

Handout Summary
Workforce Board Meeting
July 10, 2019

Washington Workforce Association (WWA) Response Letter: At the June Meeting, the Board took action to approve a letter allowing for the postponement of performance evaluation and sanctions for the 12 Workforce Development Councils for the 2019 program year. Included in the Brown folder is the WWA's response to that letter.

Rural Community Vitality Forum DRAFT Summary Report: Workforce Board staff, with support from a consultant team from Maher and Maher (funded by the US Department of Labor) planned and convened a series of Business Breakfasts and Community Vitality Forums in Toppenish, Aberdeen, Colville, and Quincy. The full report of the findings from those convenings is still in progress. Included is a summary of the findings from the convenings.

Workforce Board-Inspired Initiatives: At the June retreat, the Board asked staff to compile a binder to be made available at each meeting, including historical and reference materials. Part of putting together that binder included updating the Board's achievements. Included is your own copy of Board inspired initiatives for your review.



June 21, 2019

Suzi LeVine
Commissioner
WA State Employment Security Department
P.O. Box 9046
Olympia, WA 98507

Eleni Papadakis
Executive Director
Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board
128 10th Avenue SW
PO Box 43105
Olympia, WA 98504-3105

Dear Suzi and Eleni:

On behalf of the Washington Workforce Association (WWA), I want to thank you for your partnership and transparent leadership approach. The WDCs have received the June 12th letter that acknowledges the failed May 2016 launch of the statewide management information system called Efforts to Outcomes (ETO), and your plan moving forward to provide a fully functional and user-friendly system that will accurately track and report valid data needed to oversee performance. As your letter indicates, tracking performance is one of a local Board's primary duties. We take that responsibility seriously. The failure of ETO has frustrated our business-led Board of Directors because we are not able to answer their reasonable questions about performance.

I want to assure you that the WDCs are committed to providing continued support in the form of input, guidance and expertise so that the target dates you have established to clean up all data and launch a new system can be achieved. However, we ask that you proceed in the leanest way possible so that the local systems are not overtaxed like it had been with the development and implementation of ETO. Given how broken the current system is, given the complexity of the fix, and given that you are still relying on a vendor that has failed to produce what was and is expected, the WDCs are understandably skeptical that a new and fully functional system will be ready by July 1, 2020.



As you are aware, WWA along with your staff, are researching available systems that can be implemented as an interim solution should a delay in this effort occur. It is imperative that WDCs have the ability to track and access reliable performance data, for at least the WIOA Title I programs, to meet its statutory obligations. WWA has established October as the benchmark month to determine whether adequate progress has been made toward achieving the goals of clean data and a functional product ready to deploy next July. If WWA determines that progress has been made, our confidence in meeting established deadlines will increase, and a new benchmark month will be established. If we determine that progress is not being made, we must begin immediate work to implement an interim system. We want your assurance that, should we not meet the deadlines for progress, we will get your support for such an interim system.

Again, we are committed to working closely with you and your team throughout this process. We appreciate your continued partnership and focus on this matter.

Sincerely,

Linda Nguyen, CEO, WorkForce Central
Chair, Washington Workforce Association

cc: WWA Directors
Perry England, Chair, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board



June 12, 2019

Elizabeth Court
614 Division Street, MS-23
Port Orchard, WA 98366

Re: Olympic WDC WIOA Performance Measurement

Dear Elizabeth:

Thank you for your and Olympic WDC's partnership and your important role in the statewide workforce system!

Performance measurement and accountability is one of the 13 primary local board duties established in Section 116 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The purpose of measurement is to determine whether or not we are achieving positive outcomes for individuals served by those programs.

In May 2016, the Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD) implemented a new case management system, Efforts to Outcomes (ETO). Unfortunately, this system failed to fully deliver what was needed – including valid data that could be reported to the Federal Government. ESD formally notified its technology vendor in August 2016 of these shortcomings, many of which remain unresolved.

As a result, the integrity of current WIOA Title I-B performance data has been called into question. Specifically, ESD's technology vendor has not met its contractual obligation to provide an accurate, validated Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) Report.

Work is underway to replace ETO, however, the data continues to be unreliable. ESD is striving to have prior data cleaned up and ongoing data tracking improved by the end of calendar year 2019. ESD plans to launch the replacement case management system by the summer of 2020.

The U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) will begin binding negotiations and performance assessments with the PY2020-2021 negotiations in the spring of 2020. The first year for potential USDOL sanctions will be 2023, as that is the point at which two full years of accurate data will be available.

Elizabeth Court
Olympic WDC WIOA Performance Measurement
June 12, 2019

Accordingly, given the current state of Washington's WIOA Title I-B data, in the event that a local area does not meet its performance targets, ESD will not recommend, and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board will not sanction, the respective Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB). While we will not issue sanctions for failure to meet performance targets in PY19, LWDBs must continue to properly determine eligibility and ensure funds are spent according to federal and state requirements.

In addition, because WIOA law, rule, and guidance require the State to report local area performance to USDOL on a quarterly and annual basis, local WIOA Title I-B staff and contractors must continue entering accurate data into ETO in a timely manner as required by WorkSource System Policy 1020 (Data Integrity and Performance Policy and Handbook) and associated guidance in WorkSource Information Notice 0082 (Real-Time Data Entry). Such data entry is not only federally-mandated, it is also important for the purpose of establishing baselines for future local target negotiations once the current data issues in ETO are resolved.

We will continue to work and communicate openly with you on matters pertaining to the case management system and federal performance reporting. We appreciate your dedication to serving your customers and we anticipate that the future improvements to the system described above will give us confidence in the integrity of our system.

We fully recognize that, as Peter Drucker said, "You can't manage what you don't measure." We apologize that we are in this situation. Please rest assured that we are working very hard to remedy it as quickly as possible!

If you have any questions or concerns, we are available, as are our staff, to discuss. Please contact Special Executive Assistant to the Commissioner, Mari McGill or Executive Assistant, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, Erica Wollen, to set something up. Mari can be reached at 360-878-1840 or by email at mmcgill@esd.wa.gov. Erica can be reached at 360-709-4600 or by email at erica.wollen@wtb.wa.gov.

Sincerely,



Suzan G. LeVine
Commissioner
Employment Security Department



Eleni Papadakis
Executive Director
Workforce Training and Education
Coordinating Board

cc: Perry England, Chair, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

Rural Community Vitality Forums

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Summary of Key Themes

Washington continues to be the highest economic growth state in the country—three years running. Yet, as we move into the next round of strategic planning and review system results, it is clear that many communities are not benefitting from this economic boom. The rural and remote regions of our state continue to experience high unemployment levels, while local businesses report having trouble finding skilled workers. The data also tells us that crime rates, especially violent or gun-related crime, is growing, as is drug use. Homelessness, food insecurity, and school disengagement are also on the rise. It appears that the public structures and resources committed to economic, community, and workforce vitality, including the strategies outlined in the state's workforce plan, Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP), are not sufficiently addressing the needs of our rural communities. As we enter into the next phase of TAP planning, it will be important to understand the conditions and context of the various rural regions of Washington.

