

***Welcome to the 2024
Workforce Board Retreat***



WASHINGTON

Workforce

Training & Education Coordinating

Board

Overview: Workforce Board Retreat 2024

PRESENTED BY: Workforce Board Staff

CHECK ONE:

Action Item

Possible Action

Discussion Only

SUMMARY:

After a year of development, the state strategic plan Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP) Plan has been officially submitted. It is a complex plan with approximately 20 partner programs. The Board retreat is where Board members, stakeholders, and partners will begin the work of launching TAP implementation and creating the structures to ensure the implementation process is effective over the coming four years.

Included in this packet are materials to prepare you for full participation in the retreat. This packet includes:

1. The retreat agenda and relevant information about the resort facilities.
2. An executive summary of the TAP plan, with brief summaries of the 2 data chapters (economy and demographics), the 3 guiding principles, and the 5 strategic priorities of the plan. If you'd like more information on any of the information in the plan, the full 700+ page plan (much of which is focused on responses for federal compliance) can be found at <https://wtb.wa.gov/planning-programs/washington-state-workforce-plan/>.
3. A call for Board sponsors on each of the Strategic Priorities and the responsibilities for that role.
4. More detailed summaries of each of the five Strategic Priorities and Performance Accountability sections, with a max of 2 pages each.
5. Draft TAP Legislative Agenda ideas—including an overview of projects the agency will be submitting for continuation of existing projects as well as areas for consideration on each of the five priorities that were presented at the March Board meeting.

When you arrive at the retreat, you will be given a small workbook to help you organize your thoughts, decide which break-out tables you'd like to join, and more information on framing questions to be answered during the retreat.



BOARD MEETING RETREAT AGENDA*

May 1-2, 2024

Sagecliffe Resort | 344 Silica NW, Quincy, WA 98848

RETREAT GOALS

1. Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP) discussions on organizing ourselves to move implementation forward, prioritizing the five strategic priorities and identifying board and staff sponsors for each.
2. Transitional year for the Governor – what do we need to position TAP and the system with the potential new administration?
3. Legislative Agenda – what items are priorities to jumpstart TAP implementation and continue longstanding priorities?

Day 1: May 1 – Celebrating Success & Action Planning

Time	Topic	Speaker(s)
9:00 a.m.	Call to Order Welcome and Introductions	Gary Chandler, Workforce Board Co-Chair
9:30 a.m.	Retreat Goals & Overview	Facilitator Alicia Koné, Koné Consulting
9:45 a.m.	Celebrating Success Stories: Opening Small Group Discussion	Gary Chandler, Workforce Board Co-Chair Eleni Papadakis, Workforce Board Alicia Koné, Koné Consulting
10:30 a.m.	Break	
10:45 a.m.	Learning from our Success: Large Group Discussion	Alicia Koné and Kristie Schultz, Koné Consulting
11:15 a.m.	Leadership Transition Planning	Gary Chandler, Workforce Board Co-Chair Alicia Koné, Koné Consulting <i>Cami Feek, Employment Security Department</i>
12:00 p.m.	Lunch	
1:00 p.m.	New Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP) Plan Review	Alicia Koné and Kristie Schultz, Koné Consulting Small Group Discussion
2:30 p.m.	BREAK	

*Agenda subject to change.

Time	Topic	Speaker(s)
2:45 p.m.	TAP Ecocycle Action Planning	Alicia Koné and Kristie Schultz, Koné Consulting
4:45 p.m.	Wrap-up & Next Day Preview	Gary Chandler, Workforce Board Co-Chair Alicia Koné, Koné Consulting
5:00 p.m.	Day 1 Adjourn	
6:00 p.m.	Dinner	

Day 2: May 2 – Decision-Making and Commitments

Time	Topic	Speaker(s)
9:00 a.m.	Call to Order & Summary of Previous Day Activities and Agenda for Day Two Welcome	Gary Chandler, Workforce Board Co-Chair Alicia Koné, Koné Consulting
9:15 a.m.	TAP Action Planning: Discussion of Workgroup sponsorship and framework	Gary Chandler, Workforce Board Co-Chair Eleni Papadakis, Workforce Board Alicia Koné, and Kristie Schultz, Koné Consulting
10:15 a.m.	Break	
11:00am	TAP Action Planning: <i>World Cafe Workgroup Discussion</i>	Alicia Koné and Kristie Schultz, Koné Consulting Workforce Board Staff
12:00 p.m.	Lunch	
1:00 p.m.	Workforce Board's Legislative Agenda Development	Nova Gattman, Workforce Board
1:30 p.m.	Workforce System Legislative Priorities Discussion	Facilitator Alicia Koné and Kristie Schultz, Koné Consulting & Workforce Board
2:45 p.m.	Commitments & Next Steps	TAP Workgroup Sponsors
3:00 p.m.	Adjourn	

*Agenda subject to change.



2024 WORKFORCE TRAINING BOARD RETREAT ITINERARY

Arrival Date	Tuesday April 30, 2024
Departure Date	Thursday May 2, 2024
Destination:	Sagecliffe Resort and Spa 344 Silica Rd NW, Quincy, WA 98848
Dress Code:	Casual

Arrival Day / Tour Day ~ Tuesday April 30, 2024

Time	Location	Activity
12:15 pm	Gather in Sagecliffe Parking Lot	Van Pool
12:30 pm	Depart Sagecliffe Parking	Quincy High School Van Pool
1 pm to 4 pm	Quincy High School	School Tour
4:00 pm	Check In	Sagecliffe Resort and Spa
Evening	Dinner is on your own. Reservations recommended for Tendrils Restaurant Quincy High School, 403 Jackrabbit St NE, Quincy, WA 98848	

Retreat Day 1 ~ Wednesday May 1, 2024

Time	Location	Activity
7 am to 9 am	Tendrils Restaurant (Main Lodge)	Breakfast
9 am to 12 pm	Retreat Tent (East of the Main Lodge)	Morning Session
12 to 1 pm	Patio outside of Tendrils Restaurant	Lunch
1 pm to 5 pm	Retreat Tent	Afternoon Session
6 pm	Retreat Tent	Dinner

Retreat Day 2 ~ Thursday May 2, 2024

Time	Location	Activity
7 am to 9 am	Tendrils Restaurant	Breakfast
9 am to 12 pm	Retreat Tent	Morning Session
12 pm to 1 pm	Patio outside of Tendrils Restaurant	Lunch
1 pm to 4 pm	Retreat Tent	Afternoon Session
4 p.m.	Adjourn	



