

Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) Contact Information

When submitting your draft and final plans, please provide the name, title, e-mail address, and phone number of the person we may contact with questions regarding the plan:

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INTRODUCTION: REGIONAL TRANSFORMATION- WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF SEATTLE KING COUNTY

The Workforce Development Council of Seattle King County is undertaking transformative change to evolve the organization into an industry and outcome-driven regional workforce development system with racial equity at its core. In late 2018, the WDC Board of Directors in partnership with the Chief Local Elected Officials (Seattle Mayor and King County Executive) and its stakeholders set a new vision for a region-wide workforce development system and role of the WDC to catalyze and support an equity-centered and industry-driven approach.

This transformation strives to:

- Leverage and align federal and other workforce resources to increase scale and maximize investment impact
- Improve system structure, efficiency, and delivery through collaboration and coordination
- Remove barriers, racial disparities and provide equitable opportunities for residents to obtain and grow into living wage opportunities
- Coordinate and centralize industry engagement to inform workforce development system partners and strengthen partnerships
- Engage and partner with community and workforce training and system stakeholders to create innovative programs and practices to serve job seekers and businesses.

The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County (WDC) aspires to lead transformative change to evolve our region's workforce development efforts into an innovative industry, community, and outcome-driven system with racial equity at its core. More specifically, the WDC strives to become a best in class, innovative, regional workforce development backbone organization that is a catalyst for leveraging and aligning resources to increase equity and maximize outcomes.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the urgency of the WDC's work and the compelling need for a regional workforce development plan to ensure equitable economic recovery for all workers in King County. The region's economy experienced unprecedented job loss - as of September 2020, the unemployment rate in King County stood at 7.0%, down from its peak of 14.9% in May, but more than double the rate of under 3% at the start of the year. Disproportionately impacted are Black, American Indians, Alaska Natives and Pacific Islander workers, women and those without postsecondary credentials who are experiencing higher unemployment rates as compared to the overall population. The massive job loss, particularly to lower wage workers has exacerbated already stark income inequity observed in the region pre-pandemic.

Plan Update Process

The Local Plan update reflects a significant shift, focused on advancing racial equity and job quality through policy efforts, programs, and investments. The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County is committed to centering racial justice in our work while also addressing other inequities and disproportionately impacted communities to support economic opportunity and inclusion.

The Plan intentionally and explicitly prioritizes equitable economic recovery, improving job quality and the placement of dislocated workers into quality jobs, as its ultimate north stars. The strategies here are explicit in their intent to support Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and immigrant and refugee communities, who have historically experienced economic marginalization, and now made more vulnerable without an intentional and concerted effort to center their needs and ensure their equitable participation in the region's recovery.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES. A set of guiding principles informed the planning and development of the Plan as well as its priorities and strategies:

- Centering racial equity at the core of the Plan by focusing on Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) workers, immigrant and refugee communities, and those disproportionately impacted in the current economic recession.
- A determined insistence on moving dislocated workers into quality jobs offering living wages and benefits, the opportunity for advancement, and safe workplaces to minimize personal risk and prioritize health.
- Improving the quality of jobs historically occupied by low-income workers.
- Attention to equitable access to economic opportunity and the removal of barriers that have historically precluded BIPOC workers, immigrants, and refugees from accessing quality jobs.
- A cross-sector and expansive solutions orientation inclusive of human services, advocacy and policy solutions.
- Strategy selection informed by research, evidence, and data, as well as the perspectives of industry, labor, the community, and other partners.
- Leading with innovation and best practices in workforce development, resisting an impulse to default to the status quo and other real or perceived constraints.

Approach

The WDC Board launched a 7-month planning process in mid-2020 to create a Regional Strategic Plan. The Regional Strategic Plan ('the Plan') is intended as a blueprint for establishing a set of shared priorities for the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County (WDC) and its regional partners: county and city government, industry, labor, community colleges, educational and training partners, community-based organizations, and the community over the next 3-5 years.

The Plan was and is intended to align regional and partner resources, and to strategically and collaboratively respond to the unprecedented job loss and massive economic disruption resulting from the COVID-19 global pandemic and serves as the high-level strategic plan to guide the WDC's priorities and basis for the 2021 WIOA Local Plan.

During this time, the board, WDC staff facilitated a robust outreach plan to engage regional stakeholders in the development of the strategy. As there were numerous planning and recovery initiatives underway, concerted effort and attention was paid to these parallel processes, with an aspiration to coordinate and complement our respective efforts. While not exhaustive, we sought the perspectives of industry, labor, government and the community to understand barriers to employment; and to complement data analyses, research, and evidence.

In addition, we examined economic projections at the national and regional levels to make realistic assumptions about the region's recovery. We established a short-list of promising sectors based on short-term indicators of recovery, criteria associated with job quality, accessibility to those jobs by BIPOC, immigrant and refugee communities, and industry readiness and commitment. In recognition of the protracted uncertainty of these complex times, we anticipate the Plan to evolve over time and be responsive to changing circumstances.

Finally, we undertook an extensive landscaping of national and regional equitable workforce development practices and innovations to understand their efficacy and promise in supporting BIPOC communities and immigrants and refugees. In addition, we examined efforts in other regions to inform the selection of prioritized strategies.

Additionally, the Advancing Workforce Equity project provided a powerful platform to embed our regional strategic plan. The racial equity metrics developed through this project supports regional workforce partners to develop explicit, data-driven equity strategies. Seattle was one of five community partners in this National Fund for Workforce Solutions national network of workforce practitioners. Each city formed equity workgroups to guide the work, identify the key drivers of inequity, and prioritize actionable strategies to advance equity through their policy efforts, programs, and investments.

This initiative was guided by deep partnerships and valuable perspectives brought by our local BIPOC communities, as well as the enduring dedication of our equity workgroup, strategic planning team, our board, and WDC-SKC staff. Through these efforts, the WDC aims to remove barriers and build sustainable access to economic opportunities that have historically precluded communities of color and to foster an equitable approach to our region's economic recovery.

SECTION I

Regional Designation

- **Workforce Region Name:**
Workforce Development Council of Seattle King County
- **Workforce Development Area Name and Number:**
WDA 5
- **County or Counties Comprising Service Delivery Area:**
King County
- **Fiscal Agent/Entity Responsible for the disbursement of grant funds:**
Workforce Development Council of Seattle King County

SECTION II

REGIONAL COMPONENT OF PLAN

Introduction:

In many ways, the Seattle King County economy is illustrative of the trends driving the growth and transformation of the US economy. Home to the headquarters of two big tech powerhouses (Amazon and Microsoft) and a major aerospace and advanced manufacturing sector led by The Boeing Company, Seattle led all major US metropolitan areas in economic growth in 2018, and for two years in a row was ranked by Forbes as the best city for business and careers. Seattle possesses one of the largest and most efficient ports in the world, and is a major node for national and international trade. The region's population grew by more than 15 percent from 2010 to 2020. It also grew more diverse, with Asian or Pacific Islander, Latinx, Black, and mixed/other race residents making up an increasing share of the population. Since 2000, much of King County's population growth has been due to an influx of foreign-born residents, increasing from 15 percent to 24 percent of the total population in 2018.

This is one way to tell the story of the Seattle-King County: a robust regional community that created an economy shaped by technological advancement, global connectivity, and demographic change. Official measures suggested that Seattle had achieved "full employment" before the coronavirus pandemic began, with an overall unemployment rate of just 2.5 percent in February 2020. But another story has unfolded, a more accurate one, underneath the region's impressive growth in jobs, productivity, and population. Such measures that only look at totals without the nuance of a demographic break out by race, ethnicity gender or geography, mask racial gaps in employment and wages, and obscure, entirely, the intergenerational inequities that disadvantages communities of color. People of color continue to face significant barriers to accessing good jobs and opportunities, including discriminatory

hiring practices, gaps in educational attainment due to longstanding and pervasive educational inequities, low job-quality standards, and housing and transportation inequities that create a vastly uneven geography of opportunity. This situation must be noted for the impact, to emphasize again, all of these areas, employment, housing, education, banking, transportation and other geographic disproportional situations.

1. Regional Analysis .

King County's estimated population was nearly 2.3 million in 2021 and 1,430,940 jobs. The county's population grew at a faster rate (1.6 percent per year) than the state (1.4 percent per year) over the most recent decade. Over the past year, however, King County's population expanded by 0.8 percent – the same as the state. The largest city in King County is Seattle (742,400 in 2021). Other large cities include Bellevue, Kent, Renton, Federal Way, Kirkland, and Auburn.

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS (IMPACT OF COVID-19 AND RECOVERY TRENDS) Washington State's Employment Security Department's King County Profile [ESDWAGOV - King County profile](#)

The pandemic-induced recession of 2020 interrupted the long arc of local employment growth. From February to April 2020, total nonfarm employment plummeted by about 166,600 jobs – more than 11.0 percent. Total employment since April 2020 has shown remarkable recovery, with a great deal of variation by industry. Total employment continues to expand. As of March 2022 (preliminary), businesses located in King County collectively supplied nearly 1.46 million jobs – Major industry sectors in King County supplied more than 100,000 estimated jobs in 2021 include professional and business services, education and health services, retail trade, government, information, and leisure and hospitality.

a. *Existing & Emerging In-Demand Industry Sectors, Occupations and Employment Needs*

Source: [ESDWAGOV - King County profile](#)

King County averaged nearly 1.41 million nonfarm jobs in 2021. From 2020 to 2021, average annual employment increased by 24,800 jobs or 1.8 percent. By comparison, Washington state as a whole saw the addition of about 74,700 jobs over the same time period, an increase of 2.3 percent.

- **Goods-producing industries** supplied an average of 168,700 jobs in 2021, making up 12.0 percent of the total count of nonfarm jobs. Over the year, employment declined by 3,700 or 2.2 percent. Beneath the surface, King County-based construction employment expanded while manufacturing employment contracted.
 - Employers in the construction industry added 2,700 jobs (3.5 percent) from 2020 to 2021. Construction growth was relatively unaffected by the pandemic. Demand for built projects remained strong, buoyed by existing projects and a strong real estate market.
 - Manufacturing employment contracted by 6,300 from 2020 to 2021. Pandemic-related impacts to manufacturing – especially the aerospace sector – were delayed relative to most other sectors. Employment in manufacturing dropped throughout most of 2021.

- **Service-providing employment** accounted for 88.0 percent of all nonfarm jobs in King County in 2021. From 2020 to 2021, service-providing industries collectively added 28,500 jobs or 2.4 percent, following average annual losses of 71,200 jobs or 5.6 percent in 2020.

Average annual employment in all major private sector service-providing industries (except wholesale trade and other services) expanded over the year. The largest year-to-year employment gains were made in professional and business services (11,200 jobs), retail trade (7,000 jobs), and information (6,500). In King County, the three industries that added the largest number of jobs are all characterized as “high tech” and were able to recover relatively quickly from the pandemic recession as workers were able to telecommute. In contrast, service industries that rely on face-to-face contact, and, in many cases, the presence of office workers from other industries expanded to a lesser extent after suffering devastating blows from the pandemic.

- Professional and business services, which includes professional scientific and technical services, management, and administrative and support services, added 11,200 jobs or 4.8 percent over the year.
- Retail trade is an extremely diverse sector. Job growth was observed in general, but was prominent among essential service providers (e.g., grocery stores) and online retail.
- The collection of industries that make up the information sector added 6,500 jobs or about 5.1 percent. More than one-third of the observed job gains were attributable to hiring by software publishers.
- Public sector employment contracted by 1,300 jobs over the year. Losses were concentrated among state government educational services (i.e., state colleges and universities).

As of March 2022, this set of industries was still down 44,000 jobs or about 30 percent. At the other end of the continuum, industries such as information and professional and business services, maintained or even expanded employment levels, even early on, insulated by the ability to establish telecommuting arrangements for their workforces. King County’s information sector added 700 jobs during the initial months of the pandemic. As of March 2022, employment in the information sector was 15,500 above the level observed in March 2020.

Comparing March 2022 against March 2020, the following industries have fully recovered or expanded total employment:

- professional and business services (up 15,600 jobs),
- information (up 15,500 jobs)
- retail trade (up 9,000 jobs),
- financial activities (up 4,000 jobs), and
- construction (up 1,400 jobs).

Referencing the same time frame, the following industries have yet to recover the number of jobs lost in the pandemic recession:

- leisure and hospitality (down 19,400 jobs),
- manufacturing (down 9,900 jobs),
- government (down 9,200 jobs),
- other services (down 8,600),
- wholesale trade (down 3,700 jobs),
- transportation, education and health services (down 2,800 jobs), and
- warehousing and utilities (down 1,400 jobs).

The report indicates that at this point, all industry sectors are building their employment bases. However, King County’s recovery will depend on the interplay between sectors. While innovations such as telecommuting directly reduced the total number of potential job losses, they simultaneously contributed to indirect job losses from sectors that rely on in-person service delivery in King County’s downtown areas (e.g., restaurants and coffee shops).

Looking ahead, King County is poised for widespread industry growth led by high-tech industries. While these projections paint a positive outlook for the region, they don’t take into the account the deep disparities in wages across sectors and the implications for an equitable and inclusive economic recovery.