Workforce Board staff, with support from a consultant team from Maher and Maher (funded by USDOL) planned and convened a series of Business Breakfasts and Community Vitality Forums in Toppenish, Aberdeen, Colville and Quincy in April and May 2019. The purpose of the breakfasts and forums were to: 1) listen to rural stakeholders' economic and workforce development hopes and concerns; 2) determine emerging and existing rural community needs and explore economic vitality goals of each region and stakeholder group; 3) identify potential strategies and tools for increasing rural economic vitality; and 4) gather forum participants' "Big Ideas" to inform policymakers and shape workforce development policies for the next four years.

Each forum was well attended by a wide range of local stakeholders, including businesses and local business organizations, community-based organizations, and interested citizens, although the majority of attendees were from state, federal, tribal, and local government entities. A full report that describes each of the four forums will be made available later this month on our website

(<http://www.wtb.wa.gov/RuralCommunityVitalityForums.asp>). You will also find on this site an economic overview and presentation materials for each of the forums, and a "roundup webinar."

While each forum was unique, key themes emerged that cut across all regions:

- **Local/regional rural economies need to be diversified to be recession-proof and to recruit and keep talent.** Agriculture, lumber, fishing, and tourism were primary industries among the various regions, and in their heyday provided fodder for a robust economic ecosystem in each community. However, as these sectors declined, the businesses that supported them disappeared. Each region asked for support to diversify their local economies.
- **Government laws and regulations, designed for urban areas, inadvertently hamper rural growth and development.** Most public policy is developed for the greatest impact on the largest number of people or businesses, which often results in a focus on urban centers, almost by definition. Rules that govern how funds are distributed, or that set parameters for necessary infrastructure and support were highlighted often as being in conflict with the rural context. The state's subsidized early childcare program (ECEAP) came up often as an example. The payment rates are based on a consistent number of children, within particular age categories, in care per day or week. Attendees reported that it is difficult in small communities for home childcare providers to recruit and maintain enough children in the

Rural Community Vitality Forums

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Summary of Key Themes

appropriate age categories to meet the threshold for reimbursement. Home child care providers often don't survive in business, or cater only to self-pay families. Attending employers reported lack of or loss of childcare as a barrier to hiring or retaining workers. Another often cited example was regarding transportation costs not being factored into the cost of service delivery for education and social services.

- **Workforce/education/economic development must speak with one voice to the business community.** Businesses reported feeling overwhelmed by the numbers of public entities that they dealt with, and the differing answers or information they received depending on which entity they spoke with. They would like to see communication and coordination among public entities that deal with the same customers or work on different aspects of the same situation (i.e., business growth may require support for capital, regulatory compliance, upskilling of current workforce, hiring new workers). They also asked that government entities understand the constraints of small businesses, including most rural businesses, where the one individual who can handle interactions with the public sector is usually also a working manager of the business.
- **Career-connected learning and paid work experience, such as OJT and apprenticeship, can fill the talent void when traditional education options aren't accessible, and can help change the new culture of youth disenfranchisement in our rural communities.** There are limited resources to coordinate learning on the work-site within educational pathways. Almost all the businesses that participated in the forums offered their workplaces to support student learning, and as partners to educational and other programs. But they also acknowledged that they can't/won't be responsible for the student's educational learning goals without a strong educational partner. They also wanted it understood that work-based learning schedules and models must fit the rhythm of each workplace, and might require a robust learning experience to include time at multiple workplaces. Design flexibility is a necessity. For registered apprenticeships, they suggested that a multi-workplace apprenticeship might be necessary in areas where small employers can't absorb additional full-time employees. Employers also stated that they needed help navigating the laws around on-the-job training models, especially child labor and safety laws.
- **Need for study/understanding of societal issues in a rural context.** Policy analysis and performance evaluation reports rarely disaggregate the impact on rural areas. The number of affected individuals is often too small to meet de-identification standards, or the data may not be available through certain administrative records, such as certain census tract data which is reported by metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs). The suggestion was made at least once in each forum that new policies or policy research and evaluation should be viewed through a rural lens whenever possible.
- **Navigators for public services and information needed by businesses, workers, and communities.** Small population numbers in rural communities result in few full-time FTEs available to assist individuals, families, and businesses on a regular basis. Attendees suggested that investment by the state in navigational services would likely make use of public services much more efficient and effective. There were many stories provided of calling or meeting with numerous individuals within numerous agencies

Rural Community Vitality Forums

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to try to find answers or resources to address a particular problem. The suggestion was made that individuals who are assigned to work in rural areas might be cross-trained to have basic understanding of a wide-range of services and resources that might be available across agencies or departments, and have a directory of contacts for referral.

- **State grant opportunities don't take into consideration the challenges of rural applicants.** State agencies will often provide grant opportunities to pilot new program models, research new policy issues, or add resources to a new or existing effort. Grant development and grant writing require staff to be available during specific, but random, periods of time, and to have the appropriate skills and competencies to develop a winnable proposal. It is rare that rural organizations have available staff support, let alone with grant writing skills. Larger, better funded organizations will often hire a grant writer. The point was also made that pilot or demonstration projects are often funded to help inform new, sustainable programs or policies. Once again, the rural context is likely to be inadvertently overlooked in policy-making if rural communities are excluded from the learning laboratory stage.
- **Pros & cons of cannabis: An economic driver while adversely affecting the workforce/industry.** Many job applicants and current workers can't pass the employer's drug test. Attendees reported a lack of understanding by young people and adults about the impact of cannabis use on their employment potential, driving safety, family and social interactions and other important life domains. An education and awareness campaign was recommended by many. There was also acknowledgement that tourism numbers rose with the legalization of marijuana, although those numbers dwindled as more states passed legalization legislation.
- **Solution-finding will result from partnerships in a rural context—community, state, federal, for-profit and not-for-profit—but public funds needed to support intermediary roles.** Much like the need for navigators, attendees expressed a need for intermediaries to work across public-private chasms to identify local problems. Understand the root causes of those problems, and then work across all sectors to find and implement solutions. Many examples were provided about partnership groups forming to address pressing and complex problems facing a community. Partnership is in the DNA of rural communities. However, we learned that very often partnership efforts waned or even failed for lack of a permanent intermediary to keep members coming to the table and fulfilling their project-based assignments together. Again, it is difficult to find permanently available FTEs for this purpose.
- **Clear value proposition is needed by Washington's policymakers about the state's rural communities.** Many comments and questions arose across all the forums about whether or not Olympia-based policymakers can articulate the value of rural Washington, which, attendees believe, hampers the creation of policies that support rural vitality and revitalization.



