



workforce  
SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON



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**Workforce Southwest Washington Partners with Career Karma  
to provide underrepresented populations access to tech training and careers**

**Vancouver, Wash. (Sept. 2, 2020)** – [Workforce Southwest Washington](#) (WSW) is 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 applying, interviewing and being accepted into a coding bootcamp. With mentoring, participants build a professional network and social capital.

“Increasing the number of women and people of color in the tech industry brings a diversity of experience and new perspectives which will strengthen and benefit the industry,” said Kevin Perkey, CEO of Workforce Southwest Washington. “We’ve seen during the COVID-19 pandemic that individuals with tech jobs were able to work from home and remain employed. Our partnership with Career Karma will provide more people access to those careers.”

A Columbia-Willamette Workforce Collaborative [Technology Labor Market Report](#) shows that in the Portland-Vancouver Metro Area in 2017, women held approximately 32 percent of jobs in the technology industry and just 21 percent of tech workers were from underrepresented communities. In software occupations the gap is even more pronounced with data from first quarter of 2020 showing women holding only 22 percent of those jobs in Clark County.

To help more women and people of color get the training and skills to secure tech jobs, WSW will provide funding for a two-year pilot that will include recruiting and placing 20 people per year into one of Career Karma’s training programs. The 40 trainees will have access to a WorkSource Talent Development Specialist who will provide career coaching and wrap-around support, including a laptop computer, access to childcare, transportation and other services.

WSW will invest in an additional 30 laptops through Career Karma’s [ReSkill America Initiative](#) and launch a regional check-out system so individuals in need can complete job training programs. WorkSource will manage the check-out system, which will be operational within the next six months.

Local tech companies wishing to be part of the Career Karma app can get assistance from WSW in the coming months. This will provide them access to the new trainees and a local pool of talent for hiring.

“More than 1.5 billion students now have to study online due to school closures caused by COVID-19,” said Ruben Harris, CEO of Career Karma. The problem is that most people have a smartphone, but many

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

people from underestimated backgrounds don't have laptops. If you want to get a job working remotely or study online you need a device to get you there and partnering with Workforce Southwest Washington, gets us there. We are excited to test out this pilot and so we can help workforce boards use Career Karma software across the country to help people get jobs."

Career Karma recently put together a report called the "[State of the Bootcamp Market 2020](#)" that shares the most comprehensive research covering the last decade of job outcomes for people getting jobs through bootcamps.

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**About Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW)** – WSW funds community prosperity by investing in services that help individuals gain skills to find a good-paying job 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. A nonprofit organization founded in 2002, 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).

**About Career Karma** – Career Karma matches people to job training programs to get high-paying jobs in tech in less than a year. They work with 450+ job training programs and the main roles people get are focused on software engineering, design, data science, cybersecurity, and sales. Eligible Schools for the Laptops (<https://careerkarma.com/apply>) When enrolled, participants use Career Karma software to get support through coaching and peer-mentorship in a group called a Squad. After job training is complete, Career Karma uploads student projects to showcase their portfolio to employers. Career Karma completed Y Combinator's Winter Batch in 2019 and now has over 100,000+ users. Learn more at <https://careerkarma.com/>.