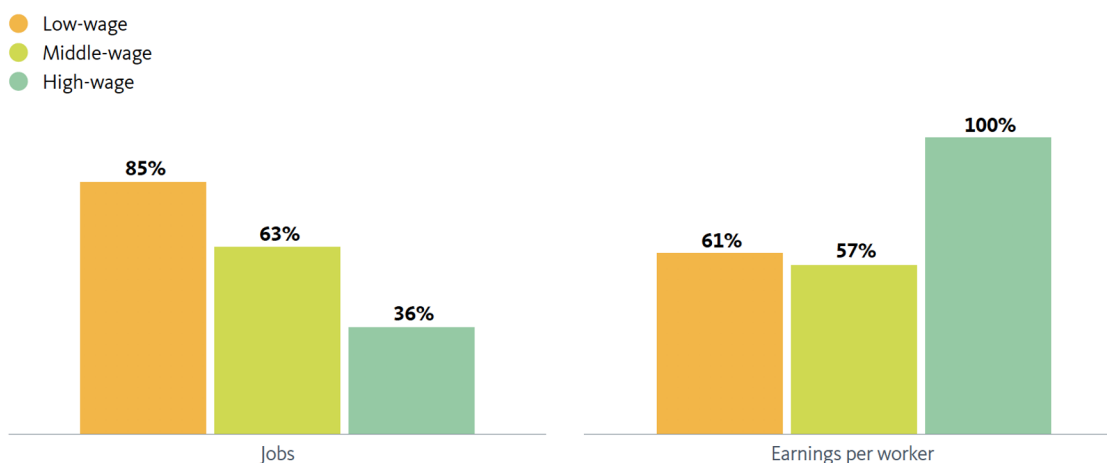
The region faces a shortfall of good jobs. Overall, only 44 percent of workers are in good jobs (defined as stable, automation-resilient jobs with family-sustaining wages). But the share drops to 13 percent among workers in jobs that require no more than a high school diploma. This good-jobs gap has significant racial equity implications, considering that 36 percent of Black adults, 32 percent of US-born Latinx adults, and 68 percent of immigrant Latinx adults have not had the opportunity to achieve post-secondary education.

Growth in Good Jobs Lag Behind Low Wage Jobs

Since 1980, low-wage job growth was more than twice as fast as high-wage job growth, but earnings grew 67 percent faster for high-wage compared with low-wage earners. And the spatial dynamics of the regional economy have pushed many low-income workers and people of color farther away from centers of opportunity, as gentrification and skyrocketing housing costs have accompanied Seattle’s rising prosperity. While the metro area is diversifying, the Black population in the city of Seattle has fallen to its lowest share in decades.

Job growth over the past 30 years has been concentrated among low-wage jobs, while wage growth has disproportionately accrued to high-wage workers.

Growth in Jobs and Earnings by Wage Level, Seattle Metropolitan Region, 1990–2018



Source: PolicyLink/USC Equity Research Institute, National Equity Atlas, [www.nationalequityatlas.org](https://nationalequityatlas.org). Available at: https://nationalequityatlas.org/indicators/job_and_wage_growth#. **Note:** Universe includes all jobs covered by the federal Unemployment Insurance (UI) program.

b. *King County Workforce Demographics*

Population: King County's estimated population was nearly 2.3 million in 2021.

Age, gender and ethnicity

The age distribution of King County residents compared to the state and the nation reflects a relatively large working-age adult population and smaller resident populations at either end of the age spectrum. Residents age 25 to 49 have a proportionally high presence in King County, while residents age 0 to 24 and 55+ have a less prominent presence relative to shares seen at the state and national levels.

King County has proportionally larger Black and Asian, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander populations than the state as a whole, but a smaller Hispanic or Latino presence.

	King County	Washington state
Population by age, 2019		
Under 5 years old	5.7%	6.0%
Under 18 years old	20.0%	21.8%
65 years and older	13.5%	15.9%
Females, 2019	49.7%	49.9%
Race/ethnicity, 2019		
White	66.2%	78.5%
Black	7.0%	4.4%
American Indian, Alaskan Native	1.0%	1.9%
Asian, Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander	20.9%	10.4%
Hispanic or Latino, any race	9.9%	13.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

Educational Attainment: King County has a more highly educated population than the state or the nation. During the period 2016 to 2020, 93.4 percent of King County residents aged 25 and older graduated from high school, which is higher than Washington state residents (91.7 percent) and higher than the nation (88.5 percent). More than 53.4 percent of King County residents had a bachelor's degree or higher education, substantially higher than the state (36.7 percent) or the nation (32.9 percent) in the same period.

Educational attainment by race/ethnicity. About 45 percent of White adults and 55 percent of Asian or Pacific Islander adults in the Seattle metro have a bachelor's degree or higher. In contrast, just 14 percent of immigrant Latinx adults, 29 percent of US-born Latinx adults, and 25 percent of Black adults in the Seattle region have a bachelor's degree.

King County Workforce

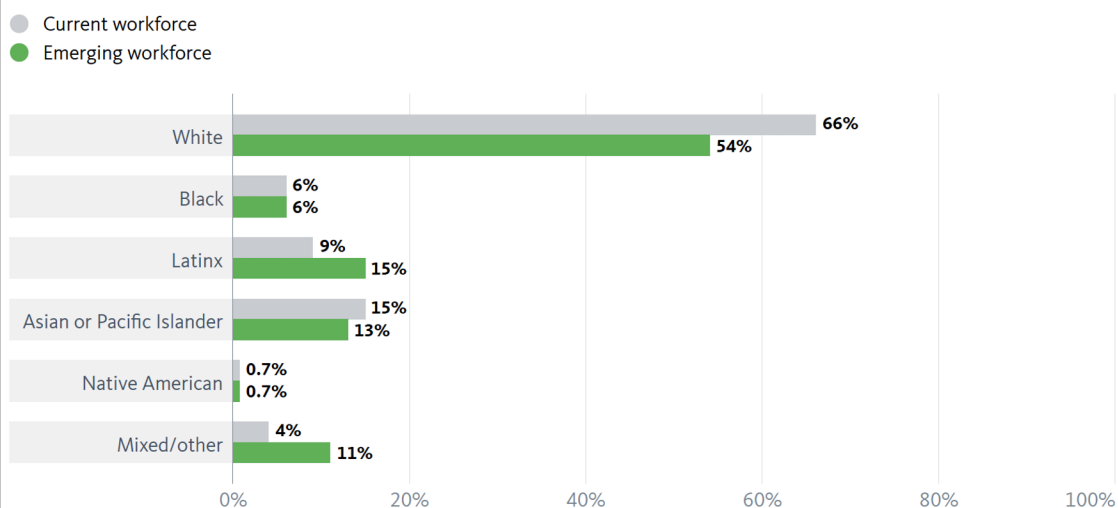
The King County workforce is growing quickly, at a projected rate of 13 percent over 10 years. Overall, the region is recognized for its educated and diverse workforce, yet there are stark differences in the workforce when you disaggregate population, employment and wage data to understand the different experiences and challenges faced, and the need for diverse strategies to address them.

- **King County has a young workforce**, relative to the rest of Washington state. In 2020, workers aged 25 to 44 made up 50.2 percent of the workforce. For comparison, the statewide proportion of workers aged 25 to 44 was 46.1 percent. The proportion of workers younger than age 24, as well as those age 55 and older in King County, is lower than observed statewide.

- **Gender:** In 2020, males held 53.3 percent and females held 46.7 percent of the jobs in King County. There were substantial differences in gender participation by industry.
- **King County's workforce is becoming increasingly diverse** = The region's workforce is already one-third BIPOC. White workers make up the majority racial/ethnic group (66 percent of the workforce). King County has proportionally larger Black and Asian, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander populations than the state as a whole, but a smaller Hispanic or Latino presence. Asian or Pacific Islander workers make up 15 percent of the workforce and three-quarters of them are immigrants and Black workers make up about 6 percent of the total workforce in the region and about one-third are immigrants. These demographics are rapidly shifting as mature workers retire and younger people enter the labor force. Among the rising generation of workers under the age of 25 years, nearly half are youth of color—primarily Latinx and Asian or Pacific Islander.

One in three working-age adults in the Seattle region are people of color, along with 46 percent of youth under the age of 25 years.

Current and Emerging Workforce Demographics by Race/Ethnicity, Seattle Metropolitan Region, 2018

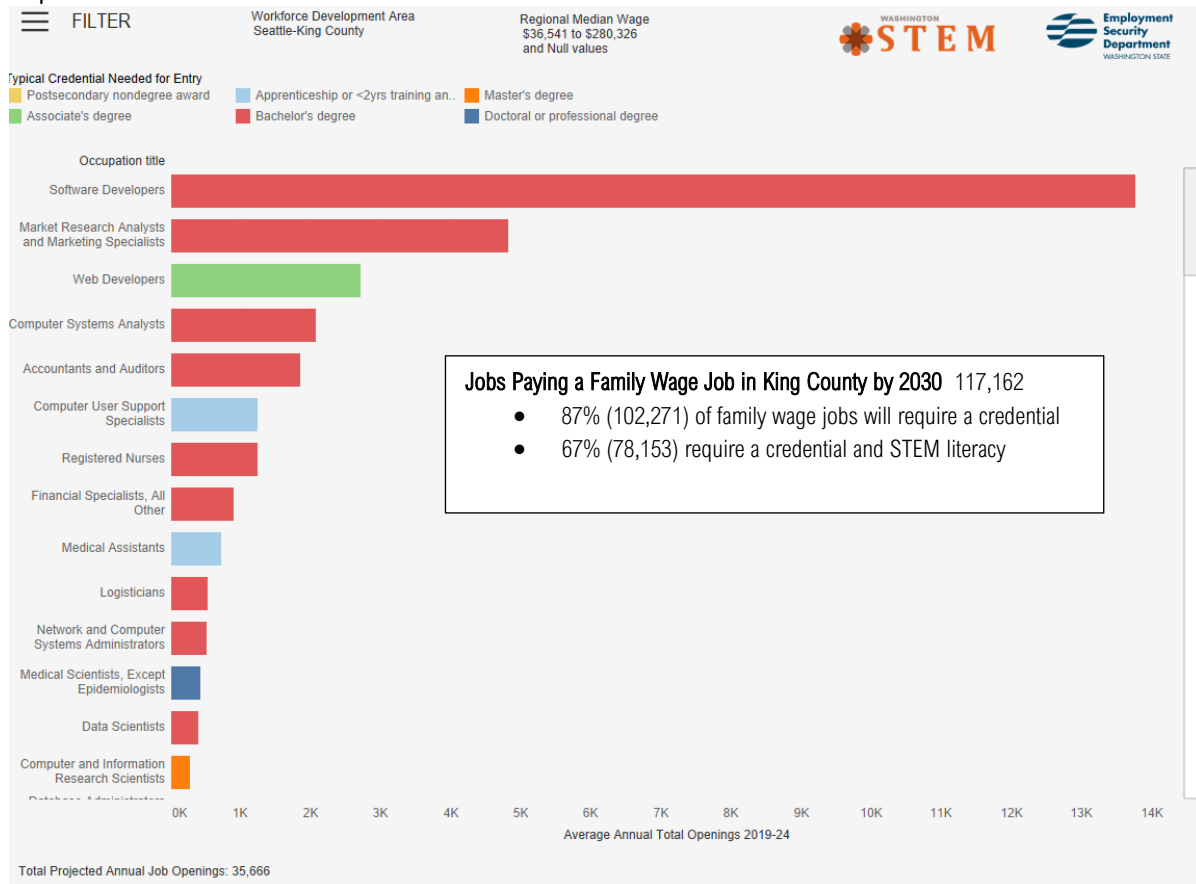






Source: Authors' analysis of the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. **Note:** Universe of emerging workforce includes all people under the age of 25 years old while current workforce includes the employed population between the ages of 25 and 64 years.

In a generation's time, the United States will be a majority people-of-color nation; the Seattle metro is slightly ahead of this national curve, and is projected to reach this demographic milestone by 2040.²⁵ The region is also home to more than 650,000 immigrants and more than one-third of Washington's considerable refugee population. This ongoing demographic transformation underscores the urgent need to center racial equity as a crucial ingredient for continued economic prosperity.

c. Knowledge and Skills Needed for Living Wage Jobs

According to Washington STEM, King County is home to some of Washington's largest STEM industries. By 2030, 87 percent of high-demand, family-sustaining wage jobs available in our region will require a postsecondary degree or credential (all forms of postsecondary education and training, including registered apprenticeships, 1-year certificates, 2-year degrees, and 4-year); 67 percent of those jobs will be STEM or STEM literacy-based occupations.



	 Software Developers	 Industrial Engineers	 Healthcare Professionals (RN & Medical Assistant)	 Health Technologists and Technicians
Annual Number of Openings**	15,227	460	2,976	1,020
Oct. Insured Unemployment* Rate	0.0%	1.1%	1.1%	0.9%
Oct. Regional Insured Unemployment* Rate	3.3%			
Credential	Bachelor's	Bachelor's	Apprenticeship → Bachelor's	Certificate → Associate's
Average Regional Wage	\$112,403 → \$158,995	\$90,771 → \$139,713	\$48,557 → \$92,685	\$45,906 → \$102,370

**Insured unemployment is a count of payments made to unemployment insurance claimants.*

***Annual number of entry level job openings created by workers who leave an occupation and need to be replaced or occupation growth. Openings do not include turnover.*

Top 25 skill clusters from online ads King
County, October 2021 through January 2022

Source: Employment Security Department/LMEA; The Conference
Board® Burning Glass® Help Wanted OnLine™

Rank	Skill clusters	Number
1	Customer and Client Support: Basic Customer Service	33,368
2	Administration: Scheduling	24,330
3	Information Technology: Microsoft Office and Productivity Tools	22,660
4	Sales: General Sales	18,697
5	Business: Project Management	15,730
6	Health Care: Infectious Diseases	15,317
7	Administration: General Administrative and Clerical Tasks	13,641
8	Information Technology: Software Development Principles	12,690
9	Finance: Budget Management	12,380
10	Business: Business Process and Analysis	11,457
11	Business: People Management	10,525
12	Supply Chain and Logistics: Material Handling	10,080
13	Health Care: Basic Patient Care	8,687
14	Business: Business Strategy	8,591
15	Administration: Administrative Support	8,310
16	Health Care: Emergency and Intensive Care	7,700
17	Industry Knowledge: Retail Industry Knowledge	7,604
18	Information Technology: Cloud Solutions	7,176
19	Information Technology: System Design and Implementation	7,036
20	Sales: General Sales Practices	6,967
21	Human Resources: Occupational Health and Safety	6,858
22	Marketing and Public Relations: Customer Relationship Management (CRM)	6,776
23	Information Technology: SQL Databases and Programming	6,774
24	Business: Business Management	6,761
25	Business: Quality Assurance and Control	6,549

Economic opportunity is uneven across the country with substantial disparities by race and place.

