



**workforce**  
SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Julia Maglione, [jmaglione@workforcesw.org](mailto:jmaglione@workforcesw.org), 360.567.3176

**Workforce Southwest Washington secures \$25,000 for services to support employment for South Kelso and Highlands neighborhood residents**

**COWLITZ COUNTY (Sep. 17, 2020)** – Residents of the South Kelso and Highlands neighborhoods will soon have additional resources and services to help them obtain a job or keep an existing one.

In August, Workforce Southwest Washington (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.

“Parents are unable to keep a job without access to reliable childcare and transportation,” said Kevin Perkey CEO of Workforce Southwest Washington. “These supportive services are crucial to the success of individuals seeking to improve their skills to get a job, advance or retain employment. These generous grants from the Community Foundation enable the workforce system to provide complete wrap-around services to help people in the neighborhoods as they seek to provide for their families.”

The Community Foundation grants are in addition to the \$1.6 million WSW, as the local workforce development board, 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.

To date, approximately 37 residents have benefited from this initiative, attending WorkSource workshops and receiving training in a variety of areas, including soft skills, technology, commercial driver’s license (CDL), and certified nursing assistant (CNA), among others. Cowlitz County Habitat for Humanity is providing mentoring and networking through its Neighborhood Resource Coordination Council (NRCC). Helping individuals build a network aids in their professional development and career advancement.

Residents of South Kelso and the Highlands neighborhood wanting information about this initiative and no-cost job and employment services should contact WorkSource’s Talent Development Specialist Stephanie Moore at 360-578-4220 or [stmoore@esd.wa.gov](mailto:stmoore@esd.wa.gov) for details.

The initiative includes a business component designed to improve employee retention by providing companies access to a Retention and Engagement coach who assists current workers with improving their skills and connecting them to supports in the community for help with housing, transportation and other challenges that might impact their ability to work. Five companies are currently participating, and 15 employees are being assisted, while more than 25 individuals have received referrals to community resources for help with rent, unemployment insurance and utilities.

*Serving businesses, job seekers and youth in Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties.*



**workforce**  
SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

Companies can get assistance from a Retention and Engagement coach by contacting Amryn Scott at WorkSource at [ascott@esd.wa.gov](mailto:ascott@esd.wa.gov) or 360-726-2930.

By investing in the adjoining neighborhoods, WSW hopes to address three concerns: (1) residents say finding and keeping work is challenging due to travel expenses and limited childcare availability, (2) nearby companies report difficulty recruiting and retaining a local workforce, and (3) as their wages increase, individuals may fall over the “benefits cliff” and lose access to services such as childcare or housing, further impeding their ability to keep a job and continuing the cycle of poverty.

WSW’s proposal was one of four in the State to be accepted for the Governor’s “Economic Security for All” (EcSA) poverty-reduction pilot project, which runs from July 1, 2019, to March 31, 2022.

###

**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 attract, 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 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](http://www.workforcesw.org).

**WorkSource** is a statewide partnership of state, local and nonprofit agencies that provides an array of employment and training services to job seekers in Washington State. Customers access services electronically through [www.WorkSourceWA.com](http://www.WorkSourceWA.com) or a network of more than 60 WorkSource centers, affiliates and connection sites across Washington State. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the local WorkSource centers in Kelso and Vancouver are providing services virtually, including job search support, funding for job retraining, workshops and classes, connections to housing, childcare, transportation, food assistance and other support services. View information about the Southwest Washington WorkSource centers and local job openings at [www.WorkSourceSWSWA.com](http://www.WorkSourceSWSWA.com).

WSW and WorkSource are equal opportunity employers/programs.  
Auxiliary aids are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Washington Relay 711.

*Serving businesses, job seekers and youth in Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties.*

805 Broadway, Suite 412 | Vancouver, WA 98660

[www.workforcesw.org](http://www.workforcesw.org)

360.567.1070