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SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

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Workforce Southwest Washington Launches Summer Employment Program for Young Adults

Vancouver, Wash. (May 6, 2019) — Every minute nearly seven baby boomers turn 65, according to AARP. More than a fifth of our region's workforce is over the age of 55 and could retire within the next decade, potentially creating labor shortages when companies are struggling to find skilled workers.

To help businesses tap into a potential source of talent – young adults – and to help youth learn about the world of work, Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW), the local workforce development board for Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties, has launched SummerWorks, a summer employment program for young adults ages 16 to 21.

“A number of companies have already decided to invest in their future workforce by joining the SummerWorks program, and we're looking for more,” said Kevin Perkey, Workforce Southwest Washington CEO.

SummerWorks is designed to provide businesses with qualified employees that can assist with a variety of tasks or project-based assignments. Before being placed at a business, the young adults receive 40 hours of work-skills training and are pre-screened for fit with the company.

SummerWorks handles payroll and covers wages, insurance and taxes for 90 hours of work experience with the company. Hours and days per week are decided by the business and talent. Companies provide supervision and direction and approve time sheets.

Numerous companies have already signed up to hire a SummerWorks intern, including nonprofit organizations, healthcare, automotive, retail and a variety of other local businesses.

Interested companies and organizations should contact Benton Waterous at 360.567.3182 or bwaterous@workforcesw.org.

According to a JP Morgan Chase report, local economies benefit from having young people with greater purchasing power and the skills and experience to compete in the workforce. And employers can benefit from the creation of a better-trained, more experienced and diverse workforce pipeline.

Companies have much to gain by hiring young adults for summer or part-time jobs, including an opportunity to see the abilities of potential candidates and train them to their standards, engagement with an important audience of potential customers and/or talent pool, fresh perspective and innovative and novel ways of thinking about business.

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

The report also states that summer jobs are directly linked to positive short- and long-term outcomes for teens such as higher graduation rates, better future employment prospects and increased earnings later in life.

The program will serve 220 students. Student enrollment is being coordinated by Educational Service District 112. Clark County students should contact Becky Mohagen at 360.952.3453 or becky.mohagen@esd112.org. Individuals in Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties should contact Christine Katon at 360.355.3119 or christine.katon@esd112.org.

This project is funded by the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, with funds provided through Workforce Southwest Washington.

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SummerWorks is an initiative of Workforce Southwest Washington. SummerWorks and Workforce Southwest Washington are equal opportunity employers/programs. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Washington Relay Service 711.

Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW), a nonprofit organization founded in 2002, contributes to regional economic growth by providing investments and resources to improve the skills and education of the workforce in Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties. WSW-funded programs operated by WorkSource and community-based organizations help businesses recruit, train and retain talent and provide individuals with the skills, education and training to find work or advance in their careers. Learn more at www.workforcesw.org.