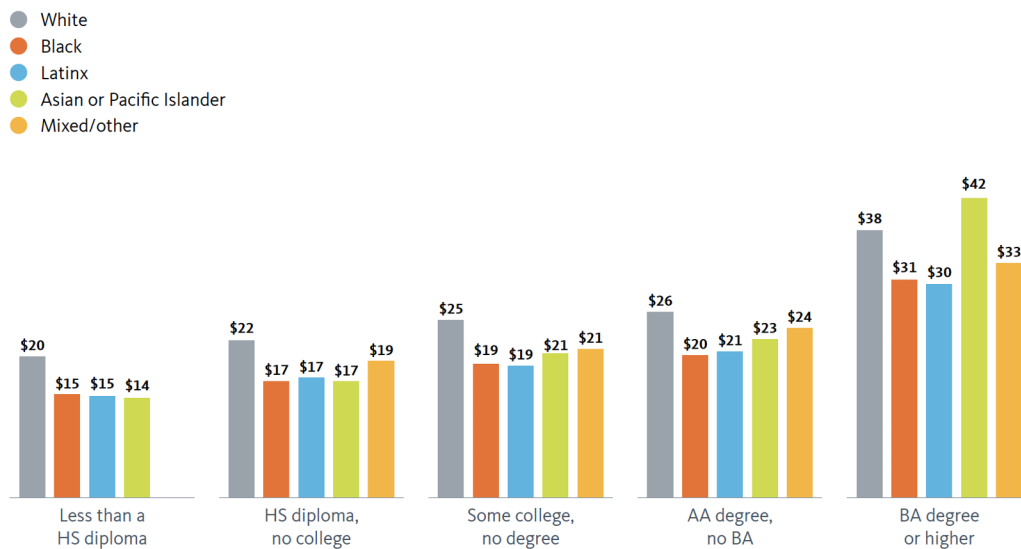
Higher educational attainment is associated with higher median wages across all racial/ethnic groups, but racial gaps are also evident at each level of education. White workers in Seattle with no high school diploma earn the same median hourly wage as Black workers with an associate's degree (\$20/hour) and only one dollar less than Latinx workers with an associate's degree (\$21/hour).

White workers earn more than people of color across educational cohorts, except among those with a bachelor's degree or higher, where Asian or Pacific Islander workers have the highest median wage. And the relative wage gains are not equivalent: the median hourly wage premium for earning an associate's degree as opposed to a high school diploma is highest for Asian or Pacific Islander individuals, at \$6/hour (a 35 percent increase). The same educational achievement carries just a \$3/hour (18 percent) median

wage increase for Black workers. The gap in wage gains from a high school diploma to bachelor's degree or higher is even more pronounced: a 147 percent gain for Asian or Pacific Islander workers, compared to a gain of about 76 percent for Latinx workers.

Black and Latinx workers earn substantially less than their White counterparts at every level of educational attainment.

Median Hourly Wages by Educational Attainment and Race/Ethnicity, Seattle Metropolitan Region, 2018

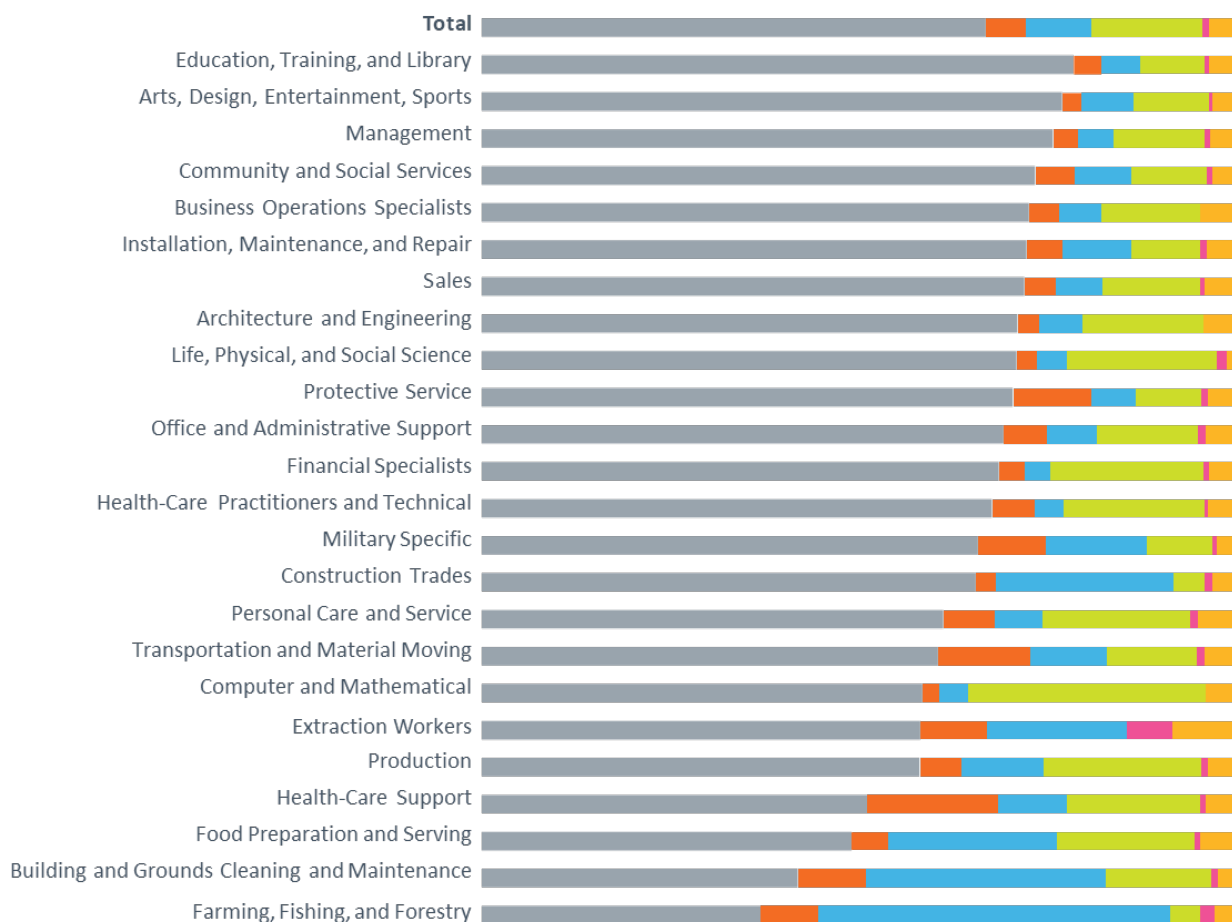


Source: Authors' analysis of the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. **Note:** Universe includes civilian noninstitutional full-time wage and salary workers ages 25–64 years. Data reflect a 2014–2018 average; Native American workers, and mixed/other race workers at certain educational levels, are not included because of small sample size. Values are in 2018 dollars.

Occupational segregation remains a significant challenge for achieving workforce equity.

Occupational Groups by Race and Ethnicity, Seattle Metropolitan Region, 2018

White
Black
Latinx
Asian or Pacific Islander
Native American
Mixed/other



Source: Authors' analysis of the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. **Note:** Universe includes the employed population ages 25–64 years. Data reflect a 2014–2018 average.

The Seattle labor market is characterized by occupational segregation that crowds many workers of color into low-wage jobs. Latinx workers are significantly concentrated in a handful of occupations: while they account for just 9 percent of the workforce overall, Latinx workers hold 47 percent of jobs in farming, fishing, and forestry occupations; 32 percent of building, grounds cleaning, and maintenance jobs; 24 percent of construction trades jobs; and 22 percent of food service and preparation jobs. In all of those occupations, the vast majority of Latinx workers are immigrants (upward of 75 percent) while immigrants make up just over half of all Latinx workers (54 percent). Latinx workers are most

underrepresented in financial specialist jobs (3 percent); computer and mathematical jobs; life, physical, and social science jobs (4 percent); and health-care practitioners and technical occupations (4 percent). In these occupations, immigrants comprise only about one-third of Latinx workers.

Asian or Pacific Islander immigrants make up 15 percent of the Seattle region's workforce, and three-quarters of them are immigrants. Overall, Asian or Pacific Islander workers in Seattle tend to fare better than their Latinx, Black, and Native American peers in employment and wage outcomes, but this group includes a broad diversity of experiences. For example, about 6 percent of all Asian or Pacific Islander workers are working poor (economically insecure, despite working full time)—but the rate is nearly three times as high among Pacific Islanders and workers of Cambodian ancestry.²⁹ In the Seattle region, Asian or Pacific Islander immigrants are most overrepresented among high-wage computer and mathematical jobs (27 percent of the workforce) as well as low-wage personal care and service jobs (17 percent), and production jobs (17 percent).

Black workers make up about 6 percent of the total workforce in the region and about one-third of them are immigrants. However, Black workers are more than triple that share of health-care support workers (17 percent) and double or more that share among transportation and material moving jobs (12 percent) and protective services jobs (10 percent). Immigrants comprise about 60 percent of all Black health-care support workers and over 40 percent of Black protective service workers. Black workers are most deeply underrepresented in computer and mathematical jobs and construction trades (2 percent).

d. Workforce Analysis

The pandemic accelerated and exacerbated several significant pre-existing issues and trends. These included rising income and racial inequalities, shifts in global supply chains, a competitive increase in technology adoption for automation and digitization in business operations including e-commerce, and an increase in remote work across many industries. Taken together, these factors greatly shape the nature of work post-pandemic.ⁱ

TRADE WARS/GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS. Trade wars between the U.S. and China had slowed trade since 2018 and fueled growing calls for the U.S. to diversify supply chains by re- or near-shoring. The breakdown of supply chains from Asia caused by COVID-19 has amplified the conversation about restructuring supply chains.ⁱⁱ

REMOTE WORK. In the first half of 2020 the pandemic catapulted businesses across many sectors to stand up remote work arrangements for employees, including building infrastructure for remote communication and collaboration. In some industries, remote work has continued as businesses have been deliberating whether remote work will last. Some have recognized the cost savings in doing so while others, like virtual health, are responding to enormous growth in consumer demand for virtual services. Many are thinking of the “virtualization” of work as part of the “next normal” and are planning to continue it permanently, such as Facebook.ⁱⁱⁱ

AUTOMATION, DIGITIZATION AND TECHNOLOGY. There is a growing body of research around the world focusing on how automation, digitization and technology will impact economic and business activity in what some experts call the “4th Industrial Revolution.” Both businesses and consumers are making greater use of technology in a myriad of ways, from e-commerce to telemedicine to remote work to the automation of manufacturing tasks, and recovery is forcing businesses to adapt operations for the next normal.^{iv} However, predictions about how exactly these changes will impact jobs and occupations is less clear, particularly automation.

Some researchers, industry analysts and business leaders believe that while automation will eliminate some jobs, it may also transform other jobs. Some assert that most occupations will not be directly replaced but the skills needed will change over time, especially for jobs where human interaction will be needed to operate or manage new technology. And new jobs will likely be created but we do not know exactly what they are yet.^v Climate change may also impact Seattle and King County and employment. While projections vary greatly, there is consensus on some of technology's broader impacts. According to Washington State's Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, in their 2019 Policy Report on the Future of Work, some experts believe:

- 39 to 58 percent of worldwide work activities in operationally intensive sectors could be automated using currently available technologies.^{vi} Automation will occur more rapidly and at greater frequency for occupations that focus on repetitive, manual tasks (such as cashiers, clerks, assembly line workers, and office support jobs), which also tend to be ones that require lower levels of formal education.
- Demand for advanced cognitive and emotional skills will increase in the future across all industries and in all economies, from emerging to advanced.
- Workers will increasingly need lifelong learning opportunities to develop a more diverse skill set that responds to occupational changes as they occur.^{vii}

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board report further notes:

"In Washington, close to half of work (44.5 percent) could be automated by adapting currently demonstrated technology, according to one estimate by think tank McKinsey Global Institute. This is particularly important for lower-skill, lower-paying jobs, like retail personnel, which often are at the greatest risk of automation."^{viii}

The report highlights manufacturing as an example of a sector where skill requirements will shift. One Georgetown University study concluded that manufacturing workers with only a high school education represented 43 percent of the sector's workforce in 2016, down from 79 percent in 1970. Over the same period, the share of middle-skilled workers in the industry doubled, underscoring the need for upskilling and lifelong learning.^{ix}

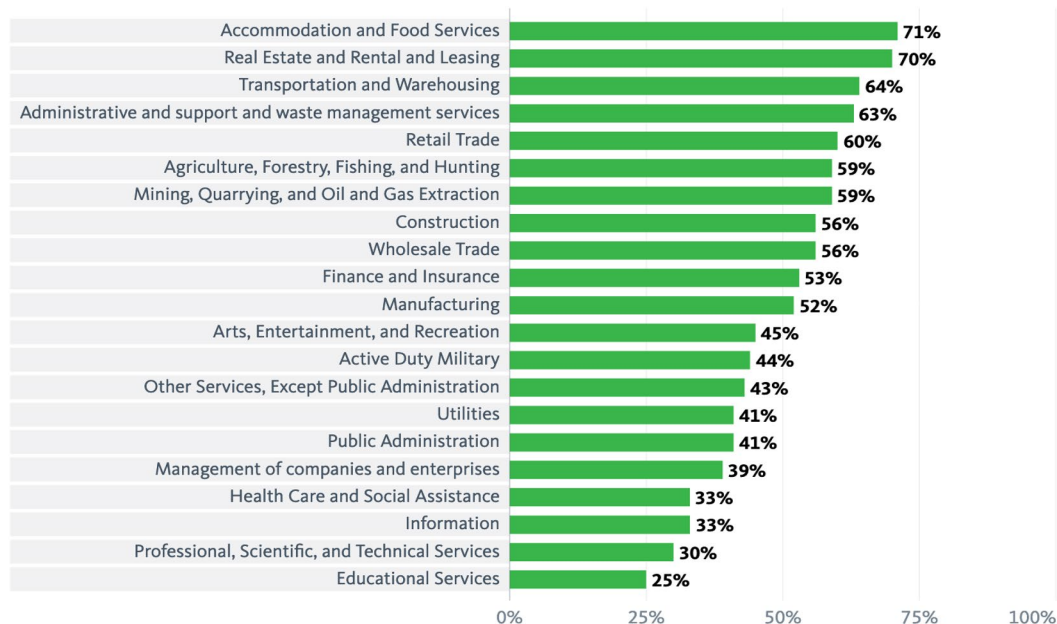
Critical skills will fall into two broad categories: digital literacy and technology skills, and non-technological/human skills. McKinsey Global Institutes projects that over the next decade, the demand for technological skills is expected to rise by more than 50 percent, and the need for complex cognitive skills and high-level social emotional skills will increase by one-third.^x