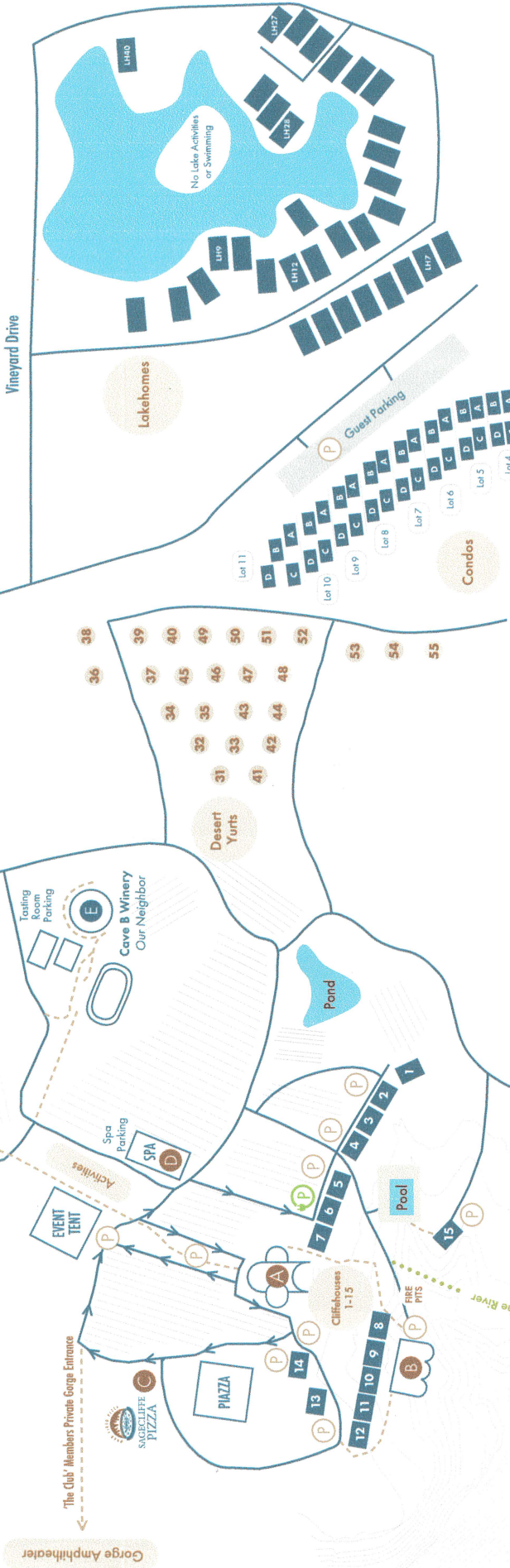
SAGECLIFFE
RESORT & SPA
WASHINGTON STATE

RESORT MAP

Silica Rd NW

Sagecliffe Rd NW

Cliffe Pointe Rd



MAP KEY

- A** Main Inn, Front desk, Tendrils Restaurant, The Whiskey Bar, Upstairs Club Room and Gym
- B** Guest Rooms / Tavern Theatre / Viewing Point Fire Pits
- C** Wood Fired Sagecliffe Pizza
- D** The Spa at Sagecliffe Resort & Parking
- E** Cave B Winery
- P** Guest Parking
- P** Tesla & Regular EV Charging

- One-way Road** (Arrow symbol)
- Asphalt Road** (Double line symbol)
- Pathway** (Dotted line symbol)
- Hiking Trail - 1.2 miles to the River** (Dotted line with arrow symbol)
- Waiver Required** (Text)



Scan the QR Code to Download a PDF Map



SPOKANE



Quincy
Located just over a two hour drive from Seattle or Spokane

SEATTLE
TACOMA

Columbia River



Executive Summary

Talent and Prosperity for All

Washington's Workforce Plan

May 2024

Introduction

Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP) is Washington's strategic workforce plan. This 2024-28 strategy guides state and federal investments that help workers access living wage jobs and provides employers with a skilled workforce. A strong workforce is critical for our state's economy and quality of life.

Washington workers and employers are at a crossroads. Our state faces a rapidly evolving economy impacted by major demographic changes, developments in automation, economic disparities, and new challenges for working families. These changes are happening as Washington employers continue to struggle to hire enough qualified workers, especially in highly skilled positions, to help them stay competitive. There is an urgency to reach marginalized communities and other untapped labor pools as employers seek talent, and too many workers are unable to access living-wage jobs.

Washington's future success depends on a collaborative and coordinated workforce development strategy. The comprehensive strategic plan is designed to be used by all partners together, to help guide actions towards transformative system improvement—to be more responsive to current and future workforce needs in Washington.

The Workforce Board is uniquely situated to help coordinate this effort. The board is a coalition of business, labor, and state agency leaders dedicated to helping residents succeed in family wage jobs, while meeting employer needs for skilled workers. This partnership is crucial to ensure that our state's workforce development strategy remains relevant, enabling workers, employers, and communities to thrive.

TAP is our state's response to new findings about our workforce system uncovered during the pandemic and post-pandemic years, and lessons learned during the Great Recession. The findings below were also affirmed through extensive community outreach and input-gathering during the plan's year-long creation:

- Employers face urgent needs to fill open positions.
- Workers seek family wage jobs and often require support to help them stay in the workforce.
- Washington's relative economic success masks disparities between historically marginalized communities and our top income brackets.
- Many employers are using traditional hiring practices as workers choose nontraditional paths to employment.
- Many Washington families struggle with childcare, food insecurity, affordable housing and transportation in ways that were unheard of in previous generations.
- Many young people are underserved and disconnected from the workforce and education.
- Many employers are disconnected from the public workforce system even as labor shortages continue.

Today Washington invests about \$1.4 billion a year on workforce development activities. These funds support more than 531,000 workers, students, and employers across 19 programs. TAP presents an opportunity to examine these ongoing investments and provides a framework to move forward.

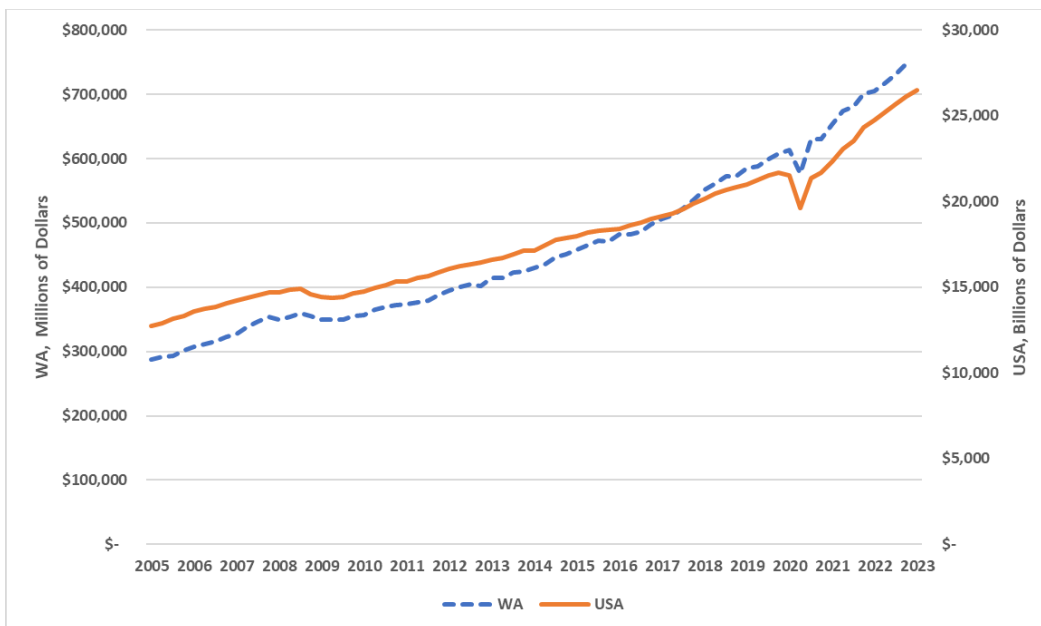
Economic and Workforce Summary

The following summary provides a snapshot of where Washington’s economy and workforce are situated today. More detailed data and analyses are provided in the [TAP narrative](#).

The High-Level Economic Numbers Look Strong

Washington’s economy is strong overall, but an uneven prosperity reveals challenges to consider as policymakers, employers, and labor leaders work to implement the next four-year workforce strategic plan. While the pandemic in 2020 was traumatic in many ways, including the unexpected shuttering of businesses and loss of jobs, the state’s economy overall has recovered well since then. However, the pandemic and recovery also spotlighted where and for whom our efforts are insufficient, as not all communities recovered equally.

Figure 1
National and State GDP
2005-2023, Quarterly



Source: U.S Bureau of Economic Analysis

Washington’s high-level economic data has been very good, especially since the end of the Great Recession in 2009. Figure 1 shows how the state’s economic output expressed as gross domestic product (GDP) has accelerated faster than that of the nation. As of 2022, only four states had a higher per capita GDP than Washington, and only five states had higher per capita personal income.

