



SEPTEMBER 2023



Next celebrates opening in 2018 with a ribbon cutting ceremony hosted by [Greater Vancouver Chamber](#)

What's Next? Youth employment center celebrates five years of successes

Five years ago, [Next](#), our region's only youth career and employment center, opened its doors to provide holistic career, education, training and support services for young adults ages 16 to 24.

[Workforce Southwest Washington \(WSW\)](#) founded Next to meet the needs of a growing population of young adults who were not in school or working. As of the [2022 Opportunity Youth Report](#), there are an estimated 34,000 young adults who are not working or in school in the Southwest Washington-Portland metropolitan area. Of those, approximately 8,220 reside in Clark County and 1,927 are in Cowlitz, Wahkiakum and Pacific counties.

[Read More](#)



September is Workforce Development Month!

We are proud to be the local workforce board serving Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties. Our goal is for Southwest Washington to be a place where economic prosperity and growth exists for every person and that businesses have access to skilled workers.

To achieve this regional goal, we provide services to businesses, invest in and oversee workforce programs for job seekers and young adults, and partner with business, education, labor and economic development to meet workforce demands.

We invite you to explore our no-cost services for businesses in Southwest Washington, including:

- Employee recruitment and retention
- Strategies and assistance to improve job quality

- Business growth
- Industry specific services
- Hiring young people
- Market data
- And more!

[Learn more about services](#)

Workforce Southwest Washington welcomes three new board members

In June, WSW welcomed three new members to our Board of Directors. WSW's Board of Directors is composed of representatives from business, workforce and organized labor, post-secondary education, economic and community development entities and governmental agencies.

Join us in welcoming Nick Massie, Ebony Price and Bill Sauters, Jr. to our board!

[Read more](#)



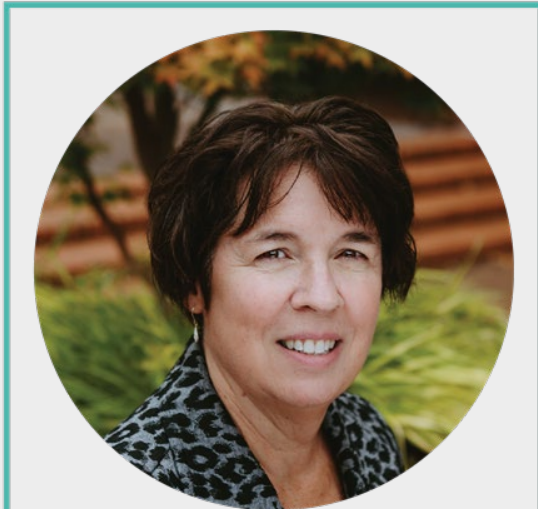
Recovery Month: Recruit, retain and support employees in recovery

Employees in recovery are a strong and resilient talent pool. Businesses looking to tap into this workforce can implement strategies and connect to resources to recruit and retain employees in recovery.

Workforce Southwest Washington provides strategies and resources in the [Accessible Hiring and Onboarding Guide](#) to help businesses and organizations improve accessibility and equity in the workplace, including for those in recovery.

Our community has a network of organizations offering recovery career resources, such as [Chai Rivers Recovery Café](#) in Cowlitz County, [Recovery Café of Clark County](#) and [Recovery Career Services](#). These organizations provide support and resources for those recovery and for businesses looking to recruit, retain and support employees in recovery.

Meet the Fiscal Team!



BARRI BLAIR
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

As the **Chief Financial Officer**, **Barri Blair** is responsible for accounting, maintenance of fiscal records, preparation of financial reports and supervision of fiscal staff.

Before joining WSW, Barri held positions in accounting at a variety of different organizations, including a collections agency, a grain merchandising company and freelance for nonprofits.

Barri finds the most fulfilling part of her job to be helping others on the team learn all about the fiscal side of workforce development, which helps allow them to do their jobs well.

Outside of work, Barri enjoys playing with her dogs and spending time with her family. She might be found camping, traveling, reading a good book or watching a movie.

Get in touch with Barri by email at bblair@workforcesw.org or by phone at 360.567.3171.



DENISE ELLIOTT
SENIOR ACCOUNTANT

Meet **Denise Elliott**, WSW's **Senior Accountant**. Denise is responsible for billings, quarterly grant actual versus budget reporting, payroll and general ledger activities.

Prior to working at WSW, Denise spent 19 years at a for-profit, publicly traded tech company in various accounting roles.

Denise finds the most fulfilling part of her job to be taking raw data and organizing it into something useful, such as a billing or report.

Outside of work, she enjoys playing with her cats, gardening and knitting. Her daughter recently got her into diamond painting which she finds to be relaxing.

Get in touch with Denise by email at delliott@workforcesw.org or by phone at 360.809.1416.



LINDA CZECH
CONTRACTS MANAGER

In her position as **Contracts Manager**, **Linda Czech** facilitates the drafting, development and execution of contracts to subrecipients and professional services. Linda also processes incoming invoices for accounts payable and enters transactions into our accounting system.

Before joining WSW, Linda worked in retail and customer-facing roles.

For Linda, the most fulfilling part of her job is working with her talented coworkers and meeting the organizations that implement WSW programs.

Outside of work, Linda enjoys working on art projects, working in her yard, hanging out with her dog and getting outside.

