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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Workforce Southwest Washington promotes Benton Waterous to Director of Programs

Vancouver, Wash. (Feb. 3, 2022) – Benton Waterous has been promoted to Director of Programs for Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW). In his new role, Waterous will provide overall direction and operational management of services and programs, primarily contracted federal- and state-funded programs. In addition, he will oversee program implementation processes, budget, performance, data management and contracted service providers and lead community partnerships and grant and revenue development activities.

“Benton has been instrumental in supporting and leading our programmatic investments over the last four years. He always asks difficult questions and promotes an environment of continuous learning and critical thought both with our team and our partners,” said WSW CEO Miriam Halliday. “We are thrilled to have him as our new director and look forward to continuing to make strides toward an equitable economic recovery and a region where economic prosperity and growth exists for every person.”

In his almost four years with WSW, Waterous has spearheaded programs serving youth, led initiatives that developed new job seeker trainings at WorkSource and served on committees to improve economic mobility for residents.

“I believe the public workforce system is one of the most potent tools our region has to materially improve the lives of working people, energize the economy and empower local communities,” said Benton Waterous, WSW’s new Director of Programs. “I look forward to working with the WSW team to prioritize equitable investment and develop programs which intentionally engage communities that have been historically underserved, including People of Color, LGBTQIA+ people, those who are unhoused and job seekers who are parenting. In addition, WSW will deepen investments to support young adults through innovative training pathways, trauma-informed work readiness opportunities, and the expansion of paid summer employment programs.”

Among his accomplishments:

- Built and oversaw [SummerWorks](#), Southwest Washington’s largest summer youth employment program, providing hundreds of high-school age youth in Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties with paid summer jobs and workplace readiness training.
- Stewarding the “Recruit Train Place” initiative, which facilitated the creation of innovative and popular “Essential Skills” trainings at WorkSource.
- Collaborated as a member of Washington State’s “Career Connect Washington” initiative and lead WSW’s work developing new industry-driven trainings in the region.

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- Oversees [Next](#), Southwest Washington’s only “one-stop” career and employment center for youth between the ages of 16-24, which helps young adults connect with training, education, and paid work opportunities in a fun, welcoming, and trauma-informed environment. He worked side-by-side with center staff responding to COVID-19 to ensure youth received the support they need during the pandemic.
- Since 2019 has served as a member of the Fourth Plain Steering Committee for the Fourth Plain Coalition, advising on economic security issues for the city’s international district.

About Workforce Southwest Washington

Workforce 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 Cowlitz, Wahkiakum and Clark counties. WSW is a nonprofit organization and 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. Since 2003, WSW has invested more than \$100 million in Southwest Washington. Investments include employment training services for businesses, career coaching for adults, and GED programs for young adults. Learn more at www.workforcesw.org.

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WSW is an equal opportunity employer/program.

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Washington Relay 711.

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

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