Workforce Board- Inspired Initiatives

A Look Back and A Look Forward



WASHINGTON

Workforce
Training & Education Coordinating
Board

Workforce Board-Inspired Initiatives

A Look Back and a Look Forward



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Business Engagement

Industry Skill Panels, the HSHW Strategic Fund, and Centers of Excellence

The Board created the concept of Industry Skill Panels (ISP) in 1999, after a longitudinal analysis of the system's impact on narrowing the Skills Gap. ISPs are public/private partnerships of business, labor, and education forming alliances to improve the skills of workers in industries vital to Washington's economy. In 2000, the Board secured funding for ISP pilots, the success of which kept a combination of federal (WIA) and state funds flowing until 2010.

The WA ISP concept did not include funding for new education or training programs, instead focusing on making better use of existing funds. A "proof of concept" report was commissioned by the Board in 2009, which showed the value of this effort from the industry perspective, and the return on investment to tax-payers due to enhanced employment and earnings results. In 2009, in order to address concerns that incumbent worker funding was inaccessible to ISPs, the next generation of ISPs was created, called the High Skills, High Wages, Strategic Fund. In addition to incumbent worker training funds, the grant program also required that applications demonstrate a partnership between local workforce and economic development entities. By 2010, only WIA discretionary funds were available to support this initiative. That funding was first reduced due to conflicting administrative priorities and then eliminated entirely by Congress.

In 2003, the Board determined that the locally-oriented strategy was resulting in some duplication across regions and some important activities ended at the grant life. For example, all 12 regions implemented healthcare ISPs in partnership with community and technical colleges. Wanting to capture and share learning across the CTC system, and maintain lasting industry relationships beyond the life of ISP grants, the Center of Excellence (COE) concept was created and supported. Initial funding was provided by a combination of ISP and Carl Perkins funding, and soon after was funded entirely through the CTC system. To date there are 11 COEs, which the Workforce Board uses as a vehicle regularly, for its multiple pathway, Program of Study, and industry-specific efforts such as in healthcare and advanced manufacturing. The Board worked to incorporate the best practices proven by the ISP concept into most relevant funding initiatives across the system, including Department of Commerce and SBCTC initiatives. The Board also supported technical assistance to local partners and the development of guidance materials. An analysis done in 2011 showed that 44 ISPs or the concept were in place across the state and covering the state's major industry clusters.

Status: In Washington, recession-era priorities and funding shifts have impacted the continuation of the ISP concept. We do not know how many ISPs continue or if new ISPs are being created. However, the Board helped to influence the value for forming and supporting regional industry skill panels as a national priority. The Board helped NGA to encourage skill panel initiatives nationwide, including offering a "policy academy" to help instruct states on effective policy making and implementation of the ISP concept. At this point, at least 30 states have implemented similar programs.

Workforce Board-Inspired Initiatives

A Look Back and a Look Forward



Lifelong Learning Accounts (LiLA)

In 2007, the Workforce Board formed a lifelong learning steering committee. The committee agreed on the principles for a *Lifelong Learning Account (LiLA)* initiative. The committee informed a HSHW 2008 Adult Strategy to: “Develop public/private financial aid support to assist working adults to gain further education and training credentials including Lifelong Learning Accounts (LiLAs) . . .” Based on this foundation work and agreement among stakeholders, the Board submitted a competitive bid application to the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and Lumina offered to test Washington’s unique college savings account model. Washington was the only state government to win a grant. LiLAs are an employee-owned educational saving account that helps pay for education and training expenses. LiLAs are owned and directed by the employee, and allows the funds to be used for either tuition or other costs associated with the employees education development plan. The account grows with pay-period contributions from both the employee and the employer. A minimum contribution level was established for the pilot, which both employer and employee needed to meet each pay period.

The Board’s 2007 winning application to CAEL expressed the Board’s belief that LiLAs provide an affordable and practical method for employers to co-invest in education and training with their employees. Washington’s LiLA embraces the principles of universal eligibility, broad use of funds, portability, voluntary participation, and informed choice. During the pilot phase, employers in Grays Harbor, Pacific, Lewis, and Thurston counties participated and still do. The Association of Washington Business (AWB) has been a key partner in the initiative. AWB serves as our state’s LiLA Trust Account Manager. Currently, about 25 employee participants across 4 employers continue to hold LiLA accounts. The pilot technically ended in 2010.

Status: On March 7, 2012, Governor Gregoire signed into law SB 6141 creating the Lifelong Learning Program, which legally defines Lifelong Learning Accounts (LiLAs). Washington is the first to adopt legislation recognizing LiLAs as an optional employee benefit. The Board was directed to provide information to those wishing to implement a LiLA program. The intention of the bill was that banking institutions would be the primary implementers, although many other entities could institute such a program. The definition allows for fee structures to support the program, with no cost to the state.

The Washington Department of Financial Institutions (DFI) has been working on the framework for banks wishing to operate LiLA. They are awaiting response from federal regulators on two critical certifications that would offer more of an enticement for banks: a) pass through protection, and b) certification under the Federal Community Reinvestment Act. Banks and other organizations, such as employers or community-based organizations, can still move forward without these certifications. However, very few organizations know about the program. Funds are required to support an awareness campaign, possibly with some level of implementation technical assistance.

As of 2019, LiLAs are still embedded in RCW 28C, though no funding has been provided to support the program in several years. Recently, efforts have been made at the federal level to advance LiLA-like policies nationally, chiefly sponsored by Rep. Derek Kilmer.

Workforce Board-Inspired Initiatives

A Look Back and a Look Forward



Make it in Washington Project

The Workforce Board is administering a portion of a \$2.7 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, National Institute of Standards and Technology, and the Economic Development Administration that provides technical assistance on exporting and technology innovation to manufacturing companies, and education and training to their workers in rural, economically-challenged parts of the state. The *Make It In Washington* project offers manufacturers several options to improve their staff, expand productivity, plan for critical staff retirements, and improve their businesses profitability by providing connections and networks to new markets, strategic consulting, supply chain identification and management training to allow manufacturers to compete for business that currently goes overseas.

The Board's component is administration of the education and training funds. The *Make It In Washington* grant pays for workers to receive online training, technical certification and college-level classes through Highline and Shoreline Community Colleges and Washington State University's Global Initiative Program. A range of between 100 and 150 workers, depending on level and type of training required, are expected to receive education and training support over two years.

Status: The lead applicant/partner for this grant is Innovate Washington, a quasi-public entity of the state that provides strategic consulting and technology commercialization for Washington companies. This organization was eliminated from the state budget. While the organization still technically exists, it is in a restructuring mode and has not been able to sustain its leadership position with this grant. The remaining partners, Workforce Board, Department of Commerce, and Impact Washington have been working together on plan modifications with federal partners. Official approval of the new plans came in April 2014. The first manufacturing company signed on June 18, 2014. Make it in Washington ended in September 2017. The final report is available at <http://wtb.wa.gov/MakeitinWashington.asp>.