Get in touch with Linda by email at lczech@workforcesw.org or by phone at 360.567.3186.



KALI DUGAN
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE
SPECIALIST

Kali Dugan is WSW's **Accounts Payable Specialist**. She manages cash flow, pays vendors and sub-recipients, audits various accounts and assists with sub-recipient monitoring.

Before joining WSW, Kali spent over 16 years in private sector publishing and held similar positions at those companies.

For Kali, the best part of her job is being able to work with folks who have “boots on the ground,” doing the very important and essential work of helping other human beings as they traverse through life.

When not working, Kali enjoys hiking, crafts, swimming, reading and playing with her wonderful dog.

Get in touch with Kali by email at kdugan@workforcesw.org or by phone at 360.567.3184.

**Youth Connect: Convening youth providers
in Southwest Washington**



Thank you to [iUrban Teen](#) for sharing your space to host our latest Youth Connect event in July!

The Youth Connect events bring together organizations that serve youth to share resources and expertise. The latest session focused on outreach and engagement, with discussion into creative storytelling, event planning and targeted marketing.

Are you an organization that serves youth and young adults in Southwest Washington? Contact Lyn Love at llove@workforcesw.org to get connected to upcoming Youth Connect events.

Workforce program in Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties help individuals, families Thrive



George participated in the Commercial Driver's License Program at Right Way Driving School in Kelso, WA

Thrive is a workforce program in Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties that trains and places individuals into jobs that promote self-sufficiency for families.

In the four years since the program launched, 521 people have enrolled in the program, 43 people have engaged in workforce training and 129 participants were placed into unsubsidized employment.

This spring, Workforce Southwest Washington and WorkSource Kelso invested in Commercial Driver's License training to upskill workers into a career path that promotes self-sufficiency.

[Listen to George's story](#)

CLACKAMAS WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP CLEAN SLATE CLACKAMAS

A Step Forward

Inclusive Recruitment & Retention

Hidden Keys to Second Chance Hiring & Best Practices
Keynote Speaker: **Ty Reed** of **Recovery Career Services**

WEDNESDAY

20TH | 11:30AM - 1:30PM

REGISTER NOW

www.clackamasworkforce.org



Clackamas Workforce Partnership hosting event on inclusive recruitment and retention

Ty Reed of [Recovery Career Services](#) will present a discussion on second-chance hiring and a workshop for employers to look at their policies around hiring people with felony convictions. A participant, Ashley, will share her story of how expungement has changed her life.

Tumwater Ballroom | 211 Tumwater Drive Oregon City, OR 97045
September 20, 2023 | 11:30 am – 1:30 pm.

Use code WORKFORCE for \$15 off per ticket.

[Register online](#)

Community organizations: New program to help underserved communities navigate unemployment benefits

The Washington State Employment Security Department will host a virtual applicants' conference from 10 a.m. to noon on Wednesday, Sept. 13 for organizations interested in the Unemployment Insurance Navigator Program.

Community organization "Navigators" will help potential claimants file unemployment claims and will also help claimants better understand unemployment claim processes and related services. Organizations selected by the Employment Security Department will receive up to \$500,000 to help their communities.

[Learn more](#)



PACE
Professional and
Corporate Education

Upgrade your skills this fall with the Washington State University Vancouver Professional and Corporate Education program.

Courses offered this fall include:

- Business Analytics with Power BI
- Change Management
- SQL for Beginners
- Leading with Finance
- Applied Machine Learning
- Communications Skills for Business
- Social Media Marketing
- Python for Beginners
- Quickbooks

[Register online](#)

WORKFORCE SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON IN THE NEWS

The Columbian

Workforce Southwest Washington helps train, retain health care workers

There are chronic employee shortages in the region's health care system. Nowhere is that more apparent than in the area's long-term care facilities. It's a hurdle that Workforce Southwest Washington is working to overcome.

[Read more](#)

The Columbian

Clark County Council discusses economic development, workforce

Clark County's economic development future will depend on the availability of trained and skilled workers to replace the Interstate 5 Bridge or create the Waterfront Gateway project.

[Read more](#)

Vancouver Family Magazine

Next steps: Young adults find support and mentoring on their career path

A program called Next, offered through Workforce of Southwest Washington (WSW), seeks to prepare young people age 16-24 to compete for these jobs, whether they are in or out of school. "Next is essentially a one-stop center for young adults . . . we basically help them wherever they're at in their life," says Next's director, Haley Hansen. "Whatever their next step might look like for them, we help them get there."

[Read more](#)

PARTNER NEWS & EVENTS

[Longview biogas plant to add up to 40 jobs by 2024](#) - The Daily News

[Let's Connect - "Connecting People, Not Dots"](#) - October 5 and 6 at the Vancouver Hilton

[Clark College gets \\$1M in federal funding to develop Center for Clean Energy](#) - The Columbian

[Clark College gets grant for surgical technician program](#) - The Columbian

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 recruit, train and retain workers. Our investments strengthen the region's businesses and contribute to a strong economy. Since 2003, we've invested more than \$126 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.

[Read our Blogs](#)

[Explore our Data](#)

[Upcoming Board Meetings](#)

Thanks for reading.

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Workforce Southwest Washington

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You are receiving this because of your interest in workforce development. WSW is an equal opportunity

employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Washington Relay

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