Similarly, Washington State employment levels have recovered and moved beyond pre-pandemic levels. The earnings of these workers in 2022 were on average just under \$84,000. This was 20 percent higher than the national average of about \$67,000 and higher than all but three other states. So, on average things are relatively great in the Evergreen State.

Prosperity Not Equally Shared

Average is the key word, though—as we know the average income in a given room jumps to millions when any of Washington’s famous billionaires enters it. The state’s average wage is driven by the exceptional earnings of workers in King County where, on average, workers earned just shy of \$114,000 in 2022. This is 35 percent higher than the state’s average wage. However, when King County—the state’s most populous and highest-earning county—is removed from the state average, then Washington’s average earnings plummet to \$62,800, with five counties well below \$50,000. That would drop us to 24th highest earning state—at the middle of the pack.

Figure 2
Average Annual Pay 2022: Highest and lowest counties in Washington State

County	Average Annual Pay 2022	Rank
King	\$ 114,000	1
Snohomish	\$ 72,400	2
Clark	\$ 67,000	3
Thurston	\$ 65,600	4
Kitsap	\$ 64,500	5
Lincoln	\$ 46,900	35
Douglas	\$ 46,500	36
Pacific	\$ 43,900	37
Okanogan	\$ 42,500	38
Wahkiakum	\$ 41,700	39

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

***Rounded to nearest hundred**

Figure 2 depicts Washington’s top five earning counties in 2022 along with the bottom five earning counties. No surprise, King County is the highest earner, followed distantly by Snohomish, then Clark County. Note that King County was the only county that was above the state’s average earnings. The bottom five counties are a mix of rural counties from across the state with the lowest earner being Wahkiakum at \$41,700. King County workers earned nearly three times as much on average as Wahkiakum workers, although of course Seattle area workers also faced significantly higher cost of living challenges, particularly in housing.

There are likely several causes for these geographic disparities. One is the differing demographics in race, ethnicity, gender, education level, employment history, and other factors. A concentration of high-paying industries in King County goes a long way in explaining the disparity between its relative prosperity when compared with the rest of the state.

The data shows that, when taken in aggregate, our economy and labor markets are performing very well, with Washington considered a national leader. However, when drilling down by geographic area and industry, we begin to see a very different and more challenging picture, with considerable differences among different regions of the state.

Workforce Demographics

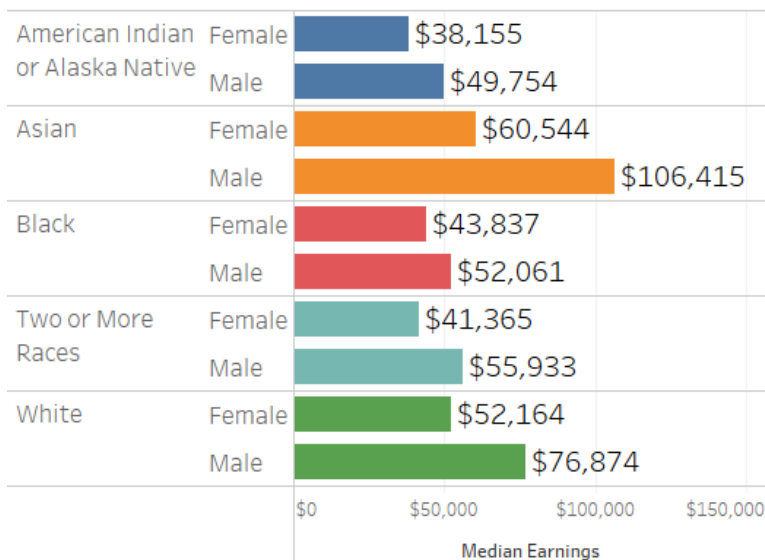
Washington is home to a diverse population. The Great Recession and the COVID-19 pandemic have tested the resilience of the state’s workers, employers, and communities. Washington as a whole has recovered from both of these socioeconomic setbacks, but that recovery has not been equitable. Race, ethnicity, disability status, sex, location, age, education levels, and other characteristics all have an impact on a Washington resident’s ability to find and keep a job. Moving out of the COVID-19 pandemic, Washington has the opportunity to mitigate the racism, sexism, “ableism,” and other discrimination that exists within its systems. But to do so data must be presented in a way that highlights these differences so they can be better understood. The demographics chapter, summarized here, presents data from the American Community Survey¹ disaggregated to better capture the population’s intersecting identities.

Median Earnings in Washington

Median earnings are a good way to analyze and compare differences; it is the divide where half of people earn more, and half earn less. In Washington, median earnings increased from \$48,335 in 2012 to \$58,886 in 2021.²

Median Earnings by Sex and Race

Median Earnings by Sex and Race



Source: American Community Survey 1-year
Ages 18-65 in the workforce
Inflation adjusted 2023 dollars

There are differences in median earnings by sex in each race category. In 2021, within each race, men had higher median earnings than women. The most profound divergence in one race is between Asian men’s median earnings of \$106,415 and \$60,544 for Asian women.

White males outearned their female counterparts by nearly \$25,000 (\$76,874 versus \$52,164). The smallest range was \$52,061 for Black males, compared to \$43,867 for Black females—only a \$7,000 difference.

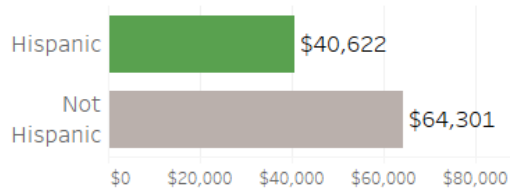
¹ The American Community Survey (ACS) is an annual demographics survey program conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau; it combines monthly surveys into an aggregate annual dataset reducing the effect of the pandemic during 2020. Some populations are too small to include and are not shown.

² Inflation adjusted 2023 dollars.

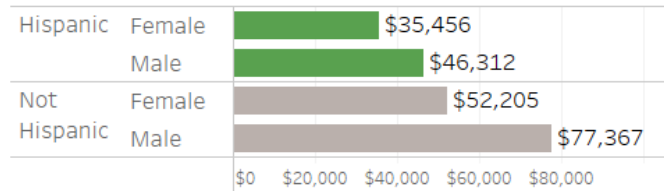
Median Earnings by Ethnicity

The gap in median earnings between Hispanic and non-Hispanic people exceeded \$20,000 in 2021: Hispanic median earnings were \$40,622 and non-Hispanic \$64,301. The gap between Hispanic men and women is not as pronounced as the gap between the sexes of non-Hispanic people. Hispanic men have median earnings that are about \$11,000 higher than Hispanic women. Meanwhile, non-Hispanic men out-earned women by \$25,000.

Median Earnings by Ethnicity



Median Earnings by Hispanic Ethnicity and Sex



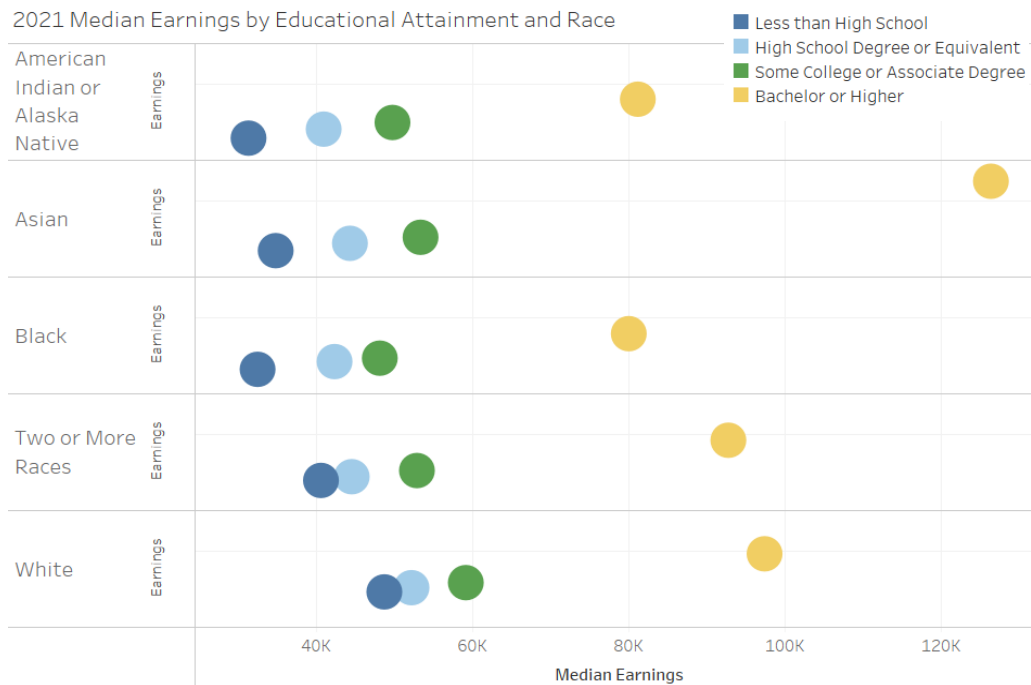
Source: American Community Survey 1-year (2021) Ages 18-65 in the workforce Inflation adjusted 2023 dollars

