



workforce
SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON



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**Workforce Southwest Washington joins WSU Vancouver
to boost career development for students and expand talent pool for businesses**

VANCOUVER, Wash. (Aug. 21, 2020)– Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW) has awarded WSU Vancouver \$150,000 over three years to support a new Employment Engagement Coordinator on campus and to enable students to gain work experience while still in college.

The funds are provided through a contract between the regional workforce system and the public university system. While helping students access workforce opportunities and resources, the arrangement also ensures that WSW's business and industry partners have qualified, home-grown talent ready to fill the region's in-demand occupations and grow the regional economy.

"Our hope is the partnership with WSU Vancouver will lead to more businesses engaging with students and creating opportunities such as internships and on-the-job training that benefit both students and business," said Kevin Perkey, CEO of Workforce Southwest Washington. "The goal is to create professional connections that build social capital for the students and lead to full-time employment, so our local businesses can fill open jobs with local talent."

According to WSU Vancouver Chancellor Mel Netzhammer, having an Employment Engagement Coordinator on campus benefits the university in multiple ways. "It advances our community service mission and helps students prepare for careers and leadership," he said. "While we offer many internships through individual departments, this is a step toward developing an integrated, campus-wide program that not only focuses on student success but also aligns with regional economic strategies."

The new coordinator will be part of WSU Vancouver's Student Affairs and Enrollment department and will begin work this fall. The coordinator's duties include helping to provide comprehensive career support to students, building partnerships with business and organizational leaders, and developing opportunities to serve the workforce needs of businesses and industry.

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About Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW)

WSW funds services that help people 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 Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties. Learn more at www.workforcesw.org.

The program's first year is financed by a \$50,000 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act grant from the U.S. Department of Labor (67% of total program costs) provided through Workforce Southwest Washington, and \$25,000 leveraged funds (33% of program costs) from WSU Vancouver.

About WSU Vancouver

As one of six campuses of the WSU system, WSU Vancouver offers big-school resources in a small-school environment. Both online and in person, the university provides affordable, high-quality baccalaureate- and graduate-level education to benefit the people and communities it serves. As the only four-year research university in Southwest Washington, WSU Vancouver helps drive economic growth through relationships with local businesses and industries, schools and nonprofit organizations.