Workforce Board-Inspired Initiatives

A Look Back and a Look Forward



Opportunity Partnerships

The Workforce Board administers the state funded *Opportunity Partnership Program*. The program provides industry mentors and worksite internships that offer relevant job experience to low-income postsecondary education students participating in the state's financial aid program called Opportunity Grants. For the past five years, the Board has issued grants to Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) who then work with area colleges and local businesses to connect students with industry mentors and arrange internship options. Mentor training and support is an important component of this program. The Board measures the impact of the program on training retention, completion, and transition to employment. The intent is to test whether these WDC-brokered activities have a positive impact for students, and whether the model should be expanded.

Status: The Opportunity Partnership Program projects are active in the following WDC regions: Northwest, Southwest, South Central and Spokane Area Workforce Development Councils. Workforce Board grants are currently being written for the 2014-2015 school year. In this last year alone, 125 students will complete the program. The biennial results are expected to be over 300 students completed.

Workforce Board-Inspired Initiatives

A Look Back and a Look Forward



Sector and Cluster Strategies

As recommended by the Board in its 2006 review of the workforce development system, *Washington Works*, in 2007, Governor Gregoire directed the Board, CTED, and the Economic Development Commission to “develop a plan to support coordination at the state and regional levels, with special emphasis on key economic clusters.” This led to the development of a plan called *Skills for the Next Washington*. In 2007, the Legislature passed SHB 1091, directing the Economic Development Commission and the Workforce Board to jointly convene a working group to establish criteria for identifying strategic clusters important to economic prosperity in the state. On January 22, 2009, the Board reviewed recommended methodology for identifying strategic clusters. In 2009, the Legislature enacted SHB 1323 establishing industry clusters as a central organizing framework for workforce and economic development planning and service delivery. In November 2011, after completing an extensive analysis and after consulting with Workforce Development Councils, the Board adopted state and local lists of strategic clusters for workforce development. These lists were appended to the 2012 HSHW and to local area WIA integrated plans. <http://wtb.wa.gov/ClusterRankingsAllRegions.asp>

Status: The Department of Commerce has organized activities around 8 strategic industry sectors, and the Board extensively discussed sector-based engagement during the 2016 TAP planning process and produced a toolkit for local workforce development councils to cultivate sector-based engagement strategies. The Board may consider aligning activities in these areas, or identifying targeted clusters specifically for the workforce development system, which will likely include Commerce’s sectors.

Workforce Board-Inspired Initiatives

A Look Back and a Look Forward



TAP Accelerator: Upskill-Backfill

In mid-2017, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) competitively awarded approximately \$2 million to eight projects across the state participating in an “Upskill-Backfill Initiative” (UBI) to test new approaches for engaging business as partners in developing future training pipelines. Upskill-Backfill projects braid together public and business resources to improve the workplace skills of both incumbent workers and new hires—and create new pathways to gainful employment and wage progression for job-seeking Washingtonians. The initiative was designed to improve an employer partner’s productivity and competitiveness, to thrive and grow new jobs.

The eight funded UBI projects served seven counties and were managed by a network of local partners coordinated by six local Workforce Development Councils (WDCs). The projects focused on a wide range of occupations and industries, including: healthcare, construction, manufacturing, and maritime operation. Each project is headed up by a regional WDC in conjunction with area businesses within a particular industry sector. This public-private partnership brings businesses to the table to shape the training their workers receive, while also co-investing their own resources into targeted training programs. The goal is to move more Washington workers into high demand, higher-skilled positions.

Status: All eight demonstration projects were concluded by April 30, 2019. The Upskill-Backfill Initiative trained 656 upskill participants and 170 backfill participants, totaled 826. This final training completion number was 10% above the planned outcomes (826 vs 750). Out of the 656 upskilled completers, only 157 participants received a wage increase or promotion. 161 participants were hired into backfill (or entry-level) positions. A few key take-away learnings from the initiative were:

- When working with employer partners, WIOA eligibility requirements was a barrier for scaling workforce talent
- The business cycle often determines the employer partners need for staff promotion/wage increase; completed skill training does not necessitate an immediate promotion or wage increase.

Final report with policy recommendations will be completed by end of July 2019.

Workforce Board-Inspired Initiatives

A Look Back and a Look Forward



Workforce Training for Aerospace and Materials Manufacturing

Under direction of HB 2156, the Workforce Board in conjunction with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, shall evaluate aerospace and advanced materials manufacturing training programs annually.

The Workforce Board's 2016 Annual Aerospace Report indicates that worker experience gap is pervasive and that demand is concentrated in key occupations, including machinists, CNC programmers, assemblers and engineers.

Status: The Board has not reviewed or published an annual aerospace report since 2016. The most recent report is available at: <http://www.wtb.wa.gov/aerospace.asp>.



Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Multiple Pathways

Career Bridge

Under statute, the Workforce Board is responsible for conducting evaluations and reporting performance results for a dozen key workforce development programs. The performance results are shared with the Governor, the Legislature, and other policymakers as part of a broader report dubbed Workforce Training Results. The Board also strives to make performance information accessible to the public on a wider range of education and training programs offered at Washington's postsecondary schools and colleges. In 2001, the Board created a website to post what's known as the Eligible Training Provider list. Each state is required by the U.S. Department of Labor to maintain this list of programs that meet certain performance thresholds tied to employment, earnings, and completion rates. Programs that meet those thresholds, as determined by the Workforce Board in our state, are eligible to receive federal training dollars. Back in 2001, the Board created a "consumer report" website to post performance results of training programs offered by postsecondary education institutions and apprenticeship programs—in addition to the website that showed which programs were on the Eligible Training Provider list. In 2009, in an effort to make education and career searches more user friendly, the Board consolidated the two websites into one called *Career Bridge*. Since then, Career Bridge has been "built out," improved and enhanced. The site also won a national innovation award in 2010 from the Council of State Governments. Career planning tools were added and labor market information was incorporated.

As of 2019, CareerBridge.wa.gov features over 6,500 education programs and remains the home of the state's Eligible Training Provider list. When data is available, the site provides performance results that show how many students completed a program, if they got a job, and how much they earned. In 2012, the site was updated, allowing users to save their education searches to a personal dashboard, among other improvements. The site receives about 15,000 visitors per month and last year recorded over 7 million page views.

The next big improvement coming to Career Bridge is a new digital portfolio feature expected to launch by the end of 2019. This will allow middle and high schools students, as well as adults, to save their career and education searches in one place; upload resumes, cover letters and work experience documents; and connect with teachers, counselors and others who can help keep track of their progress through a shared view of their portfolio. The portfolio is also expected to align well with the High School and Beyond Plan required of Washington high school students. Another update is to modernize the Career Bridge home page and, in the near future, make the site mobile friendly for phones and tablets, among other changes.

Workforce Board-Inspired Initiatives

A Look Back and a Look Forward



Career Connect Washington

Task force aimed at accelerating career connected learning in Washington.