The rising use of technology will widen the digital divide between those who can access technology and those who cannot. Around 24 million American households lack access to reliable, affordable, high-speed internet, and 80 percent of those households are in rural areas. Challenges include physical gaps in local broadband networks, unaffordable subscriptions and devices, and a lack of digital skills. In 2018, the Census Bureau found that 27.9 million households, or 10.8 percent of the urban population, lived without a broadband internet subscription. One in 10 of the lowest-income children in the U.S. have little or no access to technology for online learning, and the lack of access is strongly correlated to race.^{xi} The gap is wider for Black and Latinx households, as well as households with lower income or lower educational levels.^{xii}

As the world becomes more digital, this "information poverty" is connected to a lack of job opportunities, professional development, educational opportunity and income, and widens racial economic disparities.^{xiii}

Automation risk is best calculated in terms of the likelihood of computerization of the underlying tasks that make up a given occupation, which can lead to worker displacement. Very few jobs consist entirely of tasks that can be computerized, but most occupations include enough automatable tasks to be considered at risk of automation. The national average risk is about 52 percent, indicating that about half of job tasks performed by the US workforce can be automated. The average risk for workers in the Seattle metro region is slightly lower at 48 percent.

Automation Vulnerability by Industry, Seattle Metropolitan Region, 2018



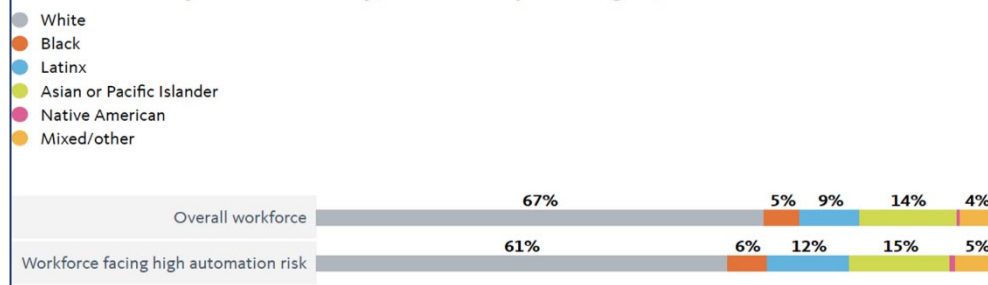
Sources: Occupation-level automation scores from "The Future of Employment: How Susceptible Are Jobs to Computerisation?" (Carl Benedikt Frey and Michael A. Osborne, 2013), and industry characteristics from 2018 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) microdata from IPUMS USA.

The risk of automation is acute for workers of color, who are overrepresented in jobs susceptible to automation. White people in the Seattle area constitute 67 percent of the workforce, but only 61 percent of workers in jobs with high automation risk. Inversely, Latinx workers make up 9 percent of the workforce overall but 12 percent of automation-vulnerable workers. The concentration of workers of color in jobs with elevated automation risk is projected to continue over time.

The charts below illustrate the increased vulnerability workers of color face due to automation:

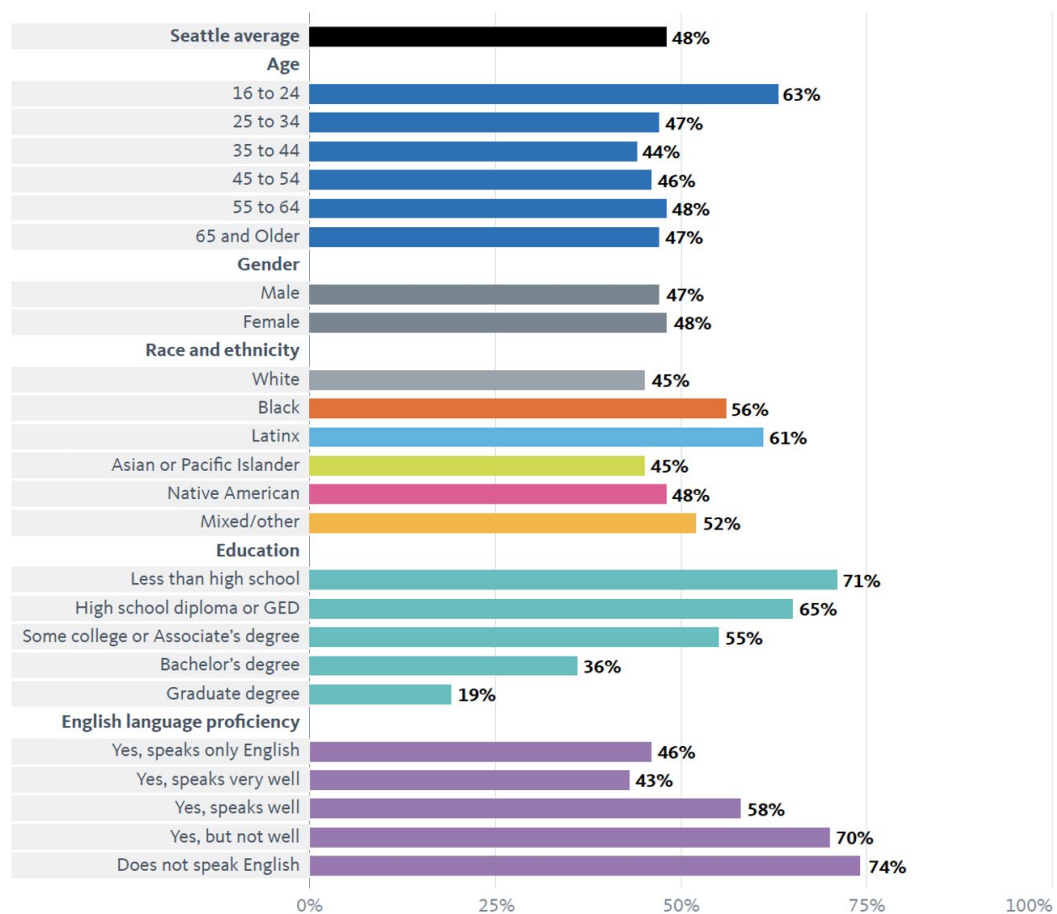
Latinx workers are overrepresented in automation-vulnerable jobs by more than one-third compared to their representation in the overall workforce.

Automation Risk by Race and Ethnicity, Seattle Metropolitan Region, 2018



Workers of color, those with less than a high school diploma, and non-English speakers are most vulnerable to automation-driven job disruption.

Automation Vulnerability by Worker Characteristics, Seattle Metropolitan Region, 2018



The Local Plan update reflects a significant shift, focused on advancing racial equity and job quality through policy efforts, programs, and investments. The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County is committed to centering racial justice in our work while also addressing other inequities and disproportionately impacted communities to support economic opportunity and inclusion.

The Plan intentionally and explicitly prioritizes equitable economic recovery, improving job quality and the placement of dislocated workers into quality jobs, as its ultimate north stars. The strategies here are explicit in their intent to support BIPOC and immigrant and refugee communities, who have historically experienced economic marginalization, and now made more vulnerable without an intentional and concerted effort to center their needs and ensure their equitable participation in the region's recovery.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES. A set of guiding principles informed the planning and development of the Plan as well as its priorities and strategies:

- Centering racial equity at the core of the Plan by focusing on BIPOC workers, immigrant and refugee communities, and those disproportionately impacted in the Covid Pandemic related economic recession.
- A determined insistence on moving dislocated workers into quality jobs offering living wages and benefits, the opportunity for advancement, and safe workplaces to minimize personal risk and prioritize health.
- Improving the quality of jobs historically occupied by low-income workers.
- Attention to equitable access to economic opportunity and the removal of barriers that have historically precluded BIPOC workers, immigrants, and refugees from accessing quality jobs.
- A cross-sector and expansive solutions orientation inclusive of human services, advocacy and policy solutions. e.g.; address other barriers low-income workers and workers of colors face, such as financial constraints from costs of training, child care, transportation, housing, health care and other demands.
- Leading with innovation and best practices in workforce development, resisting an impulse to default to the status quo and other real or perceived constraints.

One overarching principle in a re-design of workforce development is to align it with economic development approaches. Doing so would broaden the traditional scope of workforce development from skills training and job placement, to promoting family economic stability and job quality. These will then become the basis for a redefinition of measures of success to include helping families move from instability to stability, from which public investments could then be made accordingly.^{xiv}

Our plan prioritizes skills training to fill open jobs that meet job quality criteria; increasing the capacity of the traditional and non-traditional education and training system to respond to changing labor market conditions, expanding work-based experiences, on-the-job training, and customized training to support re-employment and skill attainment including incumbent worker training to increase wage and career progression upgrade. For example, workers without a college degree may need additional training and skills-based credentials to transition to new career pathways.

To re-envision workforce development, we see skills development as necessary but insufficient. We need to address other barriers: financial, worker supports (e.g., childcare, transportation, health care), as well as racialized practices and policies that result in inequitable results. The overall goal needs to shift from only skills attainment and job placement to equitable employment outcomes.

Equitable economic recovery will require an explicit and intentional set of strategies to support BIPOC workers, immigrants and refugees – those historically left-behind and at-risk again of further economic marginalization. The Plan prioritizes strategies which are informed by research and the identification of innovative national and regional practices aimed at equitable economic recovery. We evaluated strategies for their promise of impact as well as the degree of difficulty in their implementation. On the latter, many of the strategies will require collaboration and commitment from multiple partners in the workforce ecosystem. Their implementation will necessitate the regional workforce system evolving into an innovative, industry, and outcome-driven system with racial and ethnic equity at its core.

By design, each strategy centers equity and is explicit in its intent to support BIPOC workers, immigrants, refugees and other historically marginalized workers.

Finally, while the strategies are intended to help the intended beneficiaries, they may be insufficient for some populations who face additional barriers to employment. As such, additional strategies are included for opportunity youth and the immigrant and refugee community.

- Workforce Development
 - Relief Strategies
 - Recovery Strategies
 - Population Based Strategies
- Advocacy
- Systems Change

2. Regional Sector Strategies.

Sector partnerships present an opportunity to approach workforce development challenges with an explicit systems-level lens—connecting job seekers to work, helping to meet the talent needs of firms and industries, and embedding racial equity in workforce development innovations. In Seattle and King County, there are key opportunities to deepen such partnerships in the construction, information technology, and health-care sectors and build new partnerships in opportunity industry sectors.

Sector partnerships provide the infrastructure and capacity to plan, develop, and implement strategies such as development of career pathways, expansion of apprenticeships and employer and worker driven strategies to strengthen entry, retention, and advancement of underrepresented populations.^{xv}

Sea-King Leadership conducted a sector assessment to identify opportunity sectors using a set of eight criteria. Sectors were first evaluated regionally against quantitative indicators (size/presence & short-term indicators of recovery). We then evaluated sectors with significant regional presence and signs of short-term recovery against subjective criteria – including job quality and industry readiness.

OPPORTUNITY SECTORS. Using the assessment rubric and criteria described above, we identified eight opportunity sectors. While there were no sectors that rated high across all criteria, some showed promise in several criteria, while others present barriers to job access for workers of color, and/or opportunities to improve job quality. Taken together, our analysis identified seven sectors:

- Maritime
- Information Technology
- Healthcare
- Construction
- Transportation and Warehousing
- Manufacturing
- Retail Trades

Current/In Process Sector Strategies include Healthcare, Maritime and IT.

- **Maritime:** Maritime covers a wide range of industrial activities that cross many industries. As such, data on the sector can be challenging to analyze precisely; however, looking across multiple data sources gives a snapshot of COVID-19 impact and outlook for the sector's recovery. Washington's strategic position in the northwest of the U.S. combined with natural deep-water bays and inland access make the state a maritime shipping hub, particularly in connecting Asia to the Midwestern U.S. In 2015, Washington state's maritime sector included close to 70,000 jobs, including 18,700 jobs in ship building and repair, and 22,300 jobs in logistics and shipping. Our analysis surfaced two maritime sub-sectors as particularly promising: Ship and Boat Building and Repair, and Maritime Logistics and Shipping. These segments include occupations with good wages, and local industry organizations have demonstrated readiness for engagement in workforce development. Education and training requirements, career pathways and workplaces vary by specific job.^{xvi}

The WDC is partnering with the Washington State Maritime Federation to establish a regional Maritime Industry Table. This has been postponed to avoid duplication with the State's CCW funded Maritime Industry Table. The Table will be launched in early 2023. We are assured that the Maritime Community supports our efforts.