Median Earnings by Education and Race

The range of median earnings by educational attainment is different for each race for different levels of educational attainment.

American Indian/Alaska Natives have the lowest median earnings (\$29,122) for those whose highest level of education is less than a high school diploma. Earning a few thousand dollars more are Blacks (\$32,137) and Asians (\$34,676). Multiracial Washingtonians without high school diplomas earn a bit more (\$39,566) and whites significantly more among those with the lowest levels of education (\$46,486).

2021 Median Earnings by Educational Attainment and Race



Source: 1-year American Community Survey(2021) ages 25-65 in the workforce. Inflation adjusted 2023 dollars

Whites have the highest median earnings for those whose highest education is a high school diploma or equivalent—at \$52,036. Asians, American Indian/Alaska Natives, multiracial individuals, and Blacks have median earnings between \$40,000 and \$45,000.

The most obvious differences come with those who have earned a bachelor’s degree or higher. Asians with a BA and above earn \$125,688, whites \$96,440, and multiracial people earn \$92,262. Blacks and American Indians with a BA or higher have the lowest median earnings at around \$80,000.

Workforce Demographics Conclusion

Washington’s economy is strong on average; however, with considerable differences among geographic areas and different industries. This analysis also shows significant earnings differences depending on gender, race, ethnicity, and educational attainment. The complex relationship and interdependencies of these disparities drive the guiding principles and strategic priorities of the Talent and Prosperity for All four-year strategic plan. For more information on the demographics and economic analysis, [see the full report](#).

The TAP Journey

The Talent and Prosperity for All Plan 2024-2028 is the result of a year-long process of engagement and conversation with state and local partner agencies, service providers, businesses, labor, participant advocates, and other community stakeholders. Planning kicked off in spring 2023 with [Governor Inslee's letter](#) outlining his vision for the updated state workforce plan. In May 2023, the Workforce Board worked with partners and stakeholders to establish a core set of guiding principles and strategic priorities to frame statewide input-gathering, which encompassed 25 community forums, a widely distributed survey, and listening sessions at various meetings and conferences across the state. The three guiding principles and five strategic priorities, described below, were affirmed by the broad cross-section of plan contributors.

Guiding Principles

The strategic plan for the next four years will be underpinned by the following guiding principles. The planning for each strategic priority was led and informed by these principles:

Close economic disparities for marginalized populations.

Too many Washingtonians do not, and have not, shared in the state's prosperity. Those being left behind today are similar to the populations that have been economically marginalized throughout our state's history. Plan activities will be implemented to ensure that the needle finally moves towards shared and equitable prosperity. Involvement of individuals with lived experience and commitment to transparent performance measurement of metrics that matter will advance the Board's vision "that every Washington community is thriving, inclusive, and economically resilient."

Deliver comprehensive support for individuals with barriers to employment.

People are isolated from the workforce for many different reasons, from needing education and training to wraparound support services, such as child care, elder care, affordable housing, and transportation. Needs should not be bound by the eligibility and service limitations established in federal and state statutes. Success over the next four years will be determined by how well we meet workers and industry where they need support, and work with them to achieve their workforce development goals. This may also require statutory and administrative reforms in how service is provided.

Provide systemwide performance metrics and accountability.

Disaggregated, reliable data is critical for understanding how the workforce system is operating as a whole, rather than how any single program might be performing in its silo. Without significant new resources, we will only be able to achieve positive transformation if we work together across our silos, we are able to hold each other accountable to commitments made, and we are willing to be responsible for every individual seeking our services, regardless of where they enter the system (no wrong door). We will need to be more expansive and inventive in our data collection and analysis to identify and address the disparities that still exist.

Strategic Priorities

Five strategic priorities guide the efforts of the workforce system over the next four years. These priorities amplify and expand priorities from partners' own strategic plans. [Read more about the strategic priorities in the TAP Narrative.](#)

TAP Priority	Description	Impact Statements
System	Integrate system services, data, accountability, and resources with clear partners and roles to expand, improve, and streamline customer outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplified common intake. • Improved data sharing. • Data-informed, integrated service planning and delivery.
Industry	Support business development and competitiveness by aligning with economic development and growth efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support sustainable and equitable industry growth. • Build and expand career pathways for critical industries. • Expand the definition of worker supports.
Youth	Improve opportunities for young people to transition to an economically successful adulthood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase youth awareness of services and programs. • Broaden access and shorten the time to gain industry-valued credentials.
Credential Transparency	Explore credential transparency and expansion to improve equitable access, mobility, and long-term economic success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a common definition of credentials using a single taxonomy. • Put learners at the center of credential pathway reforms.
Job Quality	Develop a job quality framework to guide decisions and key investments in the delivery of business services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure pathways to living wage jobs that are critical to communities. • Expand registered apprenticeships to more fields.

Improving Systemwide Performance Metrics and Accountability

The prioritization of performance and accountability is highlighted throughout the TAP plan. Meaningful data and metrics to holistically examine employment rates, earnings, skill gaps, hiring challenges, and outcomes by key demographics across the workforce system are critical to assessing the progress and impact of the identified strategic priorities.

Current workforce system evaluation is largely limited to the impact of a single program on jobseekers and businesses. However, many customers access more than just a single program. By establishing cross-system performance monitoring metrics as well as strengthened systemwide evaluations, the system can obtain the needed insight to improve user experience and effective resource allocation.

Recommended next steps include:

- Data owners in the system will need to establish data sharing agreements to address current data silos.
- The system will need to mobilize resources including staff, access, and funding for evaluation.
- The system requires insights to ensure a continuous improvement cycle for the workforce system and its service delivery.

Implementation Timeline

We have the partners and knowledge; now we take action. The next four years will build on our strong, existing coalitions. The knowledge and experience of our coalition partners will allow us to start work in 2024. New partners and new thoughts are always welcome as we move forward. Taking transformative action includes listening to new voices. The importance of the workforce drives us to keep pushing forward with innovation even as we incorporate feedback and build bigger coalitions. We are fueled by the sense of urgency expressed by our industry partners.

Year 1: July 2024-June 2025: Getting to work on the strategic priorities.

A working group will lead each strategic priority; established by July 2024. This team will work closely with Board sponsors to drive work forward. This leadership team and Workforce Board staff will develop the workplans, identify possibilities for TAP implementation pilot projects, research existing successes, and coordinate the full resources available from across the partner organizations. Measures for success of each project will be identified that will guide ongoing assessment and formal review. Regular reports will be provided to the Board as summarized in the Board commitments section. The table below summarizes the organizations and agencies that have committed members of those teams as of April 2024. These groups are also open to more organizations to sign on to participate.