Governor Inslee created the Career Connect Washington Task Force in the spring of 2017, following a statewide summit on career-connected learning (the culmination of the NGA Policy Academy Phase I). The Task Force was co-chaired by Workforce Board Chair Perry England and Microsoft President and Chief Legal Counsel Brad Smith.

The Task Force was a public-private partnership to accelerate career-connected learning (CCL). The group was charged to conduct an intensive review of how to better align education programs with career opportunities. The Task Force's 21 members met five times in 2017 and early 2018 to discuss issues, brainstorm ideas, and consider recommendations. Members included leaders from business, labor, state government, non-profit organizations, and education. The Task Force was staffed by the Board.

The Career Connect Washington Task Force focused on how to increase the readiness of our state's young people to access high-demand and high-wage careers, and support the Governor's goal of connecting 100,000 Washington youth with career-connected learning opportunities over the next five years.

Status: The Task Force concluded in February 2018 with a media event that rolled out the Task Force's recommendations. The group made four recommendations to the Governor (see http://www.wtb.wa.gov/Documents/CCT2018_8PgFolio_Final.pdf), many of which have been included in the Governor's Career Connect Washington program via HB 2158 (2019):

- Ensure Education Puts Students on a Pathway to Careers
- Professional Development for CCL Partners
- Expand Registered Pre-Apprenticeships, Apprenticeships and Youth Apprenticeships
- Career Connect Washington system planning

Workforce Board-Inspired Initiatives

A Look Back and a Look Forward



Credential Engine-Career Bridge Project

The Workforce Board was awarded a \$50,000 grant from Credential Engine in the late spring of 2019 to encourage state education and training providers to push programs featured on Career Bridge onto the national credential registry, helping make the value of credentials more transparent and accessible to students, consumers, and employers. Washington will become the 10th state to publish information about its education and training programs to the Credential Registry, a cloud-based library. The Workforce Board is seeking a contractor who can provide one-on-one "Help Desk" assistance to schools, shape effective training materials, market the credential effort so that is sustainable and grows over the long term, and convene a Credential Advisory Committee, among other duties. The goal is to publish as many as 3,800 credentials to the national registry, building on Career Bridge, which features over 6,500 education and training programs. The Workforce Board is developing a tool to translate the information from Career Bridge into CTDL, a set of common terminology created by Credential Engine that allows providers and their audiences to describe, understand, and compare different credentials.

Status: Project in progress.

Workforce Board-Inspired Initiatives

A Look Back and a Look Forward



CTE Video Project

Starting in 2018, Washington middle and high school students have participated in the Workforce Board's "Get Real" Video Challenge by filming short videos that promote the value of career and technical education as part of a statewide contest. The Workforce Board received a \$20,000 grant in 2017 from Advance CTE to promote high-quality career and technical education to Washington students and their parents. This funding helped pay to administer and launch the student-driven video project, and create two sample videos and toolkit. Two sets of videos won awards in 2018. In 2019, an Eatonville High School student was awarded first prize for her video that imagined the dire prospect of a "world without CTE" and infused it with encouraging images and interviews of students and a local employer about how CTE brings learning to life.

Status: This contest produced several standout videos over the past two years but it's not clear if the contest will continue. Winning videos are featured on the Career Bridge website.

Workforce Board-Inspired Initiatives

A Look Back and a Look Forward



Dropout Prevention and Retrieval

Since adopting dropout prevention in 2002 as a strategic component of *High Skills High Wages*, the Workforce Board has worked with the Governor's office, OSPI, Employment Security Department, and other partners to develop and implement a systemic approach to preventing dropouts and increasing high school graduation rates.

The state's Dropout Prevention Initiative (DPI) was formed as a statewide partnership, including the Workforce Board, and was funded by discretionary federal dollars from former Governor Gregoire in 2006. Based on the early success of the DPI, and the Board's advocacy efforts on this issue, the Building Bridges Program was created in 2007 with the passage of 2SHB 1573. Board advocacy also led to the creation of a larger grant program in 2010, *Open Doors* (E2SHB 1418), which explicitly makes Basic Education funds available to local partnerships for dropout prevention and retrieval, with an aim of college and career success for older youth (16-21). E2SHB 1418 created a statutory framework, which encourages engagement of a broad range of community partners, for a statewide dropout re-engagement system that provides education and career development services to older youth who have dropped out of school or are not expected to graduate from high school by the age of 21. Workforce Board staff actively participates in the steering committee for the Open Doors Initiative. The bill directs and funds OSPI to administer the program funds and provide technical assistance for development and implementation.

The 2013-2015 operating budget makes specific appropriation for the Building Bridges program, although at a reduced level compared to previous allocations. A component of the enabling legislation tasked OSPI, in collaboration with state-level partners including the Workforce Board, with establishing award criteria for Building Bridges grant recipients. Further, OSPI was tasked with establishing a state-level workgroup to make recommendations to the Legislature, track overall performance of local partnerships, and identify best practices in dropout prevention. This workgroup has since evolved to become the Graduation: A Team Effort (GATE) workgroup. GATE hosts quarterly gatherings and monthly steering committee meetings, and Workforce Board Staff actively participate in both types of meetings.

Legislation in 2010 (ESSB 6403) established and advanced Washington's dropout prevention, intervention and reengagement system. ESSB 6403 directed OSPI, in collaboration with the state-level workgroup that included Workforce Board staff, to design and recommend a comprehensive dropout reduction initiative.

Dropout prevention efforts were further advanced with the passage of the Pay for Actual Student Success (PASS) Act in 2011 (E2SHB 1599). The PASS Act created incentives and supports (subject to specific appropriation) for schools that demonstrated an increase in overall graduation rates. Successful programs explicitly referenced in the PASS Act included the Opportunity Internship Program, Jobs for Washington's Graduates, and Building Bridges grants.

Status: Dropout prevention and retrieval continues as a priority in the Workforce Board's *High Skills, High Wages* 2012. It is an explicit component of the Board's multiple pathways strategy. Unfortunately, a casualty of recent budget reductions, the Opportunity Internship Program was eliminated in the 2013-2015 operating budget, in spite of the program's demonstrated effectiveness.

Workforce Board-Inspired Initiatives

A Look Back and a Look Forward



Multiple Pathways Initiative

The 2012 workforce strategic plan, *High Skills High Wages (HSHW)*, was a blueprint for workforce development offering strategies aimed at helping more Washington residents move ahead into high-skill, high-wage jobs, while helping employers find the skilled workers they depend on. *HSHW* 2012 included Multiple Pathway strategies for First Careers and Multiple Pathway strategies for Employers and Workers. This is the framework we use when communicating to the Governor's office, the Legislature, partners and stakeholders. The Board carried a multiple pathways message to Vice President Biden in its May 2014 advisory letter.

Status: *HSHW* was succeeded by the *Talent and Prosperity for All* plan in 2016, the first WIOA-compliant state strategic plan coordinated by the Workforce Board. Multiple pathways have continued to be a focus of board advocacy in the context of both their workforce and career and technical education advocacy work. Superintendent Reykdal credited the Board for their long-term, early advocacy for the importance of multiple pathways to educational achievement for students in 2019.