- **Information Technology** (IT adjacent occupations) Locally, IT has remained strong. The Washington Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board, in its draft Economic Recovery Plan for Washington state’s workforce, includes IT among the three sectors it focuses on. The Board is prioritizing this sector both because of growth projections and the opportunity to create career pathways that are not yet well established, especially for historically marginalized populations.^{xvii} The Workforce Board’s recovery analysis notes that, “Before and through the pandemic, IT-based jobs flourished, and will continue to do so as all industry sectors move towards greater virtualization, digitization, and automation. The ability to use IT is a growing necessity of most jobs in the labor market today—and the proportion of IT to non-IT functions is expected to continue growing. Employers continually call out the need for workers with IT skills, report lengthy vacancy periods for job openings, and cite the lack of available talent as a reason for automating away jobs.” Besides positive signs of short- and long-term job growth, the IT sector (and IT jobs in adjacent clusters) also has the largest percentage by far of jobs paying over \$30/hour (74 percent and 91 percent) among the sectors in our assessment. As largely white-collar jobs, this sector is very low risk for workplace safety. However, it has historically required advanced educational credentials and does not have well established pathways to access and move up in jobs, especially for workers of color, leading to a largely white workforce. Race Forward, in an analysis of both the technology and healthcare sectors, underscores the challenges to job access and mobility for workers of color in these sectors.^{xviii} Strategies should recognize and address these barriers.

Sectoral partnerships should focus on creating robust pathways for workers of color into both the IT sector itself and tech occupations across sectors, to diversify the IT workforce.

The WDC has partnered with Technology Access Foundation, Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and the Equitable Recovery for Reconciliation Alliance (BIPOC led policy advocacy coalition) to launch an IT Industry Leadership Table. Next Steps:

- Convene a BIPOC IT summit to identify structural barriers and develop solutions led by and centered on people
- Identify and leverage the transferable skills of displaced workers to address IT supply gaps across industries.
- Create equity-centered alternative points of entry and pathways into the IT sector.
- Partner closely with education and training providers to communicate ongoing changes in IT skill requirements due to emerging technologies.

Healthcare With over 167,000 jobs in King County, the healthcare sector is the second largest industry in our region, second only to Government. Many healthcare jobs across the country were in high demand pre-pandemic, especially for nurses and home care, and that need has only increased further.^{xix} As the virus unfolded, some facilities were stretched to capacity, leading to dire need for healthcare workers at all levels.^{xx} Despite the soaring demand, entry into livable wage healthcare jobs can take months if not years, due to lengthy education and licensing requirements. There is often a disconnect between job seekers and employers seeking workers, and the lack of established occupational tracks for many healthcare roles leave many potential workers unable to access jobs and/or achieve job mobility, especially workers of color.^{xxi} As a result, like in IT, the workforce in healthcare, particularly in higher-paying jobs like nursing, is disproportionately white while lower-paying jobs like home care are disproportionately workers of color. This sector offers a major opportunity to address the longstanding need for healthcare workers: It also is an opportunity to make careers that are higher skilled, higher demand and better paying more accessible and navigable for underserved communities.

The WDC will continue to support and advance the work of the Healthcare Industry Leadership Table (HILT) to improve access to a skilled health-care workforce. In 2023, the WDC is working to expand the table (regionalizing) and adjusting the model design to an inclusive, equity and worker centered design.

The HILT was launched in May 2018 by a group of health-care leaders (King County Public Health, KinOn Assisted Living, International Community Health Services, Swedish Medical Center, Seattle Children’s Hospital, Kaiser Permanente, and Seattle Cancer Care Alliance) as a way to identify shared priorities across the region’s healthcare providers, and mobilize around shared solutions. The health-care sector offers a major opportunity to address the longstanding shortage of health-care workers, while re-deploying those who are unemployed because of Covid-19. Strong sectoral collaboration should also focus on making high-wage, high-demand careers more accessible and navigable for underserved communities while simultaneously identifying strategies to improve the quality of low-wage, high-demand occupations. Finally, health-care institutions, funders, and workforce intermediaries should coordinate efforts to leverage recovery funds to create new transitional employment pathways in public health jobs—such as testing, contact tracing, community health outreach, and new roles needed to ensure education and access to the vaccine—particularly in communities of color and other underserved communities.

- **Construction:** Across the construction sector, over 60 percent of jobs pay more than \$30/hour, established career pathways exist, and education and training requirements are relatively accessible. Workplace safety is influenced by a range of factors including sub-activity, type of project, unionization, site and project owner/management. In King County, the sector is well engaged on workforce development issues. The construction sector has historically been and continues to be predominantly white and male – workers of color comprise 26 percent of the Construction workforce in King County, compared to 34 percent of the workforce overall. This presents an opportunity for greater racial and gender diversity; however, in King County, the construction sector is well engaged on workforce development issues. The industry has many strong leaders and examples of race-centered approaches to workforce development that can be built on in construction and replicated in other industries.

One example is the Regional Public Owners and Regional Pre-Apprenticeship Collaborative. Many public agencies in the region have policy and investments in place that reduce economic inequities by opening doors to well-paying construction careers. The City of Seattle, King County, Sound Transit, Port of Seattle, Washington State Department of Transportation, Seattle Public Schools, and others are focused on leveraging their investments in public infrastructure to address race-based disparities in the construction industry and demonstrate actions toward achieving racial and economic justice in workforce development. These efforts could be expanded:

WDC is seeking funding to support and expand the Construction Sector partnership to:

- Support and advance the work of Regional Public Owners and the Priority Hire program to advance racial equity in the construction sector.
- Increase partnership opportunities to advance the work of the Regional Public Owners collaborative and expand access and training to public-sector construction jobs.
- Support the development of digital skills curriculum and hybrid in-person
- Provide regional workforce development backbone support: research, data, program development, and funding for pre-apprenticeship training and apprenticeship retention efforts.
- Align with labor, contractors, apprenticeship programs, and other partners to champion greater

workforce diversification in the trades and develop policies to support worker retention.

- Support prison-to-construction career pathways.
- **Transportation and Warehousing:** Taken as a whole, Transportation and Warehousing jobs are relatively accessible in terms of educational requirements and there is some sector engagement to support workforce development. Though some sub-industry areas have been significantly impacted, others including trucking, warehousing and support activities look strong. Taking all the criteria into account, some of the sub-sectors in Transportation and Warehousing offer promising job prospects.
- **Manufacturing** Our region's manufacturing sector in 2019 provided over 100,000 jobs, has a location quotient of 0.86, and had been experiencing pre-COVID workforce shortages, especially in workers trained to use technologies, a trend across the sector as a whole.^{xxiii} Across the state, short-term job recovery has shown some positive signs, though with variation by sector. Most manufacturers remained open because they were deemed essential, but suppliers to hotel, aerospace and restaurant industries were hard hit. Many quickly retooled to meet COVID-related demand for items such as personal protective equipment and sanitizer.

Looking ahead, analysts expect continued growth in use of technology in manufacturing, especially drones, augmented reality and virtual reality, and 3D printing.^{xxiii} Provoked by the pandemic, the sector is also expected to look at how to make supply chains more resilient such as through reshoring or localizing production,^{xxiv} as well as increasingly looking to aftermarket services as a revenue stream.^{xxv} Job recovery will depend on the length of the pandemic and permanency of changes in consumer habits.^{xxvi} Across the manufacturing sector, over 60 percent of jobs pay more than \$30/hour, and education and training requirements are relatively accessible. Workplace safety can be high risk depending on the sub-sector or type of production. In Seattle-King County, the sector is well engaged on workforce development issues. Taking all the criteria into account the Manufacturing sector is promising for WDC and partner engagement and support.

- **Retail Trade:** Prior to COVID-19, the retail trade sector had a very sizable presence in our region, with over 165,000 jobs, including 57,000 in non-store retailers (e.g., Amazon). The impact of the pandemic varied, with physical retail outlets hit hard due to stay-at-home orders, but a huge surge in online shopping, especially among older first-time online shoppers, and contactless purchasing such as curbside pickup. Shortly after the pandemic began, Amazon hired 175,000 new workers and in September announced they would hire an additional 100,000 fulfillment workers and 33,000 corporate and technology positions, in U.S. and Canada.^{xxvii} Essential retail has been in high demand (groceries, drug and pharmacy, health and hygiene products, home improvement, mass and discount stores)^{xxviii} while discretionary spending has been slower, especially spending on high-end/luxury items, which has been decimated. Looking ahead, analysts anticipate that U.S. e-commerce will grow 38 percent this year (vs 13 percent pre-COVID), an acceleration by three years, with most believing the trend likely to become permanent. Like manufacturing, this sector also experienced major disruptions to supply chains, some of which have started to come back online but which may also lead the sector to focus on localizing supply chains in the future.

Compared with other sectors identified, the retail sector has fewer than 50 percent of jobs that pay more than \$30/hour, in large part reflected in lower-paying cashier jobs. Education and training requirements are relatively accessible. Career pathways are not well established, and workplace safety is higher risk given the many retail jobs that are frontline work. In Seattle King County, the sector is somewhat well engaged on workforce development issues. Taking all the criteria into account, some of the sub-sectors in Retail Trade offer promising job prospects

3. Regional Service Strategies.

The Workforce Development Council of Seattle King County is working to strengthen our alignment and connection with our region's economic development priorities and industry sectors. Recognizing our labor market spans across our county boundaries, we are in the process of developing collaborations with workforce development areas in the greater Puget Sound Region (Workforce Snohomish and Workforce Central – Pierce) focused on career pathways in common sector strategies, equitable and inclusive recovery and meeting the demands of regional employers. This collaboration reflects alignment with Puget Sound Regional Council and Greater Seattle Partners' objectives pertaining to coordination with economic development activities and acknowledgement of shared strategic interests in job creation and meeting the growing demands for talent in the region.

Significant job growth is projected in the healthcare, information technology, life sciences, maritime and construction sectors across the Puget Sound. Despite signs of recovery, employers are scrambling to resolve massive labor shifts with outdated policies. For instance, we're encouraged to pursue industry-partnerships in service of employer engagement. Yet, we lack mechanisms to directly address persistent disparities workers of color face in the labor market. Established institutions only marginally involve low-wage workers in decision-making. While problems with credential inflation often stand in the way of meeting employers' actual labor needs or achieving their diversity goals.

While this partnership is still in its early stage, we are identifying problems and opportunities to work cross-region to support the development of workforce talent that reduces duplication, increases accountability, and affords innovation. Strategies and tactics will be employed by the cross-regional partners to improve outcomes include:

- Leveraging existing conveners/convenings to disseminate and engage stakeholders in regional strategy.
- Coordination and collaboration on industry engagement, convening industry tables
- Sharing capacity on data use and program implementation.

Regional cooperation enables us to leverage resources so that more resources to businesses and workers in three main ways.

1. Tackle labor market inequities head on through authentic partnerships with community stakeholders (BIPOC, immigrant, refugee, youth, workers). Too often, systems with good intentions default to telling communities what they need as opposed to engaging and acting on the expertise of lived experience. Integrating equity considerations collectively makes possible stronger workforce partnerships that will lead to changing industry practices.
2. Operating as a regional collaborative reduces duplication, increases accountability, and affords innovation. We've aligned and adopted a set of policies and procedures to foster equitable employment outcomes. For example, applying different indicators and new metrics to redefine return-on-investment and developing common dashboards to show how subsidized employment, income sharing, and community-led advocacy are tied to increasing employer hiring commitments.
3. Institutions can harness the benefits of regional cooperation to support economic transformation. Workforce organizations alone are great at service delivery but can promote high-road practices together and make sure new jobs are associated with better workplace conditions, including higher wages and benefits.

4. Coordination with Regional Economic Development Organizations.

The Workforce Development Council of Seattle King County will coordinate with regional economic development organizations to further the county's workforce and economic development goals: Puget Sound Regional Council, Metropolitan Seattle Chamber of Commerce and Greater Seattle Partners.

Greater Seattle Partners (GSP), the regional economic development organization for Snohomish, King, and Pierce counties. GSP's primary objectives are to attract business and investment to the region that provide good paying jobs with career opportunities; market the region to national and international businesses and investors to support job creation; and support the region's economic development goals through data-driven research and analysis. GSP's past CEO was a member of the WDC Board until his departure in early 2022. Additionally, WDC CEO, Marie Kurose, co-chaired Greater Seattle Partners Workforce Development Workgroup for its Regional Economic Recovery plan. GSP's Regional Economic Recovery plan is aligned with Seattle King County's regional strategic plan and local plan.

Puget Sound Regional Council Workforce Central CEO, Katie Condit represents the LWDB's on the PSRC Board. In her role as the LWDB representative, she has included Seattle King County, Snohomish and Kitsap CEO's in discussions with PSRC Board to strengthen partnership and collaboration on workforce development. The PSRC Recovery Plan is strongly aligned with Seattle King County's Regional Plan – Its Opportunity Occupations/Sectors include healthcare, IT, construction and manufacturing, focus on livable wage jobs, racial equity and a regional approach to workforce development.

Metropolitan Seattle Chamber of Commerce: The Greater Metropolitan Seattle Chamber of Commerce was an active partner in the Regional Transformation Workgroup and led the LWDB's Industry Engagement Workgroup until its VP resigned in early 2022. The Chamber is partnering with the WDC on the creation of the IT Industry Table, supporting employer outreach and recruitment.

5. Coordination of Transportation and/or Other Support Services, as Appropriate.

As part of the regional service delivery strategy, describe whether transportation or other support services need to be coordinated across the region based on the regional analysis, and if so which services and how.

We do not currently have a regional service delivery strategy in place.

However, many of our participants travel across county lines for work. Financial assistance with gasoline payments and car repairs will also be made available as needed for job seekers who do not have access to fixed route transit services across county lines.

6. Multi-Regional Cost Arrangements, as Appropriate.

No multi-regional cost arrangements are planned or currently in-place.

7. Regional performance negotiation and evaluation. *Single area regions may describe the process currently used to negotiate performance.*

Describe *how* a region will collaboratively negotiate and reach agreement with the Governor on local levels of performance and report on performance accountability measures.