System	Industry	Youth	Credential Transparency	Job Quality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WA Dept of Services for the Blind • DSHS • ESD • LNI • OSPI • State Board for Community & Technical Colleges • Workforce Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Industry Association of Washington • WA Retail Assoc • WA State Medical Assoc • NW Maritime Trade Assoc • WA Film Works • IMPACT WA • WA Hospitality Assoc • WA Office of Financial Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dept of Corrections • SBCTC • DSHS • ESD • Workforce SW • OSPI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBCTC • WA Student Achievement Council • WSU • Dept of Licensing • DSHS • Community Colleges of Spokane • DOH • WA State Council of Presidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce SW • Seattle-King WDC • DSHS • Commerce • MLK Labor Council • Employment Security Dept • Workforce Board

Year 2: July 2025—June 2026: Transition, framework development, and implementation.

Year 3: July 2026—June 2027: Expansion, integration, and pilot testing.

Year 4: June 2027—June 2028: Implementation, expansion, and strategic planning.

Additional Resources

[Washington State Workforce Plan web page](#) *(Includes full TAP Plan)*

[Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#)

Conclusion

Talent and Prosperity for All presents an outstanding opportunity for Washington policymakers, business, labor and community leaders to support a strong workforce. Your voice is welcome! Please ask questions, share concerns and let the Workforce Board staff know if we're on the right track.

Watch our [website](#) for updates on the five strategic priority workgroups, including contact information, how to get involved, and progress reports.

Questions? Send us a note at tap.plan@wtb.wa.gov.

Appendix

Table of Contents

The following Table of Contents shows the scope of the [full TAP plan](#). Please note, the TAP Plan fulfills other statutory requirements as well, serving as compliance-based operating plans for each of the programs contained in the plan (Appendix A of the formal document lists all programs included in TAP).

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Strategic Priority
Board Sponsor

Strategic Priority Board Sponsor – Roles and Responsibilities

Now that the state strategic plan Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP) Plan has been submitted to the federal funding agencies, the Workforce Board's role switches to overseeing and supporting effective implementation of the plan over the next four years. Direction and support from the Governor's office, as well as the leadership of all Board members were instrumental throughout the planning process. Given an impending change of gubernatorial leadership during the first year of TAP's implementation, the Board must step in to provide sustained commitment and leadership to navigate transitional hurdles. The Board, agency partners, and stakeholders suggested that appointing Priority Sponsors would help keep TAP implementation on track and in the light of day. All agreed that public transparency is an important ingredient for sustained momentum and impact.

Each of the five TAP strategic priorities and one guiding principle will be overseen by a multi-stakeholder work group, beginning July 1, 2024. At least one Board sponsor will be assigned to each work group. Each work group will have one or more lead facilitators, administrative support, a Workforce Board staff lead, and one or more Workforce Board member sponsor(s).

Sponsors will not have to attend all work group meetings but should work with the work group leadership team to create a sponsorship structure that will be most impactful for the work.

Sponsors will work with Board staff and work group facilitators to determine:

- Agendas and cadence for group meetings, including subcommittees
- Level and type of Sponsor involvement in meetings
- Which hurdles may be encountered that Sponsor can help mitigate
- What to bring from the group to Workforce Board meetings and when
- Any other supportive role the Sponsor might play

Work Groups:

- **Performance Accountability**
- Priority 1: System, including Data-Sharing – Gary and Larry have agreed to be sponsors.
- Priority 2: Industry – will involve 10 or more industry associations (business and labor) to help determine a new and/or more responsive menu of services.
- Priority 3: Youth – ensure that all young Washingtonians have a path to an economically successful adulthood.
- Priority 4: Credential Transparency – explore the expansion of WA's credential frameworks to improve equitable access, mobility, and long-term economic success.
- Priority 5: Job Quality – brings together work of other groups to define Job Quality for the workforce development system and to develop policy and practice recommendations aimed towards greater availability and accessibility of Quality Jobs.

TAP Guiding Principle:
Performance Accountability

Strategic Priority Area: Performance Accountability

1. What is your Strategic Priority Area? Performance Accountability—though not specifically a strategic priority, it was captured as a guiding principle of the plan.

2. Why was this a priority for TAP planning?

The prioritization of performance and accountability is highlighted throughout the TAP plan. Meaningful data and metrics to holistically examine employment rates, earnings, skill gaps, hiring challenges, and outcomes by key demographics across the workforce system is critical to assessing the progress and impact of the identified strategic priorities.

3. Please summarize the strategies in your area, with a focus on the Year 1 plan.

- Convene Workforce System Evaluations Work Group.
- Identify/approve dashboard metrics to show overall system progress.
- Propose cross-system evaluations.
- Strategize with stakeholders on securing resources to conduct evaluations.

4. What is the vision for what changes if this priority is realized?

Current workforce system evaluation is largely limited to the impact of a single program on jobseekers and businesses, when we know that many customers access more than just a single program. By establishing cross-system performance monitoring metrics, as well as strengthened systemwide evaluations, the system can obtain the needed insight to improve user experience and effective allocation of system resources.

5. What are the critical aspects of the system tied to this plan (what role does the system play)?

- The data owners in the system will need to establish data sharing agreements to address current data silos.
- The system will need to mobilize resources (staff, access, funding) for evaluation.
- The system requires more rigorous evaluation, and data disaggregation to identify recommendations to ensure a continuous improvement cycle for the workforce system and its service delivery.

6. Did your workgroup identify any barriers to transformation and/or positive impact?

- Lack of shared vision for what needs to be evaluated.
- Lack of existing data sharing agreements and/or issues with sharing data due to infrastructure or policies.
- Lack of resources for carrying out evaluations.

TAP Priority:
System

Strategic Priority Area: System Integration

1. Strategic Priority Area

The System Integration priority imagines a more streamlined and interconnected workforce system. By improving how services, data, and resources are shared and utilized, we aim to enhance outcomes and remove barriers for job seekers and employers alike. This effort promotes better collaboration and efficiency, simplifying processes to make the system more effective and accessible.

2. Why was this a priority for TAP planning?

- **Busting Down Silos:** Let's face it, our current workforce development system can sometimes feel a bit like a jigsaw puzzle to jobseekers and businesses, characterized by a fragmented array of services, programs, and funding streams leading to inefficiencies, duplicated efforts, and obstacles for our customers.
- **Improving Accessibility and Efficiency:** By integrating services and sharing information, we can eliminate redundant processes and make the system more navigable for all users, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of service delivery and reducing barriers for job seekers and employers.
- **Leveraging Data for Better Outcomes:** A more unified approach to data management allows for strategic decision-making and resource allocation. This ensures interventions are more effective, equitable, and targeted to achieve the highest impact.

3. Please summarize the strategies in your area, with a focus on the Year 1 plan.

- **Solidifying Governance:** The Workforce Data Governance Council will be formally created and tasked with setting priorities for data integration and shared service delivery models. This council will oversee the development and implementation of integrated data-sharing systems and processes, aiming to create a more coordinated workforce development system.
- **Pilot Projects for Common Shared Intake and Data Sharing:** Initial pilot projects, including new technologies, will be launched with our system partners as determined by the Governance Council with a focus on developing and testing common intake process and improving data sharing among agencies. These projects will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of proposed changes and help refine strategies moving forward.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Routinely engage with stakeholders including state agencies, local workforce boards, employers, workers, and the community to gather input and build support for ongoing integration efforts. This collaboration is vital for ensuring the reforms meet the diverse needs of Washington's workforce system.

- **Legislative and Funding Advocacy:** Work closely with policymakers to secure necessary funding and policy support to sustain integration initiatives. This includes preparing decision packages and presenting the benefits of integrated workforce development strategies to various governmental and public stakeholders.