Workforce Board-Inspired Initiatives

A Look Back and a Look Forward



NGA Work-Based Learning Policy Academy

Boost work-based learning for youth, particularly in STEM.

The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA), with support from the Siemens Foundation, designed a Policy Academy with the goal of assisting states in scaling quality work-based learning programs for youth and young adults in STEM-intensive industries (those in the science, technology, engineering and math areas) such as advanced manufacturing, health care, information technology and energy. The Workforce Board co-chaired the Policy Academy with the Governor's office (2015-2017) and the Washington Student Achievement Council (2017-2019).

In Phase I of the project, the NGA Center engaged six competitively selected states (Indiana, Iowa, Montana, New Hampshire, Utah and **Washington**) in this work. Washington's Phase I culminated in a Governor's Summit on Career-Connected Learning, which engaged over 1300 people from across the state in 26 sites.

In Phase II of the Policy Academy, the NGA Center continued supporting five of the Phase I states (Iowa did not continue participation) – dubbed Leader States – and also selected a new cohort of policy academy states in Fall 2017 (Alabama, Idaho, Illinois, Nevada, North Carolina, and Rhode Island). The state's participation in the Policy Academy ultimately led to the creation of the Governor's Career Connect Washington initiative to expand access to career-connected and work-integrated learning opportunities for young people.

Status: Phase II of the Policy Academy concluded in May 2019. The lessons learned from the three years of active participation in this work continue to inform the Board's interactions with Career Connect Washington and other career-connected learning initiatives in the state. The policy framework and final reports from this project can be found at: <http://www.wtb.wa.gov/WorkBasedLearningPolicyAcademy.asp>.

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WAVE Scholarship

The Washington Award for Vocational Excellence (WAVE) was a state-funded financial aid program administered by the Workforce Board. Merit-based scholarships are awarded to two secondary CTE and one postsecondary CTE in every legislative district in the state (139). WAVE awards paid for undergraduate educational tuition for two years at an accredited public or private college or university, or licensed vocational school. WAVE was an important vehicle in changing public perception about CTE as a track away from college to a viable career pathway option that included post-secondary education. This was the only program of its kind in the country until recently, as states are investing in meeting their middle skills workforce needs.

Status: Funding was suspended in 2011, along with all other scholarship funds. In the wake of the Great Recession, other scholarship funds have been unfrozen, but WAVE remains unfunded.

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Youth Unemployment

After the Workforce Board presented the first report on Washington's youth unemployment numbers, the Washington State Legislature passed Senate Bill 6261 in 2008. SB 6261 called for the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board to examine programs to help young people between ages 18 and 24 be more successful in the workforce and make recommendations to improve policies and programs in Washington. The Legislature directed the Board to conduct youth unemployment research and issue recommendations to appropriate committees every two years. No funding was provided for this purpose, but the Board made the topic a priority and activities were undertaken with existing funds. The Board has, in 2008, 2010, and 2012, submitted its research reports on young adults disconnected from both school and work. In May 2011, the Board established a Youth Unemployment Committee to further develop programs and policies to address the unemployment issue of youth and young adults. In September 2011, the Board adopted a recommendation for AWB and the WSLC to partner with the Workforce Board in support of an initiative that would provide workplace-based learning experiences, including internships, for in-school and disconnected youth. The approved motion included seven initiative components:

- A staff review of existing information on employer involvement in work-based learning (WBL) in Washington (including extent of WBL opportunities, successes or best practices, barriers, and how L&I employment standards and liability issues are dealt with).
- Developing a template or a pamphlet for employers on how to provide meaningful work-based learning opportunities, based on best practices.
- Developing a template for schools and community-based organizations on how to engage business and labor partners in developing work-based learning opportunities, based on best practices.
- Conducting a marketing campaign to generate employer involvement.
- A website center of information on workplace learning, including best practices.
- Providing information about work-based learning opportunities as part of Navigation 101.
- Providing professional development/technical assistance to replicate best practices.

At the time, the Board had had tremendous success with the Opportunity Internship Program, originally developed by the WSLC, AWB, and the Washington Workforce Association, with federal funds. The Board was directed to operate the program when a state bill was passed and funds provided. The Board's youth unemployment strategy included expansion of the Opportunity Internship Program, but it did not survive the 2012 budget cuts.

Status: This priority continues to be a focus of the Board's advocacy work. Additionally, the Board, AWB, and the WSLC have been actively looking out for funding opportunities to launch this partner initiative to boost employer involvement in work-based learning for youth. On May 8, 2014, the Board adopted a letter that was then sent to Vice President Joe Biden. Included in the letter were five recommendations for engaging industry in workforce development and three recommendations to the federal government on ways to address youth unemployment. Example: "All federal programs should be directed to develop and offer work-integrated learning opportunities, whether internships, classroom-based projects, or career exploration." The current WIA Youth Program targets low income youth 16-21. The Board successfully advocated that the age band be expanded to 24 when WIA funding was included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The Board

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A Look Back and a Look Forward



made a similar recommendation for WIA reauthorization legislation. In the proposed WIOA bill, moving through the US Senate and House, the age range for low income out-of-school youth will be 16-24.



Worker Training

Disadvantaged Populations Workgroup

In a review of *High Skills, High Wages* 2012, the Board acknowledged concerns from stakeholders and Board members that while the document suggests that all Washingtonians will benefit economically, our system does not operate in an “all means all” way. Our most vulnerable residents will continue to be left behind unless we intentionally design and implement models for this purpose. The Workforce Board formed an interagency *Disadvantaged Populations Workgroup* to create such a model or models. The workgroup currently includes a broad representation from DSHS (with TANF, DVR, BHA, and JJRA representation), OSPI, ESD, SBCTC, Department of Commerce, Department of Services for the Blind, along with AWB, WSLC, Washington Workforce Association, and the Northwest Career Colleges Federation. Representing agencies mapped and compared their own department’s customer service strategies and agreed on key components of a service model needed to affect performance outcomes--with acknowledgement that such components exist in whole or in part already throughout the system. Workgroup members agreed that the solution resides in working differently together, including the points of transition (hands-offs) between organizations, the points of co-servicing (participant receiving multiple services from multiple organizations at the same time), and the way we braid funding across organizations. Finally the workgroup formed a sub-committee to explore ways for Juvenile Justice and Rehabilitation Administration (JJRA) incarcerated youth to a) improve learning outcomes; b) get college credit before they are released; c) examine professional development for JJRA contracted teachers; and search for solutions to improve students’ transition to school or work before exiting an institution.

Status: *Talent and Prosperity for All* set a new tone for working in partnership with disadvantaged populations and people facing barriers to employment or access to services. The Board established their first permanent standing committee, the Barrier Accessibility Solutions Committee, in 2015, and designated increasing access and equity among all populations as a key TAP priority.