Seattle King County is committed to using performance accountability and data to guide strategy, measure progress and outcomes. As such, the WDC is seeking support to strengthen our data capacity. A high priority on identifying data and reporting systems sources that will provide us with participant level demographic and outcomes data needed to enable timely, accurate and relevant information to enable stronger accountability to our partners and stakeholders.

Leadership from the Workforce Development Council participate in the Performance Accountability Work Group led by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board and Washington State Employment Security Department and, in partnership with local boards across the state, negotiate standards and reach agreement among the Chief Elected Officials, Local Workforce Board, and system partners, and the Governor on regional/local targets to propose to the U.S. Department of Labor as required by statute.

The Regional Workforce Development Transformation Committee called for increased transparency and accountability for the Workforce Development Council. To achieve these goals, the WDC has set up processes for ongoing engagement with providers, diverse community stakeholders representing customers, and other regional workforce system partners.

Seattle King County's Regional Plan prioritized data and accountability as a priority strategy:

Measuring and Tracking Inclusive Economic Recovery

Actions to achieve this goal include:

- Build cross-sector partnership(s) that include education, business, labor, community colleges, workforce development and community-based organizations all aligned on a shared vision of equitable outcomes
- Align inclusive economic recovery definition & indicators with partners; establish regional benchmarks and track outcomes in King County using disaggregated data by race/ethnicity, income and other sub-populations.
- Shift current measurement rubric to include multiple measures of job quality; set and track goals to inform decision making and hold all workforce partners accountable.

SECTION III

LWDB Specific Component of Plan

1. Describe the LWDB's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers), in order to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency.

VISION:

All people in this region, regardless of race or ethnicity, share in its economic prosperity.

MISSION:

We catalyze system change in the Puget Sound region to increase the prosperity and economic growth of workers, employers, and communities and to ensure racial equity.

As a workforce intermediary, we:

- Advocate for system change of industry practices and to address barriers
- Broker a shared regional approach of strategies that are responsive to both community and industry needs
- Access and amplify resources by braiding funding sources
- Incubate & innovate strategies for racial equity impact and system change
- Analyze and use data to measure impact/drive system change

STRATEGIES

Workforce Development Strategies

- Invest in subsidized transitional employment with pathways
- Advance sector partnerships and strategies
- Expand apprenticeship programs
- Invest in digital literacy
- Expand access to credentials with labor market value rapidly and at scale, especially for workers of color

Population-Based Strategies

- Youth
 - Invest in and prioritize youth of color
 - Ensure work experience is high quality and linked to employers and pathways in in-demand fields
 - Embed youth voice in planning, process, and service delivery
 - Highlight navigation and support
- Immigrants/Refugees
 - Create bridges to vocational training programs
 - Offer apprenticeship programs in non-English languages
 - Create credential programs for foreign-educated professionals
 - Create a regional, coordinated language access plan
 - Fund translation of essential workforce documents and distribute effectively to multilingual job seekers

Advocacy

- Leverage creative funding models
- Expand portable benefits and wrap-around supports
- Eliminate prohibitive policies to suspending and reinstating driver's licenses
- Remove criminal background as a barrier to employment
- Partner with employers and industry on equitable recovery commitments

Systems Change

- Strengthen the connection between economic and workforce development
- Measure and track equitable economic recovery
- Invest in digital infrastructure
- Build meaningful and sustainable community influence and power.

2. Describe actions the LWDB will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing board.

REGIONAL TRANSFORMATION VISION:

Strengthen the WDC to become a best in class, innovative, regional workforce development backbone organization that is a catalyst for leveraging and aligning resources to increase equity and maximize outcomes.

- Industry driven
- Equity focused
- Outcome- and data-oriented
- Targeting both scale and innovation

Regional Workforce Development Backbone System Goals:

- Leveraging federal funding with more flexible dollars
- Unified (shared) regional workforce development strategy & system alignment
- Break down silos to minimize administrative costs and redundancies
- Pool or coordinate diverse fund sources increase efficiency and impact: leverage WDC's federal funding and infrastructure
- Center racial equity and economic inclusion
- Support coordinated system of industry engagement: shared Industry Tables and strategies
- Centralize and strengthen authentic community engagement and partnership
- Regional Policy Board develops and champions regional strategy

3. Taking into account the regional analysis, describe the local board's strategy to work with the entities that carry out WIOA core programs to align resources available to the local area and achieve local strategic vision and goals.

- a. Describe the workforce development system in the local area, using Attachment D to specifically clarify the one-stop system and availability of Adult, Dislocated Worker services in the area.

ATTACHMENT D

- b. Describe how each partner program fits into the local workforce development system, how the local area's workforce development system serves youth, adults in transition (e.g., job seekers, dislocated workers, under-employed), and individuals with disabilities, and the public and private workforce initiatives underway.

ATTACHMENT D

- c. Taking into account the regional analyses, describe the strategy to work with core programs to align local resources to achieve the strategic vision. Additional local data may be provided to clarify where the strategy meets local needs not identified in the regional analysis.

The WDC, serving as a Regional Workforce Development Backbone organization developed the Regional Strategic Plan to serve as a shared regional blueprint to align resources to achieve greater impact and scale. The Plan seeks to create a streamlined and coordinated workforce development system through:

- Leveraging federal funding with more flexible dollars
- Establishing a unified (shared) regional workforce development strategy & system alignment
- Breaking down silos to minimize administrative costs and redundancies
- Pooling and/or coordinating diverse fund sources increase efficiency and impact: leverage WDC's federal funding and infrastructure

- d. Describe how the LWDB will work with entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs to support alignment to provide services, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.), to support the strategy identified in the state and local plans.

Seattle King County WDC will continue to work with entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs to support alignment of services, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) to support the strategies identified in the state and local plans detailed below.

Eligible Training Providers. The Washington State Education and Training Board's Career Bridge website, home of the state's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), provides a comprehensive list of all King County Eligible Training Providers. WIOA requires that both job seekers and employers choose the education, training, and apprenticeship service that best meets their needs from this list. A job seeker may select a career pathway, requiring a credential. If the training program selected from one of the local community colleges, they may receive additional support from an Education and Employment Navigator, providing robust supports while they are enrolled in their program of study, and after completion for job placement.

Basic Education for Adults (BEaA). As articulated in Sections III-17-18, the local board works in close collaboration with the region's two public community colleges that provide robust and evidence-informed basic education programs. Both colleges offer [Integrated Basic Education Skills and Training](#) (I-BEST) programs that contextualize academic and/or language skill development has been nationally recognized for its outcomes. The State Board for Community and Technical College's success in supporting BEaA student's ability to benefit is a tremendous asset to Washington State. As the regional analysis indicates, a growing share of jobs require some post-secondary education. Washington State's I-BEST programs coupled with High School 21 are essential programs that place individuals on educational and career pathway to economic self-sufficiency and improve completers' economic resiliency. The local board will

continue to actively engage King County colleges to identify areas for which I-BEST programs can be expanded to afford greater access to quality jobs and ensure that employers have access to the talent needed to grow their businesses.

4. Targeted Outreach to Eligible Individuals with Barriers to Employment in particular veterans and eligible spouses (including any special initiatives to serve the veteran population), Unemployment Insurance Claimants, older workers, at-risk youth, low-income adults, dislocated workers (including the long-term unemployed and under-employed), and individuals with disabilities.

Seattle King County WDC has prioritized strengthening outreach and partnership with targeted communities. Since 2019, the WDC has worked to increase partnerships with communities representing priority populations, with an intentional focus on communities of color, immigrants and refugees and those with other barriers to employment. This includes

Immigrant, Refugees

Language Access: The WDC in collaboration with our community partners, advocated for language access – translation of UI documents, multilingual phone support and community navigators. Seeing the critical need in the community, our providers proactively translated UI documents in 13 languages, and WS partners enlisted 60 staff members to complete ESD UI training.

Veterans & Military Spouses. Veterans services staff are embedded in the local WorkSource Centers. Community partners work in collaboration with on-site veterans’ specialists to provide a host of services to veterans and eligible spouses including, referrals to for housing and food security, job search, employment and training benefits and services, and assistance transitioning from military to civilian services.

Youth: On February 22, 2022, the WDC released Request for Proposals (RFP) No. 21-04, “Population Based Strategies - Youth Programs,” with additional resources available from WIOA to supplement ongoing youth contracts. The RFP was designed for community-based organizations to conduct intensive, innovative community outreach to youth ages 16-24 who need training, employment and Youth are provided a full range of services, including tailored internships and jobs with a prioritization of career pathways, work experience, and industry-recognized degrees and certificates. Each participant undergoes a comprehensive assessment to review skills, interests, strengths, and aptitudes, and support needs. Then they work with a qualified case manager to identify a career goal, service plan, and outcome related to education and employment. By offering education through tutoring, alternative schools, and learning centers, these programs can serve youth throughout Seattle-King County, either enrolled in school or outside of school systems, to work toward a high-school diploma and/or a General Education Diploma.

Dislocated Workers: WIOA Title I-B Dislocated Worker services, delivered through the WorkSource Seattle-King County system, include career (basic and individualized), training, and support services, and job retention follow-up. Dislocated worker participants also receive specialized services, such as customized training through National Emergency Grant funding. Rapid response services to businesses are also part of the Dislocated Worker program.

Connection Sites

Connection Sites create strong links to the community, ensuring that Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants refugees, and other low income households have equal access to financial resources, training programs, and high-quality jobs within in-demand sectors.

In response to the diverse needs of the Seattle-King County community, the network of WorkSource Seattle-King County sites has increasingly expanded to include community organizations with a portal to WorkSource services, called “Connection Sites.” This connects local organizations to resources from the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act.

These sites provide customers and program participants with computer-dedicated access to WorkSource Seattle-King County services, in addition to:

- Food
- Transportation
- Clothing
- Family counseling
- Employment readiness
- Education
- Housing
- English-language classes
- Disability and mental health resources

By leveraging resources and knowledge through dedicated collaborative partnerships, these organizations become partners with local WorkSource Center and Affiliate sites, connecting their customers to:

- Additional resources through the larger system
- Network for customer referrals
- Staff training

System Coordination

The operator role ensures that all partners in the WorkSource system receive real-time information on emerging labor market information, guidance from the Employment Security Department, and the technical assistance, training and support needed to effectively respond to COVID-19 recovery and help individuals find employment.

The WorkSource Seattle-King County Operator is responsible for working in partnership with the WDC to:

- Integrate and streamline service delivery for all WorkSource programs and partners
- Maintain standards and accountability
- Support communication across the system
- Provide and facilitate professional development and staff training
- Provide guidance and technical assistance for all WorkSource staff, including access to resources and information for Connection Site staff
- Share system best practices
- Recruit new partners

The Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA), braided with King County Veterans, Seniors & Human Services Levy (VSHSL) funds, provides a variety of services to adults who are furthest from opportunity, overrepresented among low income and unemployed individuals, and historically underrepresented in their access to services.

This program makes an explicit commitment to racial equity and the provision of culturally competent and linguistically appropriate services. This commitment is demonstrated in the following ways:

- Program design emphasizing partnership with community-based organizations to expand system capacity and increase engagement of BIPOC, immigrant, and refugee populations
- Flexible funding model promoting wraparound supports and financial resources for communities facing barriers to employment
- Focus on expanded access to work-based learning and on-the-job training to build foundation for long-term career pathways in high-demand industries
- Emphasis on collecting more comprehensive demographic data to identify racial disparities in program access and outcomes
- Emphasis on advancing digital equity, so participants have access to internet-enabled devices, broadband internet, and digital literacy training.

5. Describe how the LWDB will coordinate education and workforce investment activities in the local area with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) is a planned program of courses and learning experiences that begins with exploration of career options, supports basic academic and life skills, and enables achievement of high academic standards, leadership, preparation for industry-defined work, and advanced and continuing education. CTE programs meet the academic and career preparation needs of secondary students that will assist them in achieving higher standards of education, including the state's Essential Academic Learning Requirements and Certificate of Mastery. Other workforce education and training programs offered by the K–12 system include school-to-work and tech preparatory programs.

School-to-work programs pair school-based learning with work-based opportunities to assist students in making the connection between high academic achievement and long-term workplace success. Tech prep programs allow students to earn college credit while still in high school by pursuing community and technical college vocational programs in conjunction with their high school course of work. Occupational skill centers are another vocational education resource. The focus of skill center programs is to provide entry-level job skill training to high school juniors and seniors. Instructional strategies promote the mastery of competencies in an applied contextual manner, emphasizing instruction in advancing technologies and striving to connect all learning to a workforce context.

King County currently has a skill center, the Puget Sound Skills Center (PSSC) in Burien. PSSC is a collaborative effort among Federal Way, Fife, Highline, Tahoma and Tukwila school districts and was the first such center in Washington when it opened in 1966. PSSC courses include 19 different programs ranging from auto-body technology and culinary arts to digital media production, medical careers and an off-campus Marine Technology program that operates at Seahurst Park in Burien. In addition to vocational training, the skill center provides an opportunity for students to earn a high school diploma that is issued by their sending high school.

Community & Technical College Vocational-Technical Education

Seattle-King County is home to 11 community and technical colleges:

- Seattle Central College
- North Seattle College
- South Seattle College
- Seattle Vocational Institute
- Cascadia Community College
- Shoreline Community College
- Bellevue College
- Highline College
- Green River College
- Lake Washington Institute of Technology
- Renton Technical College

Vocational-technical programs include job preparatory training leading to certificates of completion, programs that lead to associate degrees, related classroom instruction for apprenticeship programs, retraining for dislocated workers, and skills upgrade training for those already employed.

Private Career Schools

The Seattle-King County area has over 70 private career schools on the Eligible Training Provider List, offering courses in business, health care, information technology (IT), transportation and a wide variety of other fields.