4. What is the vision for what changes if this priority is realized?

- **Customer-Centric Services:** A "no-wrong-door" experience where it doesn't matter where you start, every step helps you move forward towards landing a Quality Job or finding the perfect hire.
- **Quicker, More Responsive Services:** By reducing redundancies and unnecessary steps and improving processes, the system can deliver services more quickly and effectively—making happy customers and successful outcomes the norm.
- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Enhanced capability to utilize and analyze data for continuous improvement and responsive policy-making. With more integrated data systems, stakeholders can gain a holistic view of the workforce ecosystem, enabling more precise and timely adjustments to programs and policies.

5. What are the critical aspects of the system tied to this plan (what role does the system play)?

- **Champion Integration Initiatives:** Actively promote and support efforts to integrate services across different agencies and departments through entities like the Data Governance Council to ensure improved communication and more unified workflows.
- **Resource Coordination:** Direct strategic allocation of funding, technology, and human resources, while enforcing accountability and transparency through performance metrics that align with the needs of Washington's diverse population.
- **Monitoring and Adapting:** Through the Workforce Data Governance Council, we keep a close eye on progress, using insights to drive improvements and adapt strategies as needed.

6. Did your workgroup identify any barriers to transformation and/or positive impact?

- **Technological Hurdles:** Integrating new technologies across different agencies with varied capabilities and resources.
- **Cultural Resistance to Change:** Potential hesitancy within and between agencies to alter longstanding processes and systems. Change management is critical and we're committed to managing this change thoughtfully, ensuring that all stakeholders are supported and onboard.
- **Consistent Funding:** Ensuring sufficient and ongoing funding to support integration efforts, including technology upgrades and staff training, is essential for sustained success.

TAP Priority:
Industry

Strategic Priority Area: Industry

1. What is your Strategic Priority Area?

The Industry priority seeks to support the competitiveness, productivity, and growth of Washington's critical industry sectors. Reimagining the menu of services available to both businesses and workers will result in a strong and stable workforce for Washington's future economic success and quality of life.

2. Why was this a priority for TAP planning?

There is a palpable sense of urgency among many Washington employers that cannot find the right workers with the right skills to meet their business needs. At the same time, workers are displaying different perspectives, many born from the pandemic, about employer-employee relationships, defining job quality, and work-life balance. Job availability has made it reasonably easy for workers to try out new jobs and has caused employers to rethink employee benefits and other retention strategies. The "trial and error" approach on both sides hasn't solved their problems. Without available support, employers find other solutions to their workforce problems, including outsourcing, automation, temporary work arrangements, and inward-facing training investments for "grow your own" solutions. The workforce development system can serve as an important intermediary to help build a reliable and responsive talent pipeline, and help employers develop and retain the talent they need for the long term.

But the current system was established at a different time, with different economic and societal norms. In order to modernize the system, to be fully responsive to the needs of our critical industry sectors, we must establish a trusting relationship with industry within a structure that can survive future economic upheavals. Creating an industry advisory group, using a sectoral lens, and bringing the voices of both employers and workers to the table will help us create a more relevant menu of services to achieve our goals.

3. Please summarize the strategies in your area, with a focus on the Year 1 plan.

The overall strategy is simple: Bring representatives of Washington's critical industry sectors together to help us identify their challenges, discuss potential solutions, and take action by creating new partnerships and advocating for necessary investments and policy changes. Year 1 activities will focus on establishing an effective industry advisory committee, with clear expectations for member roles and desired outcomes; identifying critical challenges to be addressed; and developing a framework for pilot projects or learning laboratories to test new service models. Year 1 will also include developing recommendations to support new federal infrastructure investments. Securing funds to implement and evaluate pilot projects will be a primary activity throughout the implementation period.

4. What is the vision for what changes if this priority is realized?

The overarching vision is that business enterprises of all sizes and types have the talent that they need when they need it to help their businesses flourish, and workers and their families are

economically resilient. Many more discrete goals were discussed, such as increasing employer participation in the workforce system by 25 percent; launching a new statewide business liaison program to serve as a single point of contact between state agencies and employers; creating additional registered apprenticeships and training programs designed to address key industry shortages; improving worker mobility and career progress through improved credential transparency; creating supports for employers as their new hires transition from public assistance; and evaluating and advocating for additional worker supports to enable employment retention and progress, such as transportation, employer-sponsored childcare, and affordable housing near employment centers.

5. What are the critical aspects of the system tied to this plan (what role does the system play)?

Many workforce system partners are involved in the overall success of engaging industry in the system. Crucial partners include:

- Local Workforce Development Boards
- Washington state agencies
- Employer trade associations
- Labor organizations
- Community organizations
- Local economic development agencies

6. Did your workgroup identify any barriers to transformation and/or positive impact?

The workgroup that developed this priority section was enthusiastic and felt strongly that if we could bring industry to the table, our success in reengineering our menu of services to meet their needs would encourage a lasting and trusting relationship among the partners. That said, there are potential barriers, including:

- Funding. We will seek existing resources to establish pilots and learning laboratory projects, but we realize there is little excess capacity to do this work. We will require state, federal, or philanthropic support. Appropriate staff will be required to help secure these funds.
- Perception shift. Many employers perceive the workforce system is overly focused on job seekers. Some perceive our jobseeker customers to have insurmountable barriers to becoming successfully employed. Employers must feel welcomed and feel confident that the workforce development system is an important part of the solution they are seeking for any meaningful cultural or political change to occur.
- Organizational capacity. Change requires staff support at the state and local level. Assigning staff to assist in the ongoing success of the TAP plan is necessary. New funds may be required if current staff cannot be reassigned to these tasks.

TAP Priority:
Youth

Strategic Priority Area: Youth

1. What is your Strategic Priority Area?

Youth—Ensure that every young Washingtonian can access a path to an economically successful adulthood.

2. Why was this a priority for TAP planning?

The Workforce Board recognized that the pandemic created significant obstacles for youth seeking employment: both new challenges and the exacerbation of existing challenges to entering the workforce. As a result, too many young workers remain disconnected from the workforce system and youth remain an untapped labor pool. Addressing the needs of all youth is critical to ensuring a more inclusive and equitable job market, especially those facing barriers to continued education and employment, including youth with disabilities; justice- and foster-involved youth; youth experiencing poverty and homelessness, racism, family disharmony, alternate gender identification, and other socioeconomic challenges.

3. Please summarize the strategies in your area, with a focus on the Year 1 plan.

The objective of this strategic priority is to improve opportunities for young people, especially those kept furthest from opportunity to transition to an economically successful adulthood by way of reinforcing the existing and bolstering new areas of impact, including:

- **Increasing youth awareness of workforce services and programs, and identifying needs for new or expanded support for youth.** Connecting youth to the appropriate programs equips them with the knowledge and tools to build successful and fulfilling careers. Explore and consider enhancements for using WIOA Youth funds to leverage other resources; Transition and Pre-employment Transition Services; Workforce navigators; Connecting business and education.
- **Broadening access to and shortening the time required to achieve credentials.** Increasing rates of youth credentialing not only enhances the qualifications and employability of our future workforce, but also enables youth to embark on a pathway to economic stability, boosting long-term career prospects and contributing to overall economic growth in society. Shortening the time to credential provides job options earlier in life and should decrease the unemployment rate of this demographic. Specific strategies discussed include: Increased, more accessible Dual Credit opportunities; Focus on serving young people who are between the ages of 16 to 24 years old and are disconnected from school and work (Opportunity Youth); Registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship.

4. What is the vision for what changes if this priority is realized?

Numerous impactful changes should occur if a youth strategic priority focusing on reducing credential attainment time and enhancing wrap-around support services is fully realized as envisioned in the TAP plan:

- streamlined credentialing process,

- accelerated skill development,
- expanded and more equitable access to support services,
- increased economic mobility,
- stronger workforce pipeline,
- improved social outcomes, and
- stronger long-term economic growth.

