manager Renee Hernandez to learn more about the organization and her personal journey within it.



[WorkSource](#) is funded by federal and state grants that it receives through the local workforce development board Workforce Southwest Washington with the goal to help people get back to work, often collaborating with employers to place qualified job seekers in quality jobs. As community members, and employment thought leaders, we believe Foster Farms exemplifies quality jobs.

For one, Foster Farms starts new employees at \$19/hour, well above the Washington state minimum wage of \$14.49/hour—and still more than the state's inevitable January 1 increase to \$15.74. But wage is only one part of the equation. Renee's journey at Foster Farms paints a portrait of a company that takes employee retention seriously and thrives because of it. Renee calls it, "a culture that nobody wants to walk away from."

[Read more](#)

Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW), a nonprofit organization, funds community prosperity by investing in services that help individuals gain skills to obtain 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 \$120 million in Southwest Washington. WSW is the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) designated by federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) legislation to oversee the public workforce system in Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties. Learn more at www.workforcesw.org.

[Read our Blogs](#)

[Explore our Data](#)

[Upcoming Board Meetings](#)

Thanks for reading.

If you liked this email, share it using the buttons below.
Did someone share this with you? To sign up or view previous editions, [click here](#).



workforce
SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

Share

Tweet

Share

Forward

Workforce Southwest Washington
805 Broadway, Suite 412 | Vancouver, WA 98660

You are receiving this because of your interest in workforce development. WSW is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Washington Relay 711.

[Preferences](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)