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Evergreen Jobs Leadership Team

The goal of the E2SHB 2227 Green Economy Jobs Growth Initiative (Green Jobs initiative) enacted in 2008 was to increase the number of clean energy jobs in the state to 25,000 by 2020. The legislation required a number of actions by seven state agencies. One component of the overall initiative was the creation of an Evergreen Jobs Leadership Team. The team is co-chaired by the Workforce Board and the Department of Commerce. The team was tasked, among other things, “with accelerating and coordinating efforts to identify, secure, and deploy funding, particularly through the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, for green economy projects at the state and local levels.” The team, made up of business, labor, education, and government representatives helped define green jobs, coordinate state efforts to apply for competitive ARRA job training and smart grid grants, and track the progress of these grant programs as they were implemented throughout the state.

The team’s coordinated approach helped agencies, colleges, and Workforce Development Councils to secure \$27 million in ARRA competitive grants and \$60.9 million in ARRA formula grants. ARRA grants ended in 2012 and early 2013. Even during a period of downturn in the economy, particularly in the construction industry, these investments resulted in 4,400 jobs created or retained through competitive grants and over 2,000 jobs created or retained in formula grants. The team also reviewed BLS data and the results from the Employment Security Department’s Green-Economy Jobs Survey of 21,000 public and private employers. The team observed that few occupations are uniquely “green” such as wind turbine technician or solar panel designer. Instead, employers appear to be “greening” jobs through their products and services and through the work practices they require of employees. The Evergreen Jobs Leadership Team has, since 2010, delivered to the Governor and to appropriate legislative committees, grant summaries, performance results and recommendations on how Washington could nurture its own green-oriented marketplace and foster investment in the “greening” of its economy.

Status: With limited resources available for this effort, and with a new administrative priority on the energy sector, the Leadership Team is considering recommending a reduction in effort or a change in focus to align with administrative priorities. Any change may require a change to the authorizing statute. The most recent report of the Team can be found at: <http://wtb.wa.gov/Documents/EvergreenJobsInitiative2013Report.pdf>

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Future of Work Project:

The Future of Work poses pressing questions for Washington's workforce, employers, and our state. As automation increases, will there be enough jobs? How will workers fare as they turn to short-term, "gig economy" jobs, without the safety net of health insurance and retirement plans.

Or, looking on the bright side, how can we put technology to work for us? How will robots equipped with artificial intelligence reduce tedious, repetitive work so we can focus on our passions, and possibly shrink the work week as we know it?

These questions, and others, are the focus of a first-of-its kind Future of Work project funded by the 2018 Legislature and [signed into law by Governor Inslee](#). We are on the cusp of exciting new prospects for our diverse workforce as we embrace future work opportunities for all Washingtonians. This project puts Washington in the spotlight as a thought leader. The framework used to answer these questions is also trailblazing: How can Washington's workforce and employers prosper together?

How this project started, and where it's headed

In April 2018, Washington's Legislature established the Future of Work Task Force. Made up of legislators, business and labor leaders, the 16-member Task Force was charged with developing a set of policy recommendations that help Washington businesses and workers prosper together.

Open meetings allow for more stakeholder input

The Future of Work Task Force will use an open meeting process that allows for a wide range of interested stakeholders to participate in task force learning, discussions, planning and policy development. The Task Force will also be required to establish a set of success indicators and a measurement tracking system to go along with policy recommendations.

Two staffers hired to oversee policy and research

The Workforce Board hired two staff to oversee the Future of Work Project. They will help the Task Force better understand the challenges of "future proofing" our workforce as technology advances and more fully explore the intersection of business and work. Project staff will also help the Task Force prioritize potential policy items to explore more deeply.

Future of Work Plan of Action

The full report is accessible via the Workforce Board's website where the Future of Work has a dedicated web page: <http://www.wtb.wa.gov/futureofwork.asp>

Status: An initial Plan of Action for 2019 was submitted to the Governor and the Legislature as a report in December of 2018 and included ten policy areas for further exploration.

You can read the report here: <http://www.wtb.wa.gov/Documents/FutureofWork2018Report.pdf>

The task force will produce its official recommendations to the Legislature and Governor in late 2019. The task force sunsets at the end of the 2020 Legislative session.

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Health Workforce Council

In the late 1990's and early 2000's the state was experiencing critical labor shortages in professional health occupations. These shortages were impacting the availability and quality of healthcare across the state, affecting public health and safety. In 2001, the Board convened a Healthcare Personnel Shortage Task Force, to analyze the scope and depth of the situation, and to recommend potential solutions.

The value of this effort was codified in 2003, when the Legislature passed ESHB 1851 directing the Board to confer regularly with healthcare stakeholders, including business, labor, professional organizations, education, and advocacy groups across all subsectors of healthcare. ESHB 1851 charged the Board to develop a state strategic plan to ensure that Washington has the skilled workers necessary to provide access to quality healthcare for all Washingtonians, and report annually on the state's progress towards the plan's goals and objectives. The Board is also directed to provide data on the status of the healthcare talent pipeline annually.

This task force, now called the Health Workforce Council (HWC), has become a significant advocate in the area of healthcare workforce development, working closely with the state Legislature and Governor's Office, as well as relevant state agencies. The Council has many successful policy and funding achievements to its credit, including a comprehensive review of the behavioral health workforce (2017), funded through WIOA 10% funds.

The Board operated the Council despite not receiving additional funding to support this effort after the WIA 10 percent discretionary fund source ended. From 2010 to 2013, a federal grant from U.S. Department of Labor for healthcare education and training helped support the work of the Council.

Status: The advent of the Affordable Care Act and other federal efforts have resulted in a number of significant changes in the delivery of healthcare in Washington and the United States. The Governor's Office, Legislature, Healthcare Authority, Department of Health, and the National Governors Association have called on the Health Workforce Council for advice on developing an adequate talent pipeline to support healthcare transformation.

The Council has been a leader in the behavioral health workforce space, and in the 2019 session was provided project funding to develop additional policy recommendations on specific issues impacting the behavioral health workforce to complement the 2017 report. In 2016, the Council launched the Health Workforce Sentinel Network (<http://wa.sentinelnetwork.org>), a tool to help identify potential changes in the workforce and provide that information to education much more quickly than we can do with current datasets.

In the 2019 Legislative Session the Board received dedicated, ongoing funding for the Council, including a staff FTE and the operations of the Sentinel Network.