5. What are the critical aspects of the system tied to this plan (what role does the system play)?

There are many critical aspects of the system across a gamut of state agencies and stakeholders that connect to the youth strategic priorities. These stakeholder groups include state agencies, educational institutions, local workforce development boards, employers and industry partners, community-based organizations, youth advocacy groups and nonprofit organizations, and local governments. These stakeholders will collaborate through partnerships and coalitions to coordinate resources, share best practices, and address the complex challenges facing young people in the workforce. By working together, they will create more effective and sustainable solutions to support the success of youth in Washington State.

These collaborative efforts, within the workforce system, will focus on several critical aspects that play essential roles in supporting the development and success of young people including, but not limited to:

- education and training programs,
- career guidance, mentoring, and counseling services,
- employment services and job placement,
- wrap-around support services,
- work-based learning opportunities,
- advocacy and awareness,
- youth development programs,
- policy development,
- partnerships and collaboration, and
- data collection and evaluation.

6. Did your workgroup identify any barriers to transformation and/or positive impact?

- Lack of common definitions and nomenclature across state systems hinder promoting accountability, consistency, and effectiveness in policy development, program implementation, and service delivery.
- Lack of awareness by students and parents of services and programs designed to shorten the length of time needed to attain credentials, as well as other wrap-around support services.
- Uneven performance and participation rates in education and support services and programs from historically marginalized populations.

TAP Priority:
Credential Transparency

Strategic Priority Area: Credential Transparency

1. What is your Strategic Priority Area?

Credential Transparency, exploring expansion of Washington's credential framework to improve equitable access, mobility, and long-term economic success.

2. Why was this a priority for TAP planning?

The Workforce Board's philosophy is that all learning is valuable and needs to be recognized. It doesn't matter where you learn, it's how and what you learn. More broadly, all learning that can be validated, should be able to be credentialed.

There are a lot of credentials in the marketplace and the number keeps growing. Credential Engine, a Washington, D.C. nonprofit, estimates the U.S. alone now has over 1 million credentials. That's a lot of choices for consumers—good, bad, and in between. But customers don't know the content of these credentials or if they have real value in the labor market.

We want people to be able to access all kinds of occupational credentials and understand them. What skills, competencies, and abilities are validated by a credential? What are people learning and how does learning translate into the job marketplace, especially as businesses increasingly do skills-based hiring? Which skills are gained by attaining a credential? Does attainment produce real return on investment in the form of higher employment rates and higher earnings? Do they lead to actual jobs and higher pay?

3. Please summarize the strategies in your area, with a focus on the Year 1 plan.

- Relaunch the Credential Transparency Advisory Committee.
- Gather stakeholders to hold conversations on credential transparency, forge agreements on common concepts, and establish a common vision.
- Following these meetings, test good ideas through pilot projects and discuss which projects can or should be brought to scale.
- Take stock and prioritize, including leveraging the existing credential database, Career Bridge, the state's public-facing career and education platform.
- Explore a common taxonomy for industries, sectors, and occupational areas, and gather feedback from higher education and other training providers.

4. What is the vision for what changes if this priority is realized?

In an enhanced, transparent state credentialing system, skills, competencies, and mastery levels will become the coin of the realm for both individuals and employers to navigate credentialing and occupational pathways. Also, educators will have on-time data indicating how occupations are changing so they can respond more quickly with curricular modifications. Right now, there can be a disconnect between the way credentials are described by education and training institutions and the language employers use in seeking skilled candidates. As credential transparency advances, job listings and descriptions will better align and be made visible in real-time with the common credential language, CTDL. It will be immediately evident when additional learning is required. By using the same description language, courses will be easier to find, as will other details including cost, likely skill gains, and whether courses are offered online or in person.

5. What are the critical aspects of the system tied to this plan (what role does the system play)?

We need to evaluate various credentials through a workforce lens, learning what earnings and employment outcomes result from credential attainment. You can see some of this work already on the Workforce Board's Career Bridge, the state's public-facing career and education portal. A consumer report card can be seen for many credentials, which shows completion rate, employment rate, and median annual earnings and the industries where graduates were employed.

To be truly portable, credential record platforms must be interoperable, so they can be viewed and shared among different computer systems and technologies. We also want credentials to be learner-centered. If you learned how to fix a motorcycle in your garage and your skills can be assessed and validated, why should you retake this learning? Can you build on what you already know? We need to make sure that folks get credit and recognition for what they can already do, and easily build on that.

Encouraging the use of digital Learning and Employment Records (LERS), also known sometimes as digital wallets, across Washington's workforce system can help more workers get due credit and credentials. LERS, as they become systemized across more employers in our state, can help job seekers showcase their qualifications and help hiring managers pull from a much more diverse, often disadvantaged, talent pool. LERS can record any verifiable skills, competencies, and even job experiences, and they can be particularly valuable for people who stop and start their education and career pathways.

6. Did your workgroup identify any barriers to transformation and/or positive impact?

Employers are facing tighter labor markets and traditional hiring metrics are coming up short. Skills-based hiring is increasing. But moving away from degree-based hiring to skills-based hiring can be a significant culture shift. It also requires more effort to break apart a traditional resume and work experience into discrete and verifiable skills.

Several companies, including Google, Accenture, and IBM, have shrunk the number of jobs at their firms that require a traditional college degree. A 2022 report by the Burning Glass Institute, a national nonprofit that focuses on labor market research, found that nearly half of all middle-skill occupations and close to a third of high-skill occupations slashed degree requirements between 2017 and 2019.

Perhaps the next big challenge on the skills-based hiring front is to see whether removing degree requirements has made a difference in hiring and employing a more diverse, less traditional workforce. Hiring practices will need to substantially change and those changes will need to be measured to uncover whether these shifts are leading to successful outcomes for less traditional, often marginalized, job candidates.

TAP Priority:
Job Quality

Strategic Priority Area: Job Quality

1. What is your Strategic Priority Area?

Job Quality—Job Quality includes key components such as recruitment and hiring, benefits, diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility, empowerment and representation, job security and working conditions, organizational culture, pay, skills and career advancement. Job quality will be formally defined in year one activities.

2. Why was this a priority for TAP planning?

Achieving more quality jobs in Washington means more people have access to living wage jobs that enable them to support their families and empower them to achieve economic independence. Access to quality jobs is fundamentally about ensuring equity, dignity, and the well-being of individuals in society. Quality jobs not only benefit the individual workers but also have broader positive impacts on communities and economies.

The job quality strategic priority appears in Washington's workforce plan, Talent and Prosperity for All 2024-2028 (TAP), as priority five but underpins each of the other four strategic priorities. Economic, societal, technological, and ecological changes over the past few years have disrupted many industry sectors, caused modifications to workplace practices, and changed the nature of work across occupations.

In developing the state workforce plan, there was widespread agreement that Washington's workforce development services should be focused on job quality. Public investment should help workers access quality jobs and should support businesses to develop and maintain quality jobs.

The job quality priority represents a commitment among partners to work with employers, workers, job seekers, community-based organizations, economic developers, advocates, and the public sector to define, support, and promote quality jobs.

3. Please summarize the strategies in your area, with a focus on the Year 1 activities.

During the planning and writing phases of the state workforce plan, partners discussed many options for exploration during TAP implementation. Job Quality strategies often overlap with other priorities. A point of consensus among partners is that we must find ways to measure if quality jobs are being developed and who is getting those jobs.

A strategic work group will be established in year one and will be led by Workforce Board staff. Staff plan to collaborate with Washington's Job Quality Academy team who have been working with Jobs for the Future (JFF) on a plan to utilize the Good Jobs Principles developed by the U.S. Department of Labor and U.S. Department of Commerce. This team has representation from MLK County Labor Council, Washington State Employment Security Department, Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Washington State Department of Commerce, and several Local Workforce Development Boards. The team has been networking with similar teams from across the country. This presents a unique opportunity to help the workforce system focus on enhancing good jobs and opportunities for workers.