State-Approved, Joint Apprenticeship Programs

State-approved, joint apprenticeship programs combine on-the-job training—supervised by a journey-level crafts person or trades professional—with classroom instruction. Depending on the program, apprenticeships range from three to five years. The programs and their standards are approved by the Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council. At the local level, Joint Apprenticeship Training Committees (JATCs)—made up of equal numbers of employer and labor organization representatives—administer the programs. Employers and workers provide financial contributions to apprenticeship programs.

Of the state-approved, joint apprenticeship programs in the Seattle-King County region, most are in the building and construction trades. Apprentices earn while they learn, starting out at a set percentage of the journey level wage and then increasing as they progress through their apprenticeship.

Apprenticeship programs receive the majority of their funding through training trust funds. State funds are a secondary source. In most cases, these funds go to community and technical colleges to cover the costs associated with classroom and off-site instruction.

While the availability of apprenticeships were impacted as the economy declined in the past, most recently the county is seeing a slight increase in slots for new apprentices. Pre-apprenticeship programs provide individuals with basic skills, job readiness, and trade-specific training. Graduates are prepared to be more competitive for opportunities, particularly

for openings in apprenticeships. Several pre-apprenticeship programs target women, people of color, youth and the economically disadvantaged.

6. Describe how the LWDB will facilitate development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs, and improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable).

Career Pathways. Seattle King County WDC develops career pathways through its Industry Tables, working collaboratively with employers, Labor, community stakeholders and workforce development system partners (community agencies, colleges, joint training trusts to expand access to training and credentials to support in demand and emerging careers that meet job quality standards.

Labor Market Research

To complement the anecdotal evidence provided by business leaders, the WDC analyzes regional labor market data to determine industry-wide needs. The WDC also conducts Talent Pipeline Studies and produces the State of the Workforce application to align labor market information with labor supply data.

Map Your Career

Understanding career pathway options is helpful for career and education planning for both youth and adults. Career pathway diagrams illustrate occupations and industry-wide pathways available in a particular sector.

Available both as a booklet and online at www.mapyourcareer.org, this resource displays career pathways in twelve key industries in Seattle-King County, including overall trends, sample wages, and career progression possibilities. **Map your Career is invaluable for both job seekers and workers considering how to advance in a career and decide which pathway might best fit their needs.**

Examples of current career pathways activities:

Healthcare Career Pathways: This public-private partnership at *EvergreenHealth* provides on-site career counseling services to existing staff seeking to:

- Move forward in their profession
- Achieve wage growth
- Fill mission-critical roles

The career-counseling model was identified through a convening of employer, labor, and education partners and has since been applied at several local healthcare organizations, including the most recent iteration at *EvergreenHealth*. The program covers:

- Connecting directly with incumbent workers to increase knowledge of training fund resources
- Acting as liaison between EvergreenHealth and the training fund to increase opportunities for incumbent workers
- Leveraging career counseling services and resources from the WorkSource system to support worker advancement

The career-counseling model helps *EvergreenHealth* to achieve its organizational and workforce goals, which are measured and assessed directly by employee satisfaction. More than 185 incumbent workers have been served since the project began in 2015. About 30-40 people are served annually by the Career Pathways counselor, referred by labor/management partners administering the Training & Education Fund at EvergreenHealth.

Registered Apprenticeship. Apprenticeships have gained significant attention over the past decade, significantly increasing job seeker and youth interest in this pathway to a career. Seattle King County has a strong relationship with local apprenticeship programs in construction, health care and manufacturing. Additionally, through our partnerships with Labor, we are collaborating with the Hospitality Workers and UFCW to support their emerging/new apprenticeship programs.

Youth Apprenticeships: Partnership to Advance Youth Apprenticeships (PAYA) The WDC was selected as one of 9 national sites by New America to focus on expanding youth apprenticeships in our community. This effort to advance youth apprenticeship is in partnership with:

- Aerospace Joint Apprenticeship Committee
- Computing For All
- Independent Technicians Automotive Committee
- BERK Consulting

The local partnership's vision is broad and deep: all high school students in King County can start their careers through youth apprenticeship pathways that lead to good jobs and rewarding careers. The program supports strategy development and implementation activities. The WDC will focus on building a regional partner and resource hub that coordinates information for school districts and apprenticeship partners to launch and manage successful apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship pathways for young people.

7. Business engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in demand industry sectors and who have demand occupations, in workforce development programs; (ii) support a workforce development system that meets the needs of local businesses; (iii) better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development; and (iv) strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and the state's Unemployment Insurance program. LWDBs that intend to use sector strategies for this engagement should complete the sector rubric in Attachment A for each sector prioritized

WorkSource Business Services Team (BST) prioritizes businesses that provide quality jobs to their employees, including internal career pathways with upward mobility as well as businesses that are owned by BIPOC community members. The BST serves all businesses that request services. Business is one of the primary customers of the WorkSource Seattle-King County system, as mandated by the *Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act* (WIOA). The Business Services Team at WorkSource Seattle-King County:

- Has comprehensive understanding of labor market conditions
- Acts as lead support partners through Seattle-King County's primary sector strategies (as defined by WIOA)
- Consults on workforce development activities

- Assists employers with development of quality jobs
- Connects businesses to current workforce skill needs
- Leads regional and local business partnership activities

The team is dedicated to:

- Workforce planning needs of local industries
- Talent acquisition strategy development
- Connecting businesses to the WorkSource system's talent and resources
- Directly addressing the workforce needs identified through Industry Leadership Tables by leveraging knowledge of programs and the collective strength of regional network of support partners

The team champions initiatives, led by the WDC, that engage industry as a leader in workforce development strategies and investments, with the goal of providing community members with relevant opportunities in high-demand businesses.

Services include:

- Direct connection to job seekers with the skills and relevant education
- Recruitment assistance through in-person and virtual hiring events
- Supporting efforts by Industry Leadership Tables
- Strategic retention assistance and layoff aversion planning
- Layoff assistance
- Providing workforce information (labor market data and forecasts, tax incentive assistance, human resources best practices, navigation of federal contract compliance, and connection with industry groups and economic development networks)

Industry Strategies Team

The WDC continues to pursue a model for industry engagement through the establishment of collaborative tables comprised of employers, labor, community partners, and job seekers. In alignment with the mission, vision, and objectives defined in our 2021 [Regional Strategic Plan](#), the WDC in collaboration with our partners is working to expand beyond the workforce system's nearly exclusive focus on skills building to include a worker-and-racial-equity-centered approach that addresses the structural barriers job seekers confront regardless of their skill attainment. Our current tables include the healthcare and maritime sectors, with near-term plans to build a technology table.

The **Healthcare Industry Leadership Table (HILT)** is comprised of an interdisciplinary set of partners collaborating to design programs and strategies that will strengthen recruitment, training, and retention of diverse healthcare professionals. With fifty members, the HILT has established action-oriented committees to expand Medical Assistant apprenticeships, establish student outreach and mentoring programs, and curation of a video library to support ongoing professional development.

The **Technology Industry Leadership Table (TILT)** intends to center inclusion, skill building, and career potential of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in technology careers, based on the increasing need to connect a diverse population of job seekers to a sector that offers multiple pathways to high-wage employment, yet continues to lack equitable access and diversity in its workforce.

8. [Incumbent worker training, on- the-job training, customized training, industry and sector strategies, career pathways, utilization of effective business intermediaries,](#)

and other business services and strategies to meet the needs of employers in the region.

Incumbent Worker Training: [Policies & Guidelines — Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County \(seakingwdc.org\)](#)

Seattle King County LWDB approved an Incumbent Worker Policy June 2022: For businesses to remain competitive in Seattle-King County's thriving economy, a well-trained workforce that is up to date on industry-recognized skills is necessary. The WDC provides funding for continuing education, training, and upskilling of incumbent, or existing employees. It is designed to increase local businesses' competitiveness, avert potential layoffs, and/or upskill/backfill workers for existing Seattle King County businesses. It is primarily intended for workers who (i) have experienced a change in the necessary skills required to remain in their position, (ii) wish to advance in the company, or (iii) to avoid layoff.

Procurement of Training: The WDC will utilize procurement rules for contracts with training vendors for the purposes of incumbent worker training, as defined in WDC Policy – Purchasing and Procurement [Policies & Guidelines — Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County \(seakingwdc.org\)](#)

This criterion cannot be designated to a service provider. Employer Secured Training: When in-house training is provided by an employee of the employer, the reimbursement amount is based on the employer share calculation. For example, the employer purchases new machinery, but now must train staff in its use. One employee has been trained to use it, and has the capacity and skill to train others, but calculations indicate it will be costly to devote that employee to the task because they would not be able to perform their own job while training staff. That employee's wages when providing the training would be included in the cost of training, and therefore, part of the cost share calculation. When the training provider is secured by the employer, procurement is not required. The LWDB enters into an agreement with the employer to reimburse for the WIOA federal share cost of the training. The agreement with the employer must document at a minimum: a. The training being provided. b. That the cost is reasonable for what is being provided, and c. The approximate dollar amounts, both paid by the employer and paid by the WDC for the federal share.

Each program year (July 1st – June 30th), the Workforce Development Council of Seattle King County shall determine an amount of adult/dislocated worker formula funds to be reserved/expended for incumbent worker training subject to performance results (annual report) and budget considerations. Incumbent Worker Training Applications will be open and competitive each program year (July 1st – June 30th), or until all funding is exhausted. Applications will be reviewed and awarded on a quarterly basis (January, April, July, and October), and responded to within 30 days after the end of a quarter.

Incumbent worker training will be prioritized for business and employees from key Industry Sectors identified in the Council's WIOA Strategic Plan. However, the Council will consider other opportunities with industries/companies to avert layoffs, address skill shortages or to assist emerging industries. The Council's incumbent worker training dollars are best leveraged when working with industry partnerships, associations, consortiums, round tables and where training projects benefit more than one company. The Council will give priority to projects working with industry partnerships for multi-company training. WIOA requires a minimum company match from participating employers of 10%-50% depending on the numbers of

employees of the organization. Whenever possible, the Council will acquire 100% company match (cash or in-kind or a combination). Company match can be satisfied with the cost of wages/benefits paid to the employee/trainee while in training. The Council will track and document employer cost share contributions. A tagline for Council funded incumbent worker project material (written or electronic) indicating “This training project was sponsored by the Workforce Development Council of Seattle King County” will be required. The Council will review and determine funding on incumbent worker training proposals received through Incumbent Worker Training Applications.

9. Continuous improvement of eligible providers of services and ensure that providers meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and job seekers.

The WDC holds monthly performance meetings to review provider performance, analyzing participant data and expenditures. The project managers conduct site visits to program partners to provide technical assistance, monitoring and to identify any challenges. WDC staff hold quarterly provider meetings to discuss emerging issues, seek input on policy or program recommendations and share best practices or challenges; and have initiated peer-to-peer workgroups to provide technical assistance and build a community of practice.

Additionally, the Operator leads functional teams made up of WorkSource staff, which guide system-wide efforts in: Customer engagement, Community outreach and Workshop facilitation. Through collaboration with these functional teams, the Operator creates strategies to expand outreach and service efforts to individuals facing obstacles to employment, conducts and analyzes customer survey data, and coordinates regional partnerships to ensure efficient services.

10. Describe how the LWDB will develop an implementation timeline and strategy for wireless Internet access at comprehensive one-stop centers.

All WorkSource Centers and Affiliated Sites currently have wireless internet available to customers.

11. Describe how the LWDB will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and other means.

The use of technology to remove barriers for workers and enhance their access to services is a game changer. Advances in communications and technology potentially allow for seamless, universal, and remote access to education, training, and other workforce development services. While technology cannot fix all barrier access problems, in many cases it will help staff to improve accessibility.

12. Accessibility for Customers with Disabilities

Customers with Disabilities

The WDC's Accommodations Policy works to ensure that universal access is available for all persons interested in participating in programs, projects and activities contracted through the WDC, including persons with disabilities. The WorkSource system in Seattle-King County has a wide variety of tools and accommodations designed to make all its features accessible to those with disabilities. WorkSource makes every effort to provide reasonable accommodations to all programs, policies, and procedures in order to accommodate any participant-acknowledged physical, mental, or sensory disability.

The King County Area Manager of DVR sits on the WDC Board of Directors and Vocational Rehabilitation counselors are located at WorkSource sites. The effective partnership between DVR and WorkSource has resulted in helping identify and recommend solutions for gaps in service delivery to people with disabilities. The WDC is also actively working with DVR staff to increase WorkSource staff skills and expertise through additional staff training around assistive technology and employing persons with disabilities. The WDC is currently in the process of developing a Principles of Collaboration agreement with DSHS and other Workforce Development Councils to help formalize how partners will engage and interact with each other.

The local WorkSource centers comply with all provisions and requirements of the Americans for Disabilities Act of 1990. Staff undergo extensive and ongoing training on how to provide the highest quality services to all individuals and ensure support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Technology and facilities assessments are conducted to identify potential deficits, possible violations and potential opportunities for enhancements. Assistive technology investments are made through partner investments in the infrastructure funding agreement cost sharing structure.

Equal Opportunity Officer. The local Equal Opportunity Officer (EO Officer) facilitates quarterly Equal Opportunity training sessions in order to provide a mandatory annual Equal Opportunity Training for all one-stop staff. In addition to Equal Opportunity training, the Local EO Officer ensures all service delivery locations are not only meeting, but exceeding, compliance standards for access. To ensure compliance the EO Officer provides full EO monitoring walkthroughs of all sites, facilitates partner walkthroughs as requested through the AIC (e.g. Department of Services for the Blind and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation accessibility walkthrough), and facilitates annual State EO monitoring. The One Stop Operator is an authorized EO trainer, providing support to the EO officer when needed.

13. Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment & Training Activities

The Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA), braided with King County Veterans, Seniors & Human Services Levy (VSHSL) funds, provides a variety of services to adults who are furthest from opportunity, overrepresented among low income and unemployed individuals, and historically underrepresented in their access to services. This program makes an explicit commitment to racial equity and the provision of culturally competent and linguistically appropriate services. This commitment is demonstrated in the following ways:

- Flexible funding model promoting wraparound supports and financial resources for communities facing barriers to employment.