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Interagency Workgroup on Serving Individuals with Disabilities

People with disabilities are an underutilized human resource. To address the need for improvements, HSHW 2006 identified a strategy to “Establish an interagency workgroup on serving people with disabilities.” In 2007, DVR agreed to take the lead to form and coordinate the workgroup and develop action steps for strategic direction. Former DVR Director, Lynnae Rutledge, established a 13-member Interagency Workgroup with state and local representatives. The group met five times in 2007 to deliberate on needed cross-program improvements. Members agreed to serve on ten topic discovery subgroups. On November 8, 2007, the Workgroup delivered five recommendations to the Workforce Board:

- Identify and prioritize performance improvements in at least one targeted area (i.e., rate of participation, program completion, job placement, wages, or retention); identify evidence-based practices that lead to increased performance over time.
- Establish at least one outcome measure that is communicated to the workforce system and evaluated in a way that reinforces that providing equal access and equally effective services for people with disabilities is a core part of what the system is required to do and is accountable for.
- Enhance state agency leadership and cross-program collaboration with development of high level coordinating group that promotes ongoing collaboration at all levels of service delivery, reviews cross-program policy impacts, and shares best practices.
- Identify ways to increase frequency of co-enrollment (among basic skills, adult WIA services, community technical education, vocational rehabilitation, and apprenticeship).
- Explore data sources to ensure that we are able to compile relevant, accurate data for people with disabilities in all elements of the workforce development system.

Workgroup members met with the Board’s Interagency Committee in 2008 to discuss Workgroup ideas and follow-up plans. The Workgroup’s recommendations had an impact on actions taken by the four barrier-removal workgroups established by the Washington Workforce Compact (see page 1). Workgroup’s recommendations also influenced *High Skills, High Wages* 2008 strategies, the development of the DVR State Plan, the development of the state’s 2008 WIA Plan, and the state’s criteria for development of local WIA plans.

Status: Cross-agency work, emerging from this initiative, carried forward with the establishment of the Disadvantaged Populations Workgroup (see summary above).

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A Look Back and a Look Forward



Partnering for Performance: Washington's Workforce Compact

High Skills, High Wages 2006 assigned the Workforce Board to coordinate the development of statewide agreements on integration among agencies and partners. In May 2007, the Board began discussions for establishing a statewide Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among partner programs. The Board studied examples of MOUs established in other states. In June 2007, the Board reviewed a draft framework. The Workforce Board adopted the Washington Workforce Compact in Bremerton on September 26, 2007.

<http://wtb.wa.gov/documents/WAWorkforceCompact11-09.pdf>

The Compact includes goals, guiding principles, and roles and responsibilities of system partners. Through the Compact, partners committed to a collective effort to identify and remove government or other barriers that stand in the way of serving customers. Over 80 individuals from throughout the state responded to a barriers survey distributed by the Board's Interagency Committee (IC). The IC worked on a number of barriers that could be addressed administratively, and also identified barrier categories requiring deeper analysis and effort or funding to address. In January 2008, the Board reviewed a report containing four categories of cross-agency barriers and heard from a panel on recommended steps to remove barriers. The four categories were: a) need for streamlined participant co-enrollment processes; b) need for staff cross-training; c) value of co-locating staff among workforce partners; and d) need for cross-agency data systems integration.

Workgroups were established to make recommendations in the four categories. Progress was made in attaining a deeper understanding of the issues in each category. The Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) took the lead on streamlining co-enrollment within the WorkSource Centers and with other local partners (e.g., CTCs, DVR). Alignment and cross-walking of data systems, and privacy concerns continued to be major barriers. ESD, DVR, the WDCs, and L&I's Apprenticeship Division took the lead on creating cross-training programs for frontline staff, which were evaluated by participants to be very effective. Co-location efforts were implemented in most regions of the state, but proved difficult to sustain during budget cutbacks.

The Board's barrier removal initiative was deferred in 2009 to a comprehensive system review requested by then Governor Gregoire. Afterward, the Board chose specific areas of system performance needing improvement, such as re-employment of dislocated workers, improving wage progression of low-wage working adults, and youth employment.

Status: The Workforce Compact has not been updated since 2007, although it still serves as a useful reference guide. Cross-agency work to implement WIOA, including service integration in the future, could be addressed in a new compact.

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Retooling Washington's Workforce

The effects of the Great Recession on Washington's workforce system were so dramatic that the Board decided, in 2010, to suspend the *HSHW* strategic plan and develop and implement a single initiative that would unify all parts of the system on the re-employment of dislocated workers, and support for employers to prevent further layoffs. In August 2010, the Board established criteria and posed two questions:

- 1) How do we work together to help the unemployed who need to have their skills retooled for jobs now and in the future?
- 2) How do we work together to respond to needs of employers when they come to us to help them have the workforce they need now and in the future?

To help answer these questions, the Workforce Board and our partners convened regional forums in Des Moines and Spokane, solicited ideas via an online questionnaire, and conducted a virtual forum with business leaders. On October 5, 2010, the Board held a statewide forum in Everett. At the Everett forum, participants fleshed out the ideas and identified the opportunities that seem to hold the most promise for quickly helping unemployed workers, and employers. Based upon this input, the Workforce Board and its partners formed three workgroups to create work plans to address three issues:

- 1) **Coordinated outreach to Unemployment Insurance exhaustees**—those individuals who had terminated or never began a relationship with the WorkSource system and were likely to be disenfranchised and discouraged, and in a downward spiral toward continual unemployment and perhaps poverty.
- 2) **"Direct-Connect" and On the Job Training**—This workgroup focused on ways to engage employers in identifying skill needs, and in the customization of training for workers who have relevant work experience, but skills that need to be honed for an available job.
- 3) **Coordinated employer outreach combined with improved job referral/skills matching**—These two issues have been combined because they involved two sides of the same operation. This workgroup concentrated on methods to improve job referrals and ways to make the most out of outreach to employers.

The three workgroups, with state and local representatives from many workforce and related programs, developed work plans to quickly implement improvements in each of these areas. Participants included staff from the Workforce Board, the Employment Security Department, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Economic Services Division, Department of Commerce, Labor and Industries, Workforce Development Councils, Economic Development Councils, DSHS, local government, and others. Workforce Development Councils also convened local teams to address the initiatives' three focus areas.

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The Board established a performance accountability dashboard and monitored workgroup progress throughout 2011 and 2012. The Board's December 2011 Retooling Washington's Workforce report provides an excellent summary of the initiative and examples of progress through that date:

<http://wtb.wa.gov/Documents/RetoolingReport2011.pdf>

In early 2013, the Board sought to transition leadership for each of the three workgroups to partner agencies. Because of conflicting priorities and budget constraints, the agencies were not able to continue the work plans of each of the three groups. However, there has been a continued focus on the issues involved in re-employment of dislocated workers, especially the long-term unemployed.

Status: The Board, at its 2013 retreat, reaffirmed its commitment to this priority area. ESD has committed to take the lead in this area, in partnership with the 12 WDCs. In March 2014, ESD, after deliberations with the U.S. Department of Labor and Governor Inslee's office, made \$4 million of WIA Rapid Response funds available to WDCs for innovative programs for the long-term unemployed. This fund pool normally provides special services to workers who lose their jobs due to mass layoffs at single companies. The number of mass layoffs has dropped as the economy has improved, but the number of long-term unemployed workers continues to grow.