At the start of year one, the job quality workgroup will develop a statewide survey. The survey will provide an opportunity for a wide array of stakeholders to provide input on a Job Quality Framework for our state and how we might measure the to-be-defined components of job quality. It is important that there is statewide agreement on definitions and opportunities within the framework. Involving a wide array of stakeholders ensures diverse perspectives. This diversity will include representatives from various industries, employers, workers' unions, professional organizations, community organizations, government agencies, academia, and more. Each stakeholder brings unique insights and experiences to the table, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of job quality issues from multiple angles leading to a shared vision for the state.

By the end of year one, the components that will be used for Washington's statewide job quality framework will be determined. In conjunction with the determination of components, metrics will also be developed to measure each component of job quality.

4. What is the vision for what changes if this priority is realized?

If this priority is realized, we will see improvements in the following areas:

- Employer buy-in—Focus on working with employers to help them cultivate quality jobs.
- Increased economic mobility and stability for all workers.
- Expanded access to registered apprenticeships.
- Increased engagement on job quality from legislators, state agencies, and the Governor's Office.

5. What are the critical aspects of the system tied to this plan (what role does the system play)?

The workforce system plays a critical role in creating and implementing a job quality framework, acting as both a facilitator and enforcer of policies and practices that enhance job quality across sectors. The system encompasses a variety of stakeholders including government agencies, educational institutions, employers, labor organizations, and community groups. Each stakeholder will contribute to the design, implementation, and maintenance of job quality standards.

Workforce System key roles:

- Policy Development and Legislation
- Funding and Incentives
- Education and Training Programs
- Research and Benchmarking
- Advocacy and Awareness
- Monitoring and Compliance
- Partnerships and Collaboration
- Feedback Mechanisms

6. Did your workgroup identify any barriers to transformation and/or positive impact?

There are several potential barriers for job quality framework design and implementation.

- Access to data to measure the outcomes of job quality framework.
- Time. Limited stakeholder scheduling opportunities, resource allocation, coordination challenges and change management delays can all lead to a time barrier.
- Lack of employer support could be a barrier. Implementing a job quality framework requires both initial and ongoing investments in terms of money, time, and human resources as well as integration into an organization's policies, practices, and cultural shifts. Without employer support, the necessary resources may not be allocated, which can stall or prevent the successful implementation of the framework.

Legislative Agenda

Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP)

Workforce System Potential Legislative Agenda Topics

DRAFT – 2025 Legislative Session

Continuation of Current Workforce Board Initiatives

The following items are continuation of existing initiatives that the agency will be advancing in the September 2024 decision package process. The Board will have the opportunity to consider an endorsement of any of the initiatives to include as part of the system legislative agenda.

- Washington Award for Vocational Excellence (WAVE): Policymakers provided a one-time award increase of \$500,000 for the WAVE scholarship in the 2024 Operating Budget. This funding allowed for up to \$5,500/year for WAVE awardees in the 2024 cohort. Available funding rolls back to a maximum of up to \$3,850/year for the 2025 cohort without an additional investment. The decision package will request an ongoing investment of funding for \$12,000/year over two years to WAVE awardees, more closely aligning awards with tuition charged by Washington’s public research universities.
- Digital Literacy and IT Career Equity: The 2024 Operating Budget provided a first-year investment for the Board’s implementation of a digital literacy and equity in IT careers initiative, including early development of a digital literacy curriculum and credentials, reentry services, and an IT education and occupation interactive portal. The September request will continue and expand year 1 activities and increase the scope of the work.
- Integrated Data Sharing: In accordance with the TAP workforce priority for system integration, the Workforce Board is carrying out Phase I of the system integration efforts. Phase I is an interagency effort to plan and design a portfolio of technology products and systems to support a comprehensive, “no wrong door” state workforce system that limits duplication in data collection. Funding for carrying out a feasibility study and constructing a formal data governance body will conclude in June 2025. The September 2024 decision package will seek continued resourcing to begin implementation and move towards realizing the goals of workforce system integration, including data sharing and common intake.
- Long-Term Care Workforce Initiative: The Workforce Board staff have been actively engaged in efforts to support a stable long-term care (LTC) workforce, including exploring how workforce supports and recruitment/retention efforts can improve patient care outcomes. The current efforts (through June 2025) have enlisted the efforts of more than a hundred professionals including LTC workers, local, state, and federal agencies, industry leadership, and families. The September 2024 decision package proposes to continue this work, and building on impetus of the existing effort, bring in pilot funding to implement and evaluate promising practices contributing to the growth of the LTC workforce and the potential impact that these efforts bring to the quality of care.
- Career Bridge Modernization: The Workforce Board has received funding to modernize the popular public-facing career and education portal, Career Bridge, and development is underway. As part of that request, the Board identified a need for dedicated staff for Career Bridge—a Career Bridge Manager and an IT lead. These positions were funded as part of the modernization components, but in a project role, ending June 30, 2025. The September decision package will request ongoing funding for these two positions. A separate policy-level decision package will request funding to boost credential transparency on Career Bridge by adding more fields for competencies, skills, and experience for thousands of postsecondary programs, helping consumers make informed decisions and better compare education and training options, while also growing Career Bridge into the state’s official credential registry.

Other TAP Legislative Agenda Potential Policy Items to Consider

The following are concepts aligning with TAP strategic priority areas that the Board heard as potential items in the March 21 Board Meeting. These items are organized into strategic priority areas. The items below are not finalized and are simply meant to generate ideas and discussion on what might be possible under these strategic priority areas for the Board as part of consideration for the TAP legislative agenda for 2025 and beyond.

Sample policy ideas for the Workforce System priority in TAP:

- Evaluation, research, and development—Revisit the Board’s 2023 request for inter-agency projects focused on promising practices in TAP implementation. The request would include a workforce system review committee to guide investments.
- Federal Perkins CTE state match—Approximately \$500K—state match funding to ensure no federal funding is left unspent.
- Workforce data—Require employers to report primary duty location, birthdate (or age at time of hire) for every covered employee.

Sample policy ideas for the Industry priority in TAP:

- Job Skills Program Expansion (JSP): The Workforce Board has been a consistent advocate for JSP, with funding requests in previous years for up to \$25M for the biennium to support the program. JSP is extremely popular with employers to provide training for their existing employees, and funding is frequently fully obligated early in the fiscal year.
- Industry Outreach Manager—Reinstate funding for program staff at the Board to outreach with business and labor to improve their experiences using the workforce system for skills development and finding their next workforce as well as build linkages with the workforce system to underserved communities. Funds would also support reinstating industry skill panels, including resources to link training with underserved communities, as part of this role.

Sample policy ideas for the Youth priority in TAP:

- Dedicated funding for Work-Based Learning Coordinators in the high schools, perhaps through Career Connect WA. Funding would support small/rural schools, especially in building business connections and registered apprenticeship programs.
- Explore funding for expanding opportunities for CTE Programs of Study (2+ courses in a single CTE program that leads to an industry-recognized credential) at all schools, including those that articulate to registered apprenticeship programs.

Sample policy ideas for the Credential Transparency priority in TAP:

- Revisit credential transparency bills from 2023 and 2024 to identify where there is stakeholder alignment for legislation in 2025.
- Digital wallets—Focus on a specific industry area to pilot using Learning and Employment Records (LERs) to build momentum for jobseekers and students toward career and postsecondary success.

Sample policy ideas for the Job Quality priority in TAP:

- Workforce emergency supports—In collaboration with workforce and service organizations, explore support of the concept of emergency funds, matched by employers & administered locally, to support workers in crisis. Could include transportation, child/elder care, behavioral health services, and a state and employer match for rental deposits or home downpayments – “Live near your work” model.
- Statewide mobile workforce support unit—offering training, career counseling, and wraparound referrals.