- Program design emphasizing partnership with community-based organizations to expand system capacity and increase engagement of BIPOC, immigrant, and refugee populations
- Focus on expanded access to work-based learning and on-the-job training to build foundation for long-term career pathways in high-demand industries.
- Emphasis on collecting more comprehensive demographic data to identify racial disparities in program access and outcomes Services prioritize job placements, training, and job retention, and are connected through the 45 WorkSource Seattle-King County locations.

Types of service include:

- ✓ Career counseling
- ✓ Labor market and training information
- ✓ Assessment
- ✓ Employment placement and retention services
- ✓ Interactive workshops
- ✓ Labs
- ✓ Job clubs
- ✓ Training
- ✓ Supportive services

14. Youth Workforce Investment Activities

Youth are provided a full range of services, including tailored internships and jobs with a prioritization of career pathways, work experience, and industry-recognized degrees and certificates. Each participant undergoes a comprehensive assessment to review skills, interests, strengths, and aptitudes, and support needs. Then they work with a qualified case manager to identify a career goal, service plan, and outcome related to education and employment. By offering education through tutoring, alternative schools, and learning centers, these programs can serve youth throughout Seattle-King County, either enrolled in school or outside of school systems, to work toward a high-school diploma and/or a General Education Diploma. Throughout the program, young people receive intensive support in addressing barriers to opportunity to progress through additional education, training, and the next steps on their career journey. This program prioritizes:

- Educational credential attainment
- Post-secondary placement
- Unsubsidized employment placements
- Training
- Employment retention

The variety of community partners and entry points available for youth ensures that they have access to WIOA services. All providers deliver the 14 required WIOA youth elements. Educational needs can be met through tutoring programs, alternative schools, and learning centers that are located throughout the County. These programs serve youth who did not complete high school and want to re-engage in education.

Youth can earn high school credit or work towards a GED and master competencies key to academic and workplace success. They receive intensive support in addressing personal barriers and move on to college and/or work.

WIOA funds are leveraged through local partnerships. Services are provided through a

consortia of interconnected partners. School districts, community based-organizations, community and technical colleges and government agencies collaborate to reach out and serve economically disadvantaged youth. The WDC's partnerships touch every corner of King County. The Consortium model builds on the unique strengths, service delivery strategies, and communities served by each partner agency. This approach allows for the leveraging of community resources and makes services available in wide geographic areas.

In-School Youth

Seattle-King County WIOA-funded programs for in-school youth target youth between the ages of 14 and 21, who are low-income and face at least one barrier to employment. In-school programs typically include a summer component that integrates employment or work readiness training, career exploration, and in some cases academic credit through a partner high school or college. WIOA funding is an important piece of the school-to-career system, as it offers increased work-based learning opportunities to those youth that are WIOA eligible. The WIOA in-school program functions as a disengagement prevention strategy by quickly intervening with at-risk youth as they begin to falter in school. Current emphasis includes exploration of careers and training and post-secondary credit retrieval activities.

Out-of-School Youth

Seattle-King County WIOA-funded programs for out-of-school youth (OSY) target young people who are between the ages of 16 and 24, not attending any school, and face at least one barrier to employment. Because many of the young people served face an identified barrier, such as homelessness or parenthood, most out-of-school youth do not need to be low-income. This is a huge change from WIA because it removes the burden of documenting a young person's income and allows more young people to be served.

15. Coordination statewide rapid response activities.

The mission of the pre-layoff system is to provide comprehensive information and technical assistance leading to employment of dislocated workers affected by layoff, closure and or disaster. All local areas will provide Rapid Response activities to employers and workers when a layoff or closure is going to occur, is occurring or has occurred, in compliance with state and federal regulations. Rapid Response activities are time-sensitive and local areas will develop local protocols to ensure contact with affected parties within 48 hours of receiving notice of a layoff, closure or crisis event.

Seattle - King County Rapid Response Team includes a staff member from the WorkSource Business Services Team, who participates in an integrated team with the Employment Security Department. The team also works extensively with Washington State Labor and Industries, Unemployment Insurance programs, and employee representatives when present. The majority of Rapid Response activity is conducted at employer sites and includes partner information, WorkSource information, including WIOA services, and job search workshops. Strengthened by WIOA, the Rapid Response team continues to implement their model to serve businesses as customers in order to maximize reemployment and minimize consumption of Unemployment Insurance benefits.

Process

The Employment Security Department Rapid Response Coordinator notifies the Seattle-King County Rapid Response team Lead upon receipt of a WARN or other relevant request for Rapid Response services. The team lead then contacts the employer to offer services. Depending on the size of the layoff, a pitch meeting is conducted with company management to recommend that the Rapid Response team work with the company to assess needs, review available services, and obtain any relevant employee information. Pre-layoff presentations are scheduled at this meeting. For companies with fewer layoffs, or, who are not interested in on-site presentations, the team lead provides an employee packet with relevant information that can be distributed by the company to impacted employees. Companies who have not filed a WARN notice, or, who have questions prior to filing their WARN, can also be directed to the Seattle-King County Rapid Response team for assistance.

Integration

The local Rapid Response team regularly coordinates its activities with statewide efforts and resources with the assistance of the state's Rapid Response team. WorkSource Rapid Response team members also work nationwide with local companies with a large national presence. If a company issues a WARN notice for a lay-off impacting multiple counties, initial meetings and conference calls include Rapid Response representation from all of the counties. In the absence of a WARN notice and where the Seattle-King County Rapid Response Team is contacted directly by a multi-county employer, the local team lead contacts the appropriate Rapid Response contacts in other parts of the state.

16. Describe how the LWDB will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area under Title I with the provision of transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate supportive services in the local area.

Supportive services are provided through a multitude of sources, including: WIOA funded supportive services, partner provided supportive services, delivering WorkSource services at community sites.

Based on individual assessment and availability of funds, supportive services may be awarded to eligible participants. Supportive service awards are intended to enable an individual to participate in WDC funded programs and activities to secure and retain employment. Secondary assessment goes beyond preliminary assessment in collecting more information about the job seeker such as literacy, numeracy, English language proficiency, aptitudes, abilities (including skill gaps), and supportive service needs.

WorkSource Partner Supportive Services

The WDC will continue to work with WorkSource Seattle-King County and Youth partner organizations that leverage other supportive services to customers. Some examples of supportive services provided by partners, include housing assistance, English language classes, and transportation assistance.

Transit Supportive Services

Three of King County Metro's ORCA LIFT Reduced Fare Program authorized enrollment offices are already a WorkSource office or Connection site. The WDC and WorkSource plan to expand the program with ORCA LIFT agencies by providing an ORCA LIFT orientation at some WorkSource offices.

Connection Sites create strong links to the community, ensuring that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color have equal access to financial resources, training programs, and high-quality jobs within in-demand sectors. In response to the diverse needs of the Seattle-King County community, the network of

WorkSource Seattle-King County sites has increasingly expanded to include community organizations with a portal to WorkSource services, called “Connection Sites.” This connects local organizations to resources from the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act. These sites provide customers and program participants with computer-dedicated access to WorkSource Seattle-King County services, in addition to support services and resources including food, transportation, clothing, family counseling, housing, disability and mental health resources.

By leveraging resources and knowledge through dedicated collaborative partnerships, these organizations become partners with local WorkSource Center and Affiliate sites, connecting their customers to additional resources through the larger system, network for customer referrals and staff training.

17. Coordination with Wagner-Peyser Services

The WDC has developed plans and strategies for, and assurances concerning, maximizing coordination of services provided by the State employment service under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) and services provided in Seattle-King County through the one-stop delivery system to improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services.

Wagner-Peyser employment services, delivered by the State Employment Security Department, are co-located with Title IB in WorkSource Centers. Services among Wagner-Peyser and Title IB staff are aligned, resulting in seamless provision of services to customers. All operational functions, including supervision and management where appropriate, are taken into consideration when developing a functional staffing plan for each center. Agreed-upon staffing plans, including methodology, roles and expectations, will be documented and may be solicited during program monitoring.

18. Coordination with Title I

As post-secondary credentials and career pathways are now an explicit goal for many adult education and literacy students, incorporating career readiness and training in a student’s pathway is integral to student success. Likewise, many WorkSource customers are in need of adult education and literacy services, particularly education that is contextualized for work and relevant to developing career pathways.

At the state level, partners commit to contributing to the WorkSource system as detailed in the agreement between State Adult Basic Education programs and the Washington Workforce Association. ABE and literacy providers in King County may take part in the WorkSource partnership agreement and memorandum of understanding.

19. . Coordination with Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Department of Services for the Blind

The WDC has entered into the agreement: “Shared Vision, Values & Principles of Collaboration between the Department of Social and Human Services Division of Vocational Rehabilitations (DVR) and the Washington Workforce Association.”

The WDC, DVR, and the Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) are partners in the development and operation of a WorkSource one-stop system that meets the needs of all customers, particularly those with significant barriers to employment. The King County Area

Manager of DVR sits on the WDC Board of Directors.

The effective partnership between DVR, DSB, and WorkSource has resulted in helping identify and recommend solutions for gaps in service delivery to people with disabilities. DVR counselors are located at multiple WorkSource sites. The WDC is also actively working with DVR staff and the WorkSource Operator Team to increase WorkSource staff skills and expertise through additional staff training around assistive technology and employing persons with disabilities. The WDC has developed a Principles of Collaboration agreement with DSHS and other Workforce Development Councils to help formalize how partners will engage and interact with each other.

20. Describe the competitive process to be used to award sub-grants and contracts in the local area for activities carried out under Title I.

Policy A402 v.6 explains the WDC's competitive sub-grant and contract process in detail. All WIOA recipients must conform to specific policies and procedures which ensure the safeguarding of public assets for fair and open competition. The extent of competition should be consistent with the dollar amount of the award.

The WDC and its subrecipients of WIOA/Federal funds must follow 2 CFR Part 200 on all procurement activities. Private and philanthropic fund sources are not required to follow Federal procurement standards. However, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and WDC staff shall prepare procurement materials for the Finance & Administration Committee's approval. Projects funded by private and philanthropic fund sources will complete all necessary documentation and must follow the WDC's procurement signature procedures.

21. Describe how adult and dislocated worker training services will be provided, including, if contracts will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts and how the LWDB will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided.

Procurement

Selecting Service Providers - The selection of service providers to carry out employment and training programs under WIOA, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or other funds shall conform to all applicable federal and state regulations and the process described in the WDC local policies. The WDC will establish and use criteria, including the ability of service providers to meet performance accountability measures based on common measures, as well as full and open competition consistent with 2 CFR parts 200 and 2900 in addition to applicable state and local procurement laws to procure eligible providers. Procurements for new service providers or modifications of existing contracts over \$250,000 must be approved by the Finance & Administration Committee. Selection of One-Stop Operators Procurement of One-Stop Operators per Washington State WIOA Title I Policy 5404 Section 3(c)(i) must be designated and certified through a competitive process once every four years and following the principles set forth in the Uniform Administrative Guidance at 2 CFR 200.318-326. Procurement by noncompetitive proposals (sole source) can be exercised as per local policies if it complies with Federal procurement regulations outlined in 2 CFR 200.320(f) and 20 CFR 678.610 and Federal guidance in TEGL 15-16.

WIOA customers may receive training after an interview, evaluation, or assessment and career planning. Training might include Individual Training Account (ITA) vouchers with eligible training providers or other training. The WDC uses contracts to ensure efficiency, highest quality customer choice, and the most knowledgeable providers on training resources. Furthermore, it allows WorkSource staff to assess and guide customers on career pathways including multiple funding resources that will lead to the most successful career pathway.

Individual Training Accounts (ITA)

- Occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment
- Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs
- Training programs operated by the private sector
- Skills upgrading and retraining
- Entrepreneurial training
- Pre-/registered apprenticeship training, tuition for training portion of an apprenticeship, supportive services, need-related payments, and work-based training options

Other Training for eligible individuals include:

- Work Based Learning such as On-the-Job Training, paid internships
- Job readiness training
- Incumbent worker and/or customized training for employed workers
- Cohorts and other apprenticeship-like models (utilizing WDC funds)
- Transitional jobs (time-limited, to establish job history)

The ITA, as described in WIOA, is established on behalf of a registered WIOA Title I-B adult, dislocated worker, or older youth. The customer uses the funds to purchase training services from an eligible provider he or she selects in consultation with an employment counselor. Payments from ITAs may be made in a variety of ways, including vouchers, the electronic transfer of funds through financial institutions, or other appropriate methods. Payments may also be made incrementally, through payment of a portion of the costs at different points in the training course.

Customers receiving training under this approach will receive the information they need (e.g., skills assessment, labor market conditions and trends, training provider performance) to make an informed choice about their own employment future and the training they need to support this decision.

Limitations established by the WDC's policies work to not undermine, but maximize customer choice in the selection of a training course toward an occupation in demand and an eligible training provider.

Based on individual assessment and funds available, an ITA may be awarded to eligible customers. It is the intent of the WDC to primarily use ITA dollars to help customers make wage progression and gains.

22. Describe how one-stop centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for WIOA programs and programs carried out by one-stop partners.

Integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information systems for WIOA programs and programs carried out by one-stop partners are of critical importance to effective services delivery. Seattle King County WDC continues to utilize the state intake and case management system, while collaborating with our state partners on a new system that will effectively meet our dynamic local and state data and reporting needs.

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^v National Governors Association, fabfoundation and fhi360. "Reimagining Workforce Policy in the Age of Disruption: A State Guide for Preparing the Future Workforce Now." July 2020. Wilcox, Joe and Lew McMurran. Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. "Future of Work Task Force: 2019 Policy Report."

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^x Eilingrud, Kweilin; Rahul Gupta; and Julian Salguero. McKinsey & Company. "Building the vital skills for the future of work in operations." 